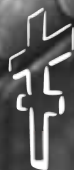




DADS BECOMING HEROES



**FAITHFUL
FATHERING**

dads becoming heroes

HERO

A MAN OF GREAT STRENGTH & COURAGE;
ANY MAN ADMIRER FOR HIS COURAGE,
NOBILITY, OR EXPLOITS, ESPECIALLY IN WAR

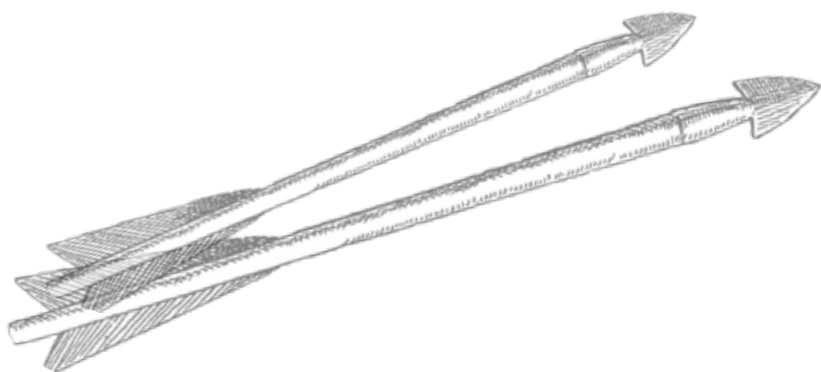


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INTRODUCTION DADS BECOMING HEROES

GOAL To encourage & equip dads to become heroes in their children's eyes, to be faithful fathers.

You may not need to read this if you received the official guidelines on how to be a father while your wife was pregnant with your first child; if you were given an owner's manual for kids at the hospital when your first child was born and read it; or if you have a 24/7 dad coach that is there to give godly marriage and child-rearing advice at every turn. Any one of the three qualifies you for an exemption from this study. You can step into the next room and proceed with the final exam everyone else will take at the end of the study.

We all do have access to the official guidelines, the owner's manual and the 24/7 coach—it is called the Bible, the word of God. The focus of this study is on how time in scripture, prayer, worship and study of the word of God can provide clarity in every dimension of our role as fathers. We will look at some very practical applications of scripture in the world today that provide quite a contrast between what the world has to say to fathers and what the Father has to say to fathers.

The Faithful Fathering Initiative has a one-liner under its logo "dads becoming heroes." I think it is safe to say that every dad wants to be the best dad he can be, to be a hero in his children's eyes. Webster's dictionary defines 'hero' as follows: "In mythology and legend a man of great strength and courage that is favored by the gods; any man admired for his courage, nobility or exploits, especially in time of war." What does "hero" bring to mind for you? Write down the names some of your boyhood heroes. How about Biblical heroes? What we know about all earthly heroes is that they will disappoint. The only hero that will never disappoint is Jesus the Christ. So as we dads work to become heroes in our children's eyes, the journey is all about pointing the way to the true Hero in all we do.

But we get BUSY! It is good in the midst of BUSY-ness to commit time in fellowship and dialogue with other men and ask the question, "Are you the dad God has called you to be?" Big question! Certainly we would each like to be able to answer with a resounding, "Yes!" My prayer is that when you face the Savior, He will say to you, "I blessed you with children, my most prized possession in all the earth and you raised them beautifully. Well done good and faithful servant." Then you will be able to say, "Yes!"

The more appropriate question may be – Are you intentional in your efforts to become the father the Lord calls you to be? That is a question that needs to be answered every morning when you get up, every night when you lie down and many times in between. We will cover a lot to encourage and equip you on this self-less improvement journey, but it does not stop at the end of the study. You will be challenged to continue on with small group accountability discussions in the weeks ahead that will enable you to continue the journey with all the strength and courage of a Joshua stepping into Moses' sandals. Let's go!



TIPS FOR THIS STUDY

5 PRIMARY SESSIONS

45 – 60 MINUTES

Nurturing, Consistency, Involvement,
Awareness and Commitment

+

4 SUPPLEMENTARY SESSIONS

R U Committed, Courageous, Responsible
and Accountable?

In general, after an opening prayer each of the primary sessions has a time for reading, discussing, wrapping up and committing to action. Even if everyone has read the session ahead of time, it is a good idea to read it again aloud. It is common to read a bit and discuss a bit. Then read and discuss a bit more as the session progresses. The point is that there will naturally be some dialogue before the actual small group discussion questions are presented. The dynamic should be unique for each group with sensitivity to how the Lord may be working among the men. The facilitator will need to ensure discussion stays on track and keep an eye on the time.

Each man is to commit to some action that will be initiated prior to the next session. In week five of the Heroes study each man will draft a Family Plan that will build on the respective action commitments made during the study.

