

# *“How to Be a Better Father”*

*Men’s Breakfast Benton, Saturday, June 10, 2023*

*By Vernon Trafford*

## *Father/Grandfather/Gr Grandfather/Pastor*

This is a vast subject!

Start with childhood.

Grew up in Ottawa and lived at 308 Cambridge Street.

That’s important because my growing up years evolved around that area.

I was fifth in a line of eight siblings. Four boys and four girls.

My Father and Mother were devout believers in Christ and therefore took great pains in leading us to faith in Christ.

Unlike today, Sundays were the Lord’s Day and as such things were different. We wore our best clothes to Sunday School and Church as a sign of respect and reverence for the Lord. Weekly activities were curtailed out of respect for the Lord’s Day.

Mother was a stay-at-home Mom and Dad earned a very modest income in the Assessing Department of the Income Tax Division, now Revenue Canada.

We were taught to Tithe and learned respect for the fact that God Provides, food, clothing, and the necessities of life. Music was an integral part of our growing up years. Other than my Downs Syndrome sister, we all learned to play instruments and sing hymns in harmony.

All four boys became ministers of the Gospel and three of my sisters became church pianists and organists.

Central in our upbringing was the fact that the *Word of God was pre-eminent*. Many a time as a teenager I would arrive home to find my Dad, sitting in the living room chair with the floor lamp on reading his Bible.

Were my parents perfect? No, but neither were the kids.

I was married in 1962 to my first wife Dianne. We raised three children, Tim now 57, Pamela soon to be 56, and Ted now 51.

How to be a better Father?

I wish sometimes I could go back and change a few things, but I can't.

Fathering can be a tough business especially if you have strong willed children.

My two oldest were strong willed and I nor my wife were prepared for this. It was at sometimes a very frustrating journey. However, we applied Biblical principles and convictions to work our way through many a situation.

Something to keep in mind as a parent is that in the Scriptures there are preferences and convictions.

Preferences can change but Biblical Convictions based upon the Word of God do not change. When we think of preferences there is no Biblical mandate to hold church services at 11:00 a.m. That is open for change.

But Biblical Convictions based upon the Word of God do not change. For instance, we must be born again; we must love the Lord our God with our heart, soul, and mind. We must believe that Jesus is God and that the Triune God exists.

I mention these things because if you do not have Biblical convictions how are you to give lasting values and direction to your children.

As a Father one of the Biblical principles that I took to heart is found in,

***Proverbs 3: 5-6***

*5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.*

*6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

We live in an evil world based upon humanistic thinking and behavior and it will not get better only worse. Incidents we see happening all around us and on the local news cause us to observe that manners and discipline have long since evaporated.

Just this week a relative of ours who works as a caretaker in an elementary public school had an exhausting week because of having to clean up the messes in the washrooms where filthy, vulgar words were written on the walls and fruit and lunches were thrown at the walls and on the floors.

This past week high school graduates in a number of school districts in North Carolina poured cement in the toilets and urinals recognizing that thousands of dollars would be incurred in clean up and replacement costs.

Kindergarten teachers are being assaulted and intimidated and the school board officials refuse to take action lest they be sued.

***Psalm 11: 3***

*3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?"*

What convictions as a parent, (a father) do you have in your home that are apparent to your children?

Men we need to take seriously that the Word of God is of primary importance. It affects everything we do as we seek to live for Christ.

***Psalm 119: 105***

*105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

***Psalm 36: 9***

*9 For with You is **the fountain of life**; In Your light we see light.*

The Media, education and culture are influencing and bullying your children into an ungodly way of living.

### ***Deuteronomy 6: 1-7***

*1 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it,*

*2 So that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.*

*3 "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.*

*4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*

*5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

*6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.*

*7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.*

Men it only takes ONE Generation to change the direction of a culture.

Now what if your son or daughter has gone their own way and are not following the Lord as they were taught?

You pray for them and if it is appropriate to gently remind them of their Christian heritage then seek the Lord's guidance as to when to do it.

Remember that children grow up and they will choose their own path. Therefore, that which has been taught and demonstrated when they are young will be in their mind.

Pray for them. Keep praying and do not lose heart.

From 1986 to the end of 1988, I pastored at a church out west. We moved back to Ontario at the end of the year and we left our two oldest children out west. Our daughter was married, but our oldest son remained there as well. Tim lost interest in the church and for a number of years, did his own thing mainly pursuing material things.

We would keep in touch by phone but it was a heartache just the same. Keep praying.

About eight years ago Tim phoned me and in the course of our conversation he said to me, "Dad, I've been going to church for the past six weeks at Caronport," where Briarcrest Bible Institute and Seminary is. He was getting into the Word and studying it.

Don't lose hope. God is able to reach the hardest of hearts.

In February 1996, my wife Dianne past away as a result of lupus. A year and a half later the Lord brought a wonderful lady into my life by the name of Paula.

This past Tuesday we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. How good God is!

There is much more that I could say about being a father but in closing I want to direct your attention to a very significant portion of Scripture.

### ***Psalm 19 1-14***

*For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

*1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*

*2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.*

*3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.*

*4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world.*

*In them He has placed a tent for the sun,*

*5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.*

*6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

*7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

*8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

*9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.*

*10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.*

*11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.*

*12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.*

*13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.*

*14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.*