



FOUNDATIONS OF FATHERHOOD  
*Buddy Hulsey*

**REAL MOMENTUM**

Being a dad is one of the most important, influential roles a man can ever fill in life, greater than CEO of a major corp., a sports celebrity, or a successful investment banker. All pale in comparison to that of being a godly dad. It's the most difficult job you will ever fall in love with. It is an impossible job with limitless possibilities.

Fatherhood finds its origin in the Garden of Eden and its Author is God, not man. It began with Adam, continuing with you/I and our responsibility will terminate with our last breath.

God created us, called us, commissioned us and equipped us to be godly fathers. As godly dads we are laborers together with God. (1 Cor. 3:9) And, God gave our kids to US and NOBODY ELSE!!

As laborers with God we are being used by God to change lives with eternal consequences. FATHERS CHANGE LIVES, for good/bad. While we can be a blessing we can also wound.

Godly fathering is neither easy and often doesn't come naturally.

How I wish I had known these principles when I was 20. When I was 23 we brought Bethany home. I did not have a clue what being a godly father was all about. I was too busy paying bills, maintaining a career usually by applying worldly principles.

Chip Dodd (Christian psychologist) "If we fathers are not careful, we will spend our lives never fully knowing ourselves, never fully knowing others, never fully finding the abundant life... We spend our existence toiling to make life happen, and all it gets us is a grave, a marker and a date."

There are lots of strategies but 6 basic principles essential for godly parenting for which there are NO SUBSTITUTES.

VERY, VERY IMPORTANT;

1) Kids are a gift from God. Psalm 127:3-5 (read) "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

It addresses the issue of how we must see our kids from God's perspective, not the worlds and as a reward and not a liability. How we see our kids will make a world of difference.

2) Fathering is a God-given commitment that comes with authority, responsibility and accountability. It is a divine position of divine trust. We have a responsibility to bring them up in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Eph. 6:4 "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Deut. 6:7 "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up."

The father is the first image of God a child receives. What does the picture look like that you are/have painted?

We DO NOT suffer from lack of instruction and God's instruction are NOT to be taken lightly.

1 Timothy 3:5 "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" It addresses the priority regarding the family vs the church.

Andrew Kosteinberger (wrote 'God, Marriage, and Family) (quote) "Parents ought to consider themselves entrusted with the temporary responsibility & stewardship of nurturing and cultivating a child's heart and mind in the Light of the scriptures and on behalf of God. And, while children ought to obey both parents, fathers bear special responsibility for disciplining the children."

3) Godly fathering will only happen intentionally, NOT BY ACCIDENT or because we want it to. Godly fathering demands we be engaged, that we be a life-long learner, that we humble ourselves, be creative, stay in the word and pray without ceasing and PRAY FOR WISDOM AND DO NOT STOP.

Godly fathering is a MARATHON, not a sprint and we must be totally committed for the long haul.

It is no accident that we call 'Jesus' our Father. There has never been nor will there will ever be a more complete example of a godly Father than Jesus Christ. If we are true followers of Jesus Christ, then we should resemble Him and mirror His character traits. And, when we don't have the answers, do we confidently, from experience, point them to the One in whom you trust?

4) A wise father will focus on the HEART, that of his own and the HEART of the children. If not, you will NOT be successful. (WHY)

Prov. 4:23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." And, the world has no answers for problems of the heart.

Luke 6:45 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

Heart deficit fathers can be TOXIC to children. If you cannot define your own heart, how can we ever know the heart of the children? Often we spend our lives and theirs focusing on the externals, their behavior, their attitude, obedience, compliance, anger, etc., rather than the expressions of their heart.

Prov. 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." GODLY DAD'S MUST BE 'HEART SPECIALIST!!'

I'm not saying these externals are not important, but they must not divert us from the HEART. We must not focus nor be 100% motivated by these external symptoms. Behavior & Compliance MUST NOT be our highest goal. The children must also be able to see the condition of OUR heart as we become honest and transparent with our kids. They must see the bible lived out in the person of their dad. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Can you and I honestly say that?

Ted Tripp (author) "Behavior is not the basic issue. The basic issue is always what is going on in the heart. The heart is the wellspring of life. Therefore, parenting is concerned with shepherding the heart."

As you raise your kids you'll learn, probably have learned, that if you have 2 or 20 kids, they are ALL different. It is a priority that you learn the individual heart of each child, the unique way God created them, which can be a challenge. Prov. 22:6 "Train up a child, etc (according to THEIR bent)

They are not, nor do they have to be, nor were they ever created to be 'like you/me.'

5) Wise godly fathers are 'GRACE DEPENDANT,'

not only for salvation, but for parenting. NONE of us have arrived with all the answers.

Our children must realize we're not perfect, that we make mistakes and they will also. That's the importance of introducing to them the importance of GRACE. We MUST maintain an atmosphere of GRACE in your homes.

We/they need grace and they should learn that from us as their fathers. To do otherwise is to teach them that we are their sufficiency.

Ask) Is it possible for us to be 'grace takers' and not 'grace givers?' God's grace will enable them to survive with the low/hi times, their failures/successes. Rom. 3:23-24 "For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Luke 7:47; Forgiven little, loves little.

Learn to own your own failures, to apologize, to forgive and to ask to be forgiven. It's called HUMILITY and our kids need to see it ALIVE in US.

We all have struggles. We must teach them how to deal with their struggles by letting them see ours, along with our strengths and the source of our strength.

FAILURE DOES NOT MEAN FINAL!!!!

The saddest words I've ever heard come from a grown child; "I am the dad I am because of the kind of dad my dad was not."

Ask) In our old age, what are our kids & grandkids going to say was our greatest accomplishments? Will it be what we did or what we were/or were not.

If our children cannot believe in and trust a father whom they can see, how can they ever believe and trust in a god they cannot see?

6) (my additional principle FOR WHICH THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE)

Your TIME is the single greatest investment you can make in your children's lives. It says 'you matter, you're a priority, you're special in your dad's life. To fail in this area greatly reduces your chance to be a successful, godly Father in all other areas. DO NOT allow your children to become accustomed to your absence. LOVE IS SPELLED T.I.M.E!!!!