The supplementary sessions follow the same flow – reading, discussing, praying and committing to action. Utilize the “Prayer guide” segment as the close for these sessions.



"SIMPLY LET
YOUR 'YES'
BE 'YES,' AND
YOUR 'NO,' 'NO';
ANYTHING
BEYOND THIS
COMES FROM
THE EVIL ONE."

Matt.5:37

NURTURANCE I

I NURTURANCE

Stating the obvious, relationship is all about relating to others. As dads, it is relating to our kids. That is the role of a father, relating to his kids in a way that encourages and equips them for life. The various dimensions of fathering covered in this study will encourage and equip you in that role, to be a faithful father. The foundation for this study is the gospel of John where Jesus spends a lot of time talking about His Dad.

Nurturing is not necessarily a manly term, but it is at the core of every relationship. In fact, it is through the course of nurturing that a mother establishes a unique bond with a daughter and as their physical similarities are validated, daughters begin early to develop relational skills. With sons, there is also a unique bond established through a mother's nurturing, but as physical dissimilarities are validated, boys begin to develop independent skills. As a result, boys lag girls relationally from an early age. That gap, an inhibited ability to relate well with others very often carries into adulthood, marriage and parenting styles.

Nurturing good relationships requires a very intentional effort for men. There are several dimensions of nurturing that we will cover here but I would like to initiate this segment with the significant role nurturing plays in the health and well-being of our children.

In his book, "Heart of a Father", Dr. Ken Canfield writes, "Nurturance often begins with a **touch**. A classic UCLA study found that people need eight to ten touches a day for good emotional health. Children need to be nurtured through word & touch." Appropriate affection and words of encouragement are key dimensions of nurturing. What is appropriate affection? Isaiah.40:11 says, "HE TENDS HIS FLOCK LIKE A SHEPHERD: HE GATHERS THE LAMBS IN HIS ARMS AND CARRIES THEM CLOSE TO HIS HEART; HE GENTLY LEADS THOSE THAT HAVE YOUNG."

Dads with daughters may be able to relate to the image Isaiah provides by reflecting on a time when your 'little girl' came running up saying, "Up-hug Daddy!" Is there any greater feeling in the world than loving arms and legs hanging onto you in an 'up-hug' from your daughter? Now, fast-forward 10 to 15 years – is an up-hug appropriate with your teenage daughter?

In one case, a dad modified his up-hug by swinging his teenage daughter's legs to the side and cradling her like a baby for a few minutes. It was an acceptable compromise with a daughter still needing up-hugs from her daddy. Dad established a new comfort factor as his 'little girl' matured into a beautiful young lady. This newly defined up-hug enabled the dad to validate his daughter as the young woman she was becoming.

In another case, a dad responded with stiffness when his daughter requested her usual up-hugs because of some awkwardness he felt as his daughter matured. His stiffness and subsequent decreased frequency of affectionate touches raised questions in her mind as to whether she was still pretty in her daddy's eyes. The tendency then is for a daughter to look elsewhere for validation of her beauty. The inability to adjust and provide the nurturing a daughter needs at every age opens the door for someone other than Dad to validate his daughter as the young woman she is becoming.

Every daughter needs to hear, "I love you and am proud of you. You are beautiful and worth fighting for", from her dad.

Sons need affection too! A hug, secret handshake or a pat on the back are ways to get the eight to ten touches a day in. The key is that sons and daughters benefit emotionally from appropriate affection through physical touch.

Words of encouragement are part of this nurturing piece as well. Dads tend to be the more critical parent, oftentimes over-critical. In one case, a dad whose son was heavily into drugs finally conceded to go to counseling with his son. The counselor challenged the dad to make ten positive comments to his son before making a critical statement across the next week, at which time they would meet again to discuss the results. Before dinner that very evening, the dad was busted on how negative and overly critical every comment directed at his son had become! The healing and new standard for their communication had begun.

Does that mean a dad should never be critical of an action or performance of his child? Absolutely not —Dad's role includes validating accomplishments and providing reality checks on occasion. All can be done in a positive way. Involvement of a coach or teacher to introduce constructive criticism is a great way for a dad to stay focused on being seen as the "encourager" versus the "always critical guy". Children need to hear, "I love you and I am proud of you" from their dad in what he says and does. Secondly, daughters want to know that they are "beautiful and worth fighting for," and sons that they "have what it takes to be a man." If they do not get that validation from Dad, the tendency is to seek it out in unhealthy ways.

