



What Makes a Dad?

Romans 8:15: (NKJV) *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*



Here we are, nearing the end of another June. This can mean a number of different things...kids are getting out of school for the summer - some are graduating; basketball and hockey have ended and baseball season is in full swing. Summer is officially beginning (tomorrow as a matter of fact). Yes, June is a pretty pivotal month... did I mention Father's Day? Today is Father's Day and in spite of all those other things happening in June, we are going to take this day's program and focus on fatherhood - its responsibilities, joys, sorrows, pitfalls and victories. What makes a dad? Stay with us and let's find out!

Our only Question:

What makes a dad?

First, as has become one of our Father's Day customs, a little history:

"Life was a lot simpler when what we honored was father and mother rather than all major credit cards." -Robert Orben

Recognition of Mother's Day vs. Father's Day:

Mother's Day was first proclaimed in Boston in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe, a Unitarian. The proclamation was a rallying call for peace. It was observed in 1907 at the request of Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia, PA, who asked her church to hold service in memory of all mothers on the anniversary of her mother's death. It became a Presidential Proclamation in perpetuity on May 8, 1914, always issued for the second Sunday in May.

Father's Day occurred first on June 19, 1910, 40 years later at the request of Mrs. John B. Dodd of Spokane, WA. It was proclaimed for that date by the mayor of Spokane and recognized by the governor of Washington. The idea was publicly supported by President Calvin Coolidge in 1924, but did not receive a Presidential Proclamation until 1966, and then only for that year. It was assured annual recognition by President Proclamation on April 24, 1972, 58 years after the Presidential Proclamation for Mother's Day and 102 years after the first recognition of Mother's Day. It remains the only Presidential Proclamation directed to the benefit of men while there are nine different Presidential Proclamations for the benefit of women.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18: (NKJV) ¹⁶And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." ¹⁷Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." ¹⁸"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

"The kind of man who thinks that helping with the dishes is beneath him will also think that helping with the baby is beneath him, and then he certainly is not going to be a very successful father."
- Eleanor Roosevelt



"My Dad," a children's songbook



So, with God as the ultimate example of a father, let's begin to look at the things he does for us and therefore the kinds of things we ought to do for our children:

"It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons." - Johann Schiller



First, a truly caring father wants his children to be united:

Ephesians 4:3-6: (NRSV) ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

(Source: Aesop's Fable, *The Father and His Sons*) A father had a family of sons who were perpetually quarreling among themselves. When he failed to heal their disputes by his exhortations, he determined to give them a practical illustration of the evils of disunion; and for this purpose he one day told them to bring him a bundle of sticks. When they had done so, he placed the bundle into the hands of each of them in succession, and ordered them to break it in pieces. They tried with all their strength, and were not able to do it. He next opened the bundle, took the sticks separately, one by one, and again put them into his sons' hands, upon which they broke them easily. He then addressed them in these words: "My sons, if you are of one mind, and unite to assist each other, you will be as this bundle, uninjured by all the attempts of your enemies; but if you are divided among yourselves, you will be broken as easily as these sticks."

Philippians 2:1-4: (NKJV) ¹Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ²fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

"A man's worth is measured by how he parents his children. What he gives them, what he keeps away from them, the lessons he teaches and the lessons he allows them to learn on their own." - Lisa Rogers

God wants for us and from us a unifying together.

Great strength and great leadership comes from great humility and good fathers put children first for their benefit. The goal is to raise up your child to be a contributor to the world.

Next, a little background on the phrase in our theme text - "Abba Father":

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words: ABBA: an Aramaic word, found in <Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15> and <Gal. 4:6>. In the Gemara (a Rabbinical commentary on the Mishna, the traditional teaching of the Jews) it is stated that slaves were forbidden to address the head of the family by this title. It approximates to a personal name, in contrast to "Father," with which it is always joined in the NT. This is probably due to the fact that, abba having practically become a proper name, Greek-speaking Jews added the Greek word pater, "father," from the language they used. Abba is the word framed by the lips of infants, and betokens unreasoning trust; "father" expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child.

It is a childlike, unreasoning trust. In some translations, the word is used in the sense of "Daddy." This gives a hint at the closeness of the relationship we can have with the Heavenly Father.



Uses of Abba - always a dramatic and emotional setting:

Mark 14:32-36: (NRSV) ³²They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." ³⁵And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Jesus himself uses the phrase in his hour of greatest need. This is exactly what fatherhood is and ought to be - great trust on every level.

The context of our theme Scripture:

Romans 8:12-17: (NRSV) ¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

This puts us in the same position of Jesus - we can have that same kind of "daddy/father" relationship with God. We have the ability to cry "Abba! Father!"

Galatians 4:6: (NRSV) ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

The phrase "Abba Father" captures the true essence of fatherhood. It symbolizes unreserved trust in the depth of trial and agony, it symbolizes the honor and respect due to the Father of Deliverance and it symbolizes the true bond of brotherhood of children united under their Father.

"It is much easier to become a father than to be one."
- Kent Nerburn



"For My Dad," sung by Nancy Sinatra

"One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters."
- George Herbert

We also want to honor the grandfathers!

