

The Art of Being a Father

June 18, 2017

DAY 1: A father's example

1. Being a dad is one of the most challenging endeavors in my life. Think about all the things you're trying to do simultaneously! Love them, build their character, train their values, discipline their foolishness, model for them how to be a husband, provide for their spiritual, medical, and financial well-being, model for your son how a man love a woman, model for your daughters what kind of man is worth waiting to marry, help them do their best in their endeavors (church, school, friends, sports, hobbies), get them through the terrible 2's, help them through the turbulent teens, help them navigate the whole dating scene, and help them see that following the Lord is the most important thing they'll ever do for themselves and for others.

2. If you are a father, go back and underline the things you believe you're doing pretty well.

3. What are one or two things you'd like to improve as a father?

4. A father's example may have a profound effect on children, as it did with King Uzziah, who was anointed king at age sixteen:

2 Chronicles 26:4 He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Amaziah had done.

2 Chronicles 26:5 He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him the fear of God. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success.

5. Unfortunately, a father's bad example can have disastrous effects.

Exodus 34:7 (God) maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

6. The effects of a poor father can have long-lasting consequences, affecting the lives of his own children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren!

7. What strikes you most from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Relationships, part 1

- **The Value of Knowing and Following God**

Deuteronomy 6:1 These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess...

Deut. 6:2 ...so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

1. Teaching your kids begins with “teaching” yourself. God’s commands must be lived out in you so that the value of following them can be seen by your children.

2. How do kids take on the value of obeying commandments? All of us are rebels by nature. We don’t “want” anybody telling us what to do. What helps motivate kids to want to follow God? Your example...

Deut. 6:5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

“I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

I’d rather one walk with me than merely tell the way.” -Edgar Guest

Deut. 6:6-7 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

3. Older children are looking for more than just theology. They want to see how theology affects your life. This requires Christianity to be “real” in your life, flowing out of your “heart.”

4. Kids pick up values by several means:

(a) Example: “Your hearts.”

(b) Teaching: “Impress.”

(c) Discussion: “Talk about them”

(d) In the normal course of life: “sit, walk, lie down, and get up.”

(e) Visually...

Deut. 6:9 Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.

5. In what ways does your Christianity need to become more “real” (visible) in your life?

DAY 3: Relationships, part 2

1. You model how to build relationships. Your kids are in a course taught by you, “How do I honor God in my relationships?” Teaching modules include: Sons learn, “How do I relate to my wife? How do you do this thing called, ‘family’?” Daughters learn, “What kind of man is worth waiting for to marry? How should I relate to my husband? What kind of man do I want to raise my kids?” Courses also include learning how to treat people from your in-laws, to annoying neighbors, to the people who make your coffee at Starbucks.

2. The Apostle Paul sums up the mission of a great Dad in three action words...

1 Thessalonians 2:11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

3. Half of how they learn about relationships is by watching you in relationships! The other half of learning is by being in relationship with you!

4. Here are the prerequisites for the course you’re teaching. Think of this section as getting “straight A’s” as a dad.

a. **Attendance**. Kids take “attendance” on you! How much time is devoted to relationship with your children?

b. **Attention**. Instead of wondering if the “students” are paying attention, your kids wonder if YOU’RE paying attention—to their mother and to them!

c. **Authority**. You teach them the value of authority by watching how you use parental authority at home. Authority needs to be consistent, fair, impartial, enforcing consistent boundaries and consistent penalties. Authority walks what it talks.

d. **Affection**. At school the students don’t need to love their teachers, but at home, the “teacher” better demonstrate his love for his children. Love is something that is demonstrated, often through affection.

e. **Affirmation**. Any father can hammer his kids with what they’re doing wrong. Kids need to know what it is that they’re doing well!

5. Which of these five “A’s” are you doing the best? Which is one that needs attention?

DAY 4: Responsibilities, part 1

Genesis 3:17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

1. God's words to Adam after Adam's sin "set the stage" for the world in which men live. A man is called to "work his field" (in any venture or career). He will inevitably find this work to be exasperating, frustrating, and will have seasons of futility and failure.

2. It is during these times that children must see how their dad responds to these challenges! Will he:

a. Seek after God for help and wisdom, and for the strength to endure and persevere no matter the difficulties?

b. Seek after relief? The easy way? The fun way?

3. What are your tendencies when life becomes discouraging?

4. What "conclusions" do you think your kids are learning about life and responsibility as they watch you and listen to you?

5. Who is someone you admire in the way they handle their responsibilities, especially in light of the difficulties they face?

6. What motivates you about their example?

DAY 5: Responsibilities, part 2

1 Kings 2:1 When David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying,

*² "I am about to go the way of all the earth. **Be strong, and show yourself a man,***

³ and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;

⁴ that the LORD may establish his word which he spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a man on the throne of Israel.'

1. These are David's words to Solomon just before David died. They are telling! Manhood is demonstrated most in how a man treats people and his responsibilities.

2. Notice how David equates manhood with strength. How have you seen this kind of strength in some men you know?

3. In what way(s) do your kids see you taking responsibilities at church?

4. In what way(s) do your kids see you taking responsibility at home?

Matthew 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you.

5. In what way(s) do your kids see you caring about more than just you and your self-interests?

6. Jot down 1-2 things that need your attention as a father. Share those with a trust friend. Ask him to check up on you.