Discipline is another dimension of nurturing, typically a dad's forte. There is a lot of Biblical support for discipline in family. In fact one of the greatest examples reflects the dire consequences when a dad was passive with his disciplinary actions. That dad was Eli. In 1 Samuel 2:12, Eli's sons are introduced as "wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord" and "they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting." (1Sam.2:12 & 22 respectively) Then when the Lord called Samuel in Chapter 3, He said, "SEE, I AM ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING IN

ISRAEL THAT WILL MAKE THE EARS OF EVERYONE WHO HEARS OF IT TINGLE. AT THAT TIME I WILL CARRY OUT AGAINST ELI EVERYTHING I SPOKE AGAINST HIS FAMILY —FROM BEGINNING TO END. FOR I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD JUDGE HIS FAMILY FOREVER BECAUSE OF THE SIN HE KNEW ABOUT; HIS SONS MADE THEMSELVES CONTEMPTIBLE, AND HE FAILED TO RESTRAIN THEM.” (1Sam.3:11–13) The consequences were indeed dire —Eli lost both sons in battle with the Philistines. The Israelites were defeated and the ark of God was captured. Upon receiving this news, “Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died.”(1Sam.4:18) The Lord, through Eli, provided dads a lesson for the ages on discipline in family. Discipline is a critical dimension in the nurturing role a dad has in the life of his children.

‘Tip for Dads’ —Discipline

1. Make the rules of the home and consequences for breaking the rules clear, no gray area;

Be sure to involve Mom and the kids in determining the rules and the consequences. Ensure that the consequences are proportionate to the crime.

2. Understand that discipline is necessary when the line is crossed;

Consequences should be consistent with what was pre-determined, proportionate to the crime and not a function of emotions at the point of disobedience.

3. Do not discipline out of anger. Discipline must be done out of love.

When anger slips through, admit it, drop to a knee and ask your child to forgive you. Discipline cannot continue once self-discipline has been compromised.

Following are a few other supportive passages on discipline:

“My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in.”
(Pr. 3:11–12)

“When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.”
(Num.30:2)

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”
(Jesus’ statement in Matt.5:37)

Protecting and providing for the family is another dimension to the nurturing role a father has. Providing is certainly a primary dimension— “IF ANYONE DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR HIS RELATIVES, AND ESPECIALLY FOR HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY, HE HAS DENIED THE FAITH AND IS WORSE THAN AN UNBELIEVER.” (1Tim.5:8) Those are pretty strong words from Paul emphasizing the dimension of provision. One of the devil’s schemes is to get a man focused in on financial provision to the point of it becoming the dimension that dominates a dad’s thinking. It is a primary dimension, but not the only one. Others include:

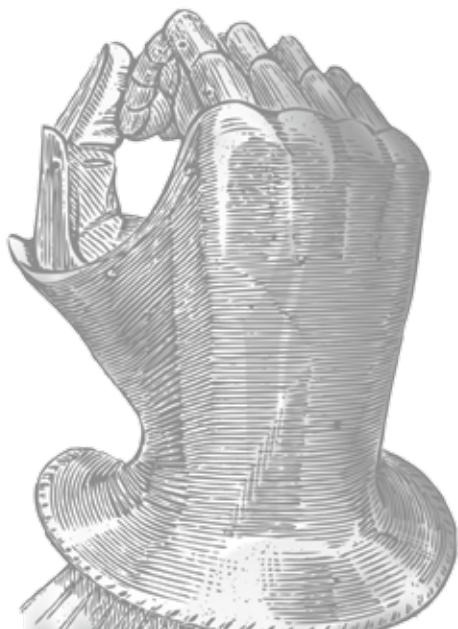
Bearer of divine blessing — Isaac over Jacob in Genesis 27, Jacob over his sons in Genesis 49 and the Father over His Son in Matthew 3:17

Head of the family — Joshua’s example —
“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”
Joshua 24:15

Authority to be respected — “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you”, in Exodus 20:12

Family priest — “... each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household” in Exodus 3:12 where Moses provided instructions for the Passover

Family teacher — “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.” in Deuteronomy 6:6–7. Dad is to preach the gospel 24/7 and when necessary, use words.



Listening is the last dimension of nurturing to be touched on here. More specifically, the topic is active listening, being physically, emotionally and spiritually present in every dialogue with your child as much as possible:

Physical involvement is consistent with a lot of sales training many men have been through. The principles are the same in the home as they are with customers—keep an open posture; be on their eye-level and pay attention to their tone of voice;

Emotional engagement in the discussion can be conveyed by a sincere desire to gain understanding of a situation or circumstance, by labeling emotional words that communicate anger or hurt and by validating the emotion expressed;

Spiritual leadership can be shown by prayerfully inviting God into the discussion before, during and after the dialogue. Also, referencing an applicable scripture passage that introduces absolute truth into the discussion can help keep opinions in perspective;

Schedule regular one-on-one time with each child to practice active listening. Dating your daughter and taking your son out for ice cream are great ways to work on these skills. Windshield time while driving to a practice or an event is another opportunity to work on listening.