Psalms 103:13: As a father has compassion for his children, so our heavenly father has compassion for those that fear (reverence) him.

A father with true compassion wants what is best for his children.

- A good dad:
- 1) honors God;
 - 2) qualifies as a true husband; and
 - 3) is a dedicated provider.





A truly caring father disciplines us:

Hebrews 12:4-11: (NRSV) ⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children-- "My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished (rebuked) by him; ⁶for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts." ⁷Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? ⁸If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. ⁹Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share his holiness. ¹¹Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

"Discipline" is the overall education of a Christian:

Discipline/Chastening: Strongs #3809 paideia pahee-di'-ah; tutorage, education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction:—chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture.

This is the first level of training - the least painful - correction with words:

Punished/Rebuked: Strongs #1651 elegcw elegcho el-eg'-kho of uncertain affinity; to convict, refute, confute; to find fault

This is the second level of training - more painful - training through action:

Discipline/Chastening: Strongs #3811 paideuw pahee-dyoo'-o
1) to train children 1a) to be instructed or taught or learn
1b) to cause one to learn 2) to chastise

This is the third level of training - the most painful - punishment:

Punished/Scourged: Strongs #3146 mastigow mas-tig-o'-o; to flog (literally or figuratively):—scourge.

"Love and fear. Everything the father of a family says must inspire one or the other."
- Joseph Joubert



"I Hope You Dance," sung by LeAnn Womack

"I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection." - Sigmund Freud

A truly caring father inspires us to grow:

Hebrews 4:16: (KJV) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Isaiah 40:31: (KJV) But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

"Being a great father is like shaving. No matter how good you shaved today, you have to do it again tomorrow."
- Reed Markham





A truly caring father keeps his word:

Hebrews 10:23: (KJV) *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

When God promises, He delivers; when we as fathers promise, we should also deliver.

" Sometimes the poorest man leaves his children the richest inheritance."
- Ruth E. Renkel

Isaiah 55:8-11: (NKJV) ⁸*For My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.* ⁹*"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.* ¹⁰*"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

There are many challenges that present themselves to fathers - not the least of which is the ability to manage time and priorities relating to our children.



"Cat's in the Cradle," sung by Harry Chapin

"What a father says to his children is not heard by the world, but it will be heard for posterity."
- Jean Paul Richter

This song is an important lesson of lost opportunity from misplaced priorities.

"At a time of reproductive freedom for women, fatherhood must be more than a matter of DNA. A man must choose to be a father in the same way that a woman chooses to be a mother." - Mel Feit

A truly caring father gives his children direction:

Romans 8:28: (KJV) *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

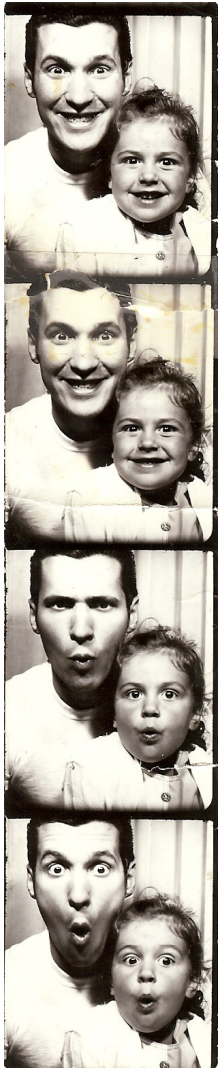
James 1:5-6: (KJV) ⁵*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* ⁶*But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

" My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."
- Clarence Budington Kelland

Rick's tribute to his dad:



Piano music by Jim Brickman



Dad, We are fortunate that we have heroes in life – Heroes – the kind of individuals who inspire, who do the things others can't or won't, who rise above and beyond the call of duty. Heroes – the individuals who make an unmistakable difference in the world around them and without which our world would be a darker and sadder place.

Many of these heroes can be named and appreciated, for their call was to works of a public nature. There are heroes like Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. who stood in the face of injustice on behalf of those who were oppressed and in so standing changed the very course of history. There are heroes like Madame Curie, Alexander Fleming and Louis Pasteur, whose scientific work and medical breakthroughs resulted in saving the lives of countless millions. There are heroes like the Apostles Paul, Peter and John, who had a spiritual calling to serve as guides and teachers of the way of true Christianity and they lived as a witness before the entire world.

All of these truly are heroes and we honor and respect their contributions, for their collective impact cannot be easily measured. But what about the other heroes – the quiet, unsung heroes, whose call was not so much public, but more personal in nature? Thankfully, there are and have been many of these heroes. Today, I chose to honor one just one of them – my dad.

Dad you are an unsung hero. Your life has been an unbroken testimony of integrity, hard work and faith that has had a dramatic impact on all of those around you.

You taught me perseverance. Through all of my years I have never known you to not work, to not strive, to not seek to be better. You have always stayed on the job until it was done.