Intentional effort is the key to active listening. This is a time to turn off technology.

The role of nurturing incorporates appropriate affection—touches and encouraging words, effective discipline, protecting and providing with all the associated dimensions and active listening. Nurturing is not just for moms.

NOTES & ACTION

Reflection/small group discussion:

Identify and discuss what you do well in the area of Nurturing and what may need work.

Do well

Needs work

State and commit to action you will initiate to grow in the dimension of Nurturance.



"I AM THE WAY,
AND THE
TRUTH, & THE
LIFE. NO ONE
COMES TO THE
FATHER EXCEPT
THROUGH ME.
(John 14:6)

CONSISTENCY II

II CONSISTENCY

Consistency is the second dimension in the role of a father we will address in this study. Often times a dad that is focused on providing for his family will kiss his kids when he leaves for work and again when he gets home from work, both times of which they may be asleep. Consistency in one dimension of the various roles a father has, in this case effective provision, is not the kind of consistency we are referring to here.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines consistency as follows: holding always to the same principles or practice. By that definition, strictly applied, it is accurate to say the above referenced dad is consistent. So we do not want to be too hard on him. Faithful fathers always encourage and equip other dads on this journey. We do not beat each other up. On the positive side, a dad's passion focused in on one dimension of fathering indicates there is potential if that passion can be redirected to address the other areas. In Acts, chapter 9, the Lord saw a passion in Saul that He could use, that passion just had to be redirected. So He knocked him off his high horse and educated him in the Way. Paul's letters and the role he played in the early Church, speak volumes of the impact passion in line with the Lord's will can have.

The Lord's will is that each dad be the father He calls him to be and that requires passion about all the dimensions of the role a father plays in family. Consistency provides the calibration that priorities are the right priorities, that we keep first things first. Regularity in our schedule is a big part of that. There is a story about the professor that filled a medium sized jar on his desk with relatively big rocks and asked his class if the jar was full. They responded with a resounding, "Yes!" The professor then put in another cup of smaller rocks in the same jar and asked his class again if the jar was full. This time they responded with "Yes," but didn't seem quite as confident in their answer. The professor

then put over a cup of sand in the same jar and asked his class if it was full now. The answer this time was, "We think so." The professor then took his cup of coffee and poured the entire cup into the jar saying, "If you always establish the right priorities in your life, you will always have time for a cup of coffee with a friend."

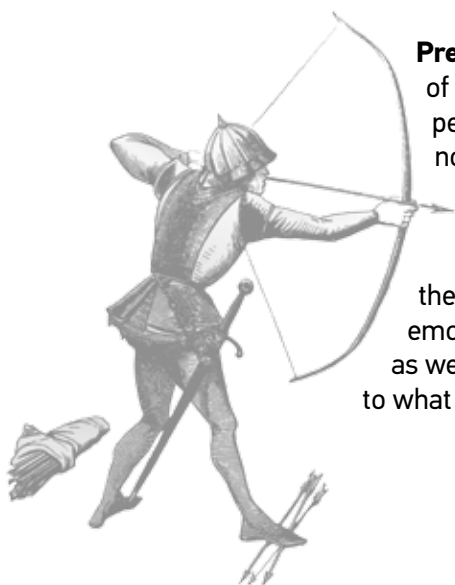
Working to keep **right priorities**, however you have been able to define them for your circumstances will be disrupted. This is real world stuff and stuff happens. An event will be missed due to something happening at work, a plane getting grounded or other situations that mandate your attention. When it happens, communication serves as the bridge between a child's expectations and the reality of the situation. The expectation is that you will always be there. The reality is that there are obligations and situations beyond your control. The communication is, "I am sorry. Will you forgive me?" Children are very forgiving, particularly if you offer to make it up by committing some time with them doing what they want to do. Know that this conversation is a lot easier if missing an event is the exception and not the rule. A little bit of due diligence will ensure that is the case. Suggestions include discussing the school calendar and other activities or events at the beginning of each semester, then record the key events on your calendar. Do the same for activities and events over the summer. A child loves to see his or her activities on Mom and Dad's calendars.

‘Tip for dads’ —Consistency

Consistency day by day in your child's life can be a challenge. In a Faithful Fathering essay contest, one young lady wrote,

"My dad has many jobs. He is my tutor when I'm doing my homework, my doctor when I am sick, my bodyguard when I need to feel safe, and my lawyer when I'm in trouble with Mom." Now there is a dad that stepped up to the challenge of being consistently present in his daughter's life!

In the gospel of John, chapter 10: 2-4, Jesus says, "THE MAN WHO ENTERS BY THE GATE IS THE SHEPHERD OF HIS SHEEP. ... AND THE SHEEP LISTEN TO HIS VOICE. HE CALLS HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME AND LEADS THEM OUT. WHEN HE HAS BROUGHT OUT ALL HIS OWN, HE GOES ON AHEAD OF THEM, AND HIS SHEEP FOLLOW HIM BECAUSE THEY KNOW HIS VOICE." As you work at being consistent in your daily schedule, in your moods, in your ethics and in keeping your promises, your children will always know your voice, and you will **become a hero** in their eyes.



Predictability is another aspect of consistency from a child's perspective. Specifically, children not only want to know when dad will get home each night, they also want to know what to expect when he walks through the door. This has to do with your emotions –good mood or bad mood, as well as your actions and reactions to what went on in their day.

A good example of this comes from a story about a young mechanic who had such a crazy day that he was not able to get around to fixing his own car before the shop closed for the night. His boss gladly gave him a ride home. When the Boss dropped his mechanic off, he saw that the young man did not go straight up to the front door though he knew they were both late for dinner. Instead, he walked to a tree in the middle of the yard and then went up to his front door. He thought this a bit odd so when he picked up his mechanic the next morning he asked him about the strange detour. The young man said, "That's my 'trouble tree'. Every evening I stop by and put my troubles from the day on that tree so that when I walk in the door of the house, I am in a good mood for my wife and kids. Last evening it took a couple extra minutes with my car broke down and all."

The young mechanic's kids knew what to expect when Dad came through the front door. That is our responsibility from an emotional standpoint, to not burden the family with stresses from the day immediately upon arriving home. Be intentional in your efforts to wind down if it's been a stressful day before you walk in the door to your home.

Finally, Dad needs to be unchanging but not rigid. Pick the battles that need to be faced but do not make everything a battle. Be unchanging in the principles and guidelines for the home, but not rigid in their implementation. God showed flexibility when talking with Noah, Abraham and Moses — He was unchanging as God but he was not rigid with His plans for implementation. That is a pretty good example to emulate! Encouragement here includes listening well and leaning on the "secret weapon" for clarity — Mom.

Another part of being **unchanging** has to do with self-discipline and discipline in family. A popular saying is that 'kids are much more likely to catch what you do than to

do what you say.' Too often dads try to wear different hats across the week - putting on a tough guy hat at work, a holy hat at church and a ball cap at home. The circumstances in the different arenas certainly mandate different actions. The challenge is to be unchanging in your character —being the same man at work as you are at church as you are at home. When a man is on the inside as he lives on the outside, he is in concert with his value system.

As you are intentional in your efforts to manage the regularity of your schedule and communication, the predictability of your emotions and actions, and the unchanging nature of your character, **consistency** in the life of your children will result. They will know your voice and you will **become a hero** in their eyes.

NOTES & ACTION

Reflection/small group discussion:

Identify and discuss what you do well in the area of Consistency and what may need work.

Do well

Needs work

State and commit to action you will initiate to grow in the dimension of Consistency.



"TRAIN A CHILD
IN THE WAY HE
SHOULD GO,
AND WHEN HE
IS OLD HE WILL
NOT TURN
FROM IT".
Proverbs 22:6

INVOLVEMENT III

III INVOLVEMENT

Involvement is the third dimension in the role of a father to be addressed in this study. Being there, being present and accounted for is the key to this dimension. A dad's physical presence in the home, at school and church activities and extra-curricular events is huge in the eyes of children. When dad is not there, not physically present in a child's life, kids are twice as likely as their peers with dads present to drop out of high school, young ladies are three times as likely to become teen mothers, boys are ten times as likely to have behavioral problems, and all are four times as likely to live below the poverty line.

A dad being present and accounted for in his children's lives is best realized by participation in their various interests. The wording of "their interests" is intentional. Effective involvement gives dads the opportunity to get in tune with their interests. One dad was sure his kids' interests would include playing tennis. After all, he had played tennis through college and had played a few professional tournaments. He felt sure he could get his kids to that level and beyond. So at ages two and four the dad had his son and daughter respectively out on the tennis court swinging a racket and even doing some running drills. They both worked hard trying to please their dad but after a few years it was obvious that neither had the passion for the game that their dad had. He may have burned them out on the game due to his intensity around raising the next Boris Becker and Steffi Graf. The good news is that he eventually listened to their mother's encouragement for him to back off a bit. The lesson to be learned is that dads do not get to pick what their children's unique gifts and interests might be. The challenge is to stay involved, listen and watch, then support and encourage them on the journey to take responsibility for the gifts they have been given.