You taught me that limitations may be inconvenient, but they don't have to be debilitating. Your partial hearing loss could have been a life-long excuse to "not show up", but instead, there you are at every Bible Convention, in the front row, always smiling and attentive even if you are not hearing what is being said.

You taught me that a soft answer turns away wrath. You never yelled – you always reasoned – though sometimes that reasoning took the form of a flick in the head, you always got my attention and always showed me a better path to follow.

You taught me integrity. You have always done the things you said you would do and you have always done them with cheerfulness and zeal. I will never forget your experience at AVCO, working in a "do as little as you can get away with" environment. Your attitude of "they pay me for forty hours and I will work for forty hours," caused you grief from the other employees, but you did it anyway.

You taught me the value of family. From all of the basketball games you attended when we were kids and your constant encouragement to "Hawk 'em!", to the family dinners each and every Sunday, you exemplified what a dad's role ought to be.

You taught me the value of wisdom. Not just from your traditional "Words of Wisdom" request at birthdays, but from the way you live with humility and the way you think before you speak.

You taught me the value of faith. You were called from the age of twelve, to a calling that few would or could answer and from that tender age until now, you have never looked back from or doubted the guiding hand of your Heavenly Father. Your faith has provoked you to witness to the Gospel, both "in season and out of season". Your faith truly is the centerpiece of your life.

It is for these reasons and others, that you have been an unsung hero of my life. Unsung, until now... I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being my dad... By the way, when I grow up, I want to be like You!!
Love, Rick



"To support mother and father, to cherish wife and children, and to have a simple livelihood; this is greatest blessing."
- Buddha

A truly caring father guides us:

Psalms 119:105-106: (NKJV) ¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. ¹⁰⁶I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.

Psalms 32:8-9: (NKJV) ⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. ⁹Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.

Proverbs 3:5-8: (NKJV) ⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. ⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. ⁸It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

It is comforting to know we don't have to lean on our own understanding.

"When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years."
- Mark Twain

A truly caring father loves us:

John 16:27: (KJV) For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

We have true security when we are truly loved!

Psalms 34:18: (KJV) The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

As dads, we need to be near our children when they are going through the difficulties of life, just as God is there for us.

1 Peter 5:6-7: (NKJV) ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

"The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother."
- Rev. Theodore Hesburgh

A truly caring father provides for us:

Matthew 6:32-33: (KJV) ³²(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Luke 12:32: (ESV) Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Isn't that just like a good parent? It is His good pleasure to give you a great gift! Our heavenly father's gifts are beneficial and everlasting. That's what a true father wants for his children.



A truly caring father knows our needs:

Philippians 4:19: (KJV) *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

1 Corinthians 10:13: (KJV) *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

"My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person: he believed in me."
- Jim Valvano

A truly caring father calms us:

Philippians 4:7: (KJV) *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

The peace of God is difficult to explain but it has the ability to keep our hearts and minds peaceful. We as dads should try to instill that in our children.

Isaiah 26:3: (KJV) *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Exodus 33:14: (KJV) *And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*

Psalms 29:11: (KJV) *The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.*

Psalms 34:7: (KJV) *The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

God tells us not to worry, He is taking care of things. This is the example we have to give our children.

"Father taught us that opportunity and responsibility go hand in hand. I think we all act on that principle; on the basic human impulse that makes a man want to make the best of what's in him and what's been given him."
- Laurence Rockefeller



"Leader of the Band," sung by Dan Fogelberg

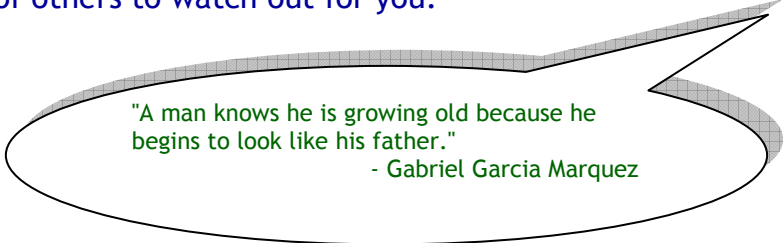
A truly caring father protects:

Psalms 59:16: (KJV) *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.*

Psalms 91:11: (KJV) *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

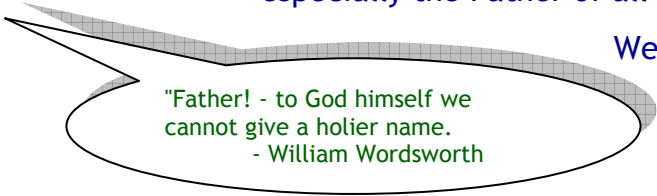


God protects you through the angels. In fathering (especially of teenagers!) you employ the help of others to watch out for you.



Fatherhood - what an institution! What a privilege! What a blessing! So, what do we do with it?

Well, today, tell the fathers in your life what they mean to you. As for every other day, live your appreciation - and don't be afraid to lean on those fathers, especially the Father of all - He wants us to understand our need for Him!



We are given the understanding of God as our Father, and then given the ability to play that role to those around us. Fathers play a critically important role for children to look up to, honor, respect and love.

***So what makes a dad?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***