One important area for dads to stay involved is certainly around the children's education. Here are three tips to help you get more involved:

1. Put key activities on your schedule and make it a priority to attend them through the school year;
2. Meet with and get to know your child's teachers and coaches early in the year, and make sure they know you and have a clear line of communication to you; and,
3. Be engaged in your child's studies by helping with homework and dropping a note of encouragement in the textbook of their hardest subject.

Romans 12:2 admonishes to "NOT CONFORM ANY LONGER TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST AND APPROVE WHAT GOD'S WILL IS – HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND PERFECT WILL." The challenge is on to renew your mind and renew your involvement in your child's education. As you make the effort to be a more involved dad you will **become a hero** in your child's eyes.

Being engaged emotionally is part of being there in family. Physical presence without emotional engagement is just showing up. Examples include dads talking business with other dads during a Little League baseball game, taking phone calls during a soccer game or responding to emails during a band performance. This is what I often refer to as busy-ness that technology tends to enable. Showing up is definitely better than not showing up. But the encouragement is if you are there, BE there emotionally. Through engagement in school activities, youth group

or other extra-curricular interests, dads have a great opportunity to learn a lot about their children's passions and interests. In addition through emotional engagement, dads meet and get to know the children's friends and other parents. That is a good thing.

Spiritual leadership is the third dimension of involvement. In "Revolutionary Parenting", author George Barna cites the value of focusing on growing spiritually, together and delving into faith matters as a family unit. And while there are ample instances of family members engaging in spiritual activities apart from other family members — Sunday school and other Christian events— his research documents that the glue that holds it all together consists of two themes:

1. Family conversations that bring biblical views into their shared lives, and
2. Efforts to regularly engage in faith activities (Bible study, worship, prayer) that model the integration of faith into their lives.

Barna notes that "this practice is certainly an aberration, even among families in which one or both parents are born-again Christians. Nationwide, less than one out of every ten born-again families read the Bible together during a typical week or pray together during a typical week, excluding mealtimes. Discussing faith principles as a normal part of decision making is highly unusual, even in 'Christian' America."

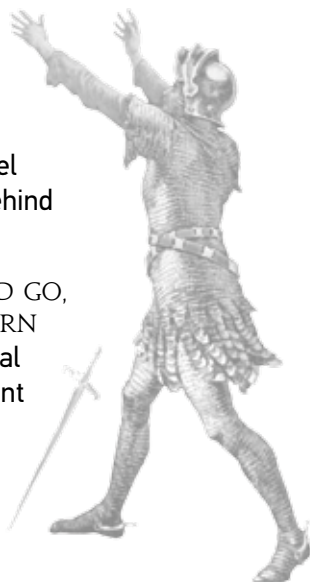
The bar is high for faithful fathers to lead spiritually by example. Setting right priorities is foundational to the effort—a growing personal relationship with Jesus the Christ, learning to live that relationship in marriage and reflecting

that relationship in family. Paul said, "A DEACON MUST BE THE HUSBAND OF BUT ONE WIFE AND MUST MANAGE HIS CHILDREN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD WELL." 1Timothy 3:12. Paul knew that a church leader must first be able to lead his family.

Family devotion time is an aberration as noted above by Barna. Yet Moses, in quoting what the Lord God had told him on the mountain made it very clear to the Israelites that, "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." Deuteronomy 6:6-7. When did we get off track? It may have started with the popular notion of balance —balancing time at work and play and family.

Spiritual leadership in family has nothing to do with balance. It has all to do with setting right priorities that start with Jesus the Christ. Balance suggests that there are two equals that maintain the equilibrium. Nothing is equal to a personal relationship with Christ. And because the marriage relationship is the closest thing to our relationship with Christ in this world, marriage and family are the next level of priority for life. Everything else falls in behind those priorities.

"TRAIN A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO, AND WHEN HE IS OLD HE WILL NOT TURN FROM IT;" Proverbs 22:6. Through intentional physical, emotional and spiritual involvement with our children today we are preparing tomorrow's leaders.



NOTES & ACTION

[illegible]

Reflection/small group discussion

Identify and discuss what you do well in the area of Involvement and what may need work.

Do well

Needs work

State and commit to action you will initiate to grow in the dimension of Involvement.



"I AM THE
GOOD SHEP-
HERD; I KNOW
MY SHEEP & MY
SHEEP KNOW
ME —JUST AS
THE FATHER
KNOWS ME & I
KNOW MY
FATHER....".

John 10:14-15

AWARENESS

IV

IV AWARENESS

A good level of involvement with our kids typically helps keep the awareness level a dad has of his children's world high as well. Yet, there is no room for assumptions as a dad and we will not assume anything through the course of this study either. So awareness is the fourth dimension of the role a father has in family.

One of the biggest challenges dads face is helping children identify the unique gifts that the Lord has blessed them with. As referenced earlier with the tennis playing dad, dads do not get to pick what their kids' gifts and interests might be. In his book titled 'Open', Andre Agassi details the workouts his dad put him through, pushing hard from a very young age to make him a champion. Today, even with an exceptional career as a professional tennis player behind him, being only the second player ever to achieve a career grand slam (winning all four of the major tournaments – Australian, French, Wimbledon and US Open), he has committed to not put his kids through what his dad put him through.

Two suggestions on this front include allowing your children to be involved in as much as they can be from a young age and to evaluate their progress through a lens calibrated with realistic expectations. Swimming and soccer seem to be mainstays on the sports front for young kids and rightfully so. It is important for a child to learn to swim and swimming is certainly great exercise. Soccer can help develop a cardiovascular capacity that will serve a child well late into life. So there is an application for pushing a child to get involved in an activity for at least a season or two for the physical benefit and to see if there is a spark of interest in continuing to grow in that area. Football, hockey, basketball and baseball are other sports that typically have youth leagues that encourage kids to grow in a well structured team environment. A challenge

many families face today is helping their children navigate through the ever-increasing pressure to perform at a high level and commit to a specific sport year round. Awareness of a child's capabilities and interests is important here. A dad happy to see his son enjoying and excelling in soccer at a young age was inclined to forego the baseball experience until the boy's soccer coach discouraged a year-round commitment to soccer. While his son continued to enjoy soccer and basketball into high school, the young man's passion was to play baseball at the next level, college and beyond.

Awareness is knocking off blinders that may be self-imposed, seeking counsel from the child, the child's mother, coaches, teachers and others, and listening well to all the inputs available. Remember to be engaged in nurturing all of your child's gifts. Physical gifts are typically Dad's forte—sports and athletics. But children do not, nor should Dad, live on sports alone. Make the effort to be in tune with their mental and spiritual gifts as well.

'Tip for dads' - Awareness

Are you aware of your child's world? When someone says, "Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado," realization hits as to what can happen when parents get caught up in their own world and just run out of the time and energy needed to be more aware of their children's world. Here are a few tips to focus on:

1. Put it on your schedule to spend time on your children's turf by volunteering at a church youth activity, participating in a work project, setting up a parent/teacher conference before you get their grades, or coaching a team;

2. Eat dinner together as a family. The Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse says the child that eats dinner with family once a week is twice as likely to use alcohol and drugs than the child that eats dinner with family five times a week; and
3. I believe in establishing an open door policy in the home. That means:
 - a. No phones behind closed doors;
 - b. No televisions behind closed doors; and certainly
 - c. No computers behind closed doors.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 10:14–15, Jesus says, “I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD; I KNOW MY SHEEP AND MY SHEEP KNOW ME – JUST AS THE FATHER KNOWS ME AND I KNOW THE FATHER ...” Get to know your children’s world and let them get to know yours, and you will **become a hero** in their eyes.

What do dads know? Typically dads know who won the last World Series or Super Bowl. They may also know what the stock market closed at yesterday or maybe the specifics around another particular area of interest. What do dads need to know? The following:

1. Who is your child’s all time hero?

2. What is your child’s most prized possession?

3. Who is your child’s closest friend?

4. What is your child’s greatest fear?

5. What is your child's greatest achievement this year?

6. What is your child's favorite food?

7. What is your child's favorite TV show?

8. What should you discuss with your child in the next six months?

Answer these on your own and then interview your child to see how you did. I recommend scheduling time for an ice cream with your son or a dinner date with your daughter. Then allow them to interview you and enjoy the resultant dialogue.

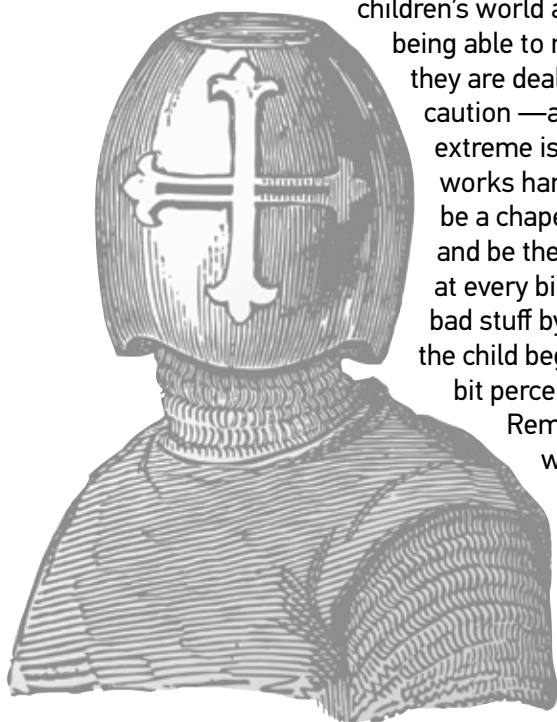
In the movie "Radio", a coach takes an interest in, and wraps his arms around, a handicapped young man. In the small town no one, not even his daughter really understood why he was doing what he was doing. At a key juncture in the movie he shares the reason with his daughter. She gained a new level of understanding of her dad and they connected to a new level of relationship. Use this interview time to share something, age appropriately, that your son or daughter may not know about you.

Having realistic expectations are an important part of awareness as your child matures. A dad can not write off his son as a baseball player if a ball goes through his legs in Little League, or his daughter as a performer if she forgets a line in her 4th grade production. On the other hand, a dad can't claim to know that his son or daughter has 'what it takes' to get to the professional ranks of their respective passions. Those are extremes, but how is a dad to establish

realistic expectations at various stages of maturity? One secret weapon I reference often and that dads have access to, is Mom. Moms typically read more on child development in their nine months of pregnancy than men read in their whole lives. Thus they are very aware of the various stages of development and what a child's capability should be, particularly in the early years. In the middle and high school years, teachers and coaches, youth directors and pastors can also provide valuable insight. A good cross-section of inputs can help dads steer clear of a popular tendency to be over critical. By navigating well through expectations with lots of encouragement and support, parents will help guide their children in understanding their unique gifts, taking responsibility for those gifts and glorifying the Father in using their gifts. If this is done well, children are more likely to realize their goals, feel comfortable with who they are and be confident in Whose they are.

A dad's level of involvement in and awareness of his children's world are foundational to being able to relate well with what they are dealing with. A word of caution —avoid extremes. One extreme is the 'super dad' that works hard to coach everything, be a chaperone for all trips and be the host and entertainer at every birthday party —not bad stuff by any means unless the child begins to push back a bit perceiving it as intrusive.

Remember that what was cool and certainly appropriate in the early years, even through elementary school, all of a



sudden is not cool in middle school. The other extreme is being a checked-out dad who defines his role simply as “financial provider and disciplinarian of last resort.” Those are things he knows he can do. But the goal is not to “do fathering.” The goal is to be the father the next generation needs, to raise “godly offspring” as stated in Malachi 2:15. So what is the right level of involvement in and awareness of your children’s world? The answer is unique for every child and family situation, but again I encourage utilization of the secret weapon: Mom. A small group of dads that meet regularly can also provide great input. And of course, asking your son or daughter directly is a good idea, with the caveat that they may not want to hurt your feelings. Be sure to validate their answer with the secret weapon. Keep listening and stay engaged. Enjoy the journey by embracing the hugs and accepting the push backs that are all just part of being a dad.

“HAS NOT THE LORD MADE THEM (HUSBAND AND WIFE) ONE? IN FLESH AND SPIRIT THEY ARE HIS. AND WHY ONE? BECAUSE HE WAS SEEKING GODLY OFFSPRING.” **Malachi 2:15a**

NOTES & ACTION

[illegible]

Reflection/small group discussion:

Identify and discuss what you do well in the area of Awareness and what may need work.

Do well

Needs works

What is your 'comfort factor' with the interview questions?

Where is renewed focus needed?

State and commit to action you will initiate to grow in the dimension of Awareness.



"COMMIT YOUR
WORK TO THE
LORD, AND
YOUR PLANS
WILL BE
ESTABLISHED."
Proverbs 16:3

COMMITMENT

V

V COMMITMENT

Commitment is the single biggest determinant of a dad's effectiveness as a father. We have covered the significance of being nurturing, consistent, involved and aware. Now the rubber meets the road with your willingness to commit to taking a step forward in your walk as a father. As you commit to grow in these respective roles, your relationships in family will flourish.

The first step in understanding the way to move forward with the level of commitment needed is to spell LOVE the way children spell LOVE, T-I-M-E, as in your time. The question that routinely comes up is whether quality time or quantity time is more important. There tends to be a lot of emphasis given to spending quality time with our children. The emphasis is great. The challenge is to remember who controls the quality. To gain perspective here, reflect on the time you spend in prayer with the Father. Do you control the quality of that time in communion with the Father or does He? The answer is that you do. The Father is always available, providing you with quantity time and hoping that you will choose to commune with Him. So the answer to the question, "Do I need to focus on quality time or quantity time?" is, "Yes!" Now certainly there are times you can focus on that have a greater probability for quality to result. Examples include talking to a younger child before bedtime. This works well because kids will do anything to stay up a bit longer. For a teenage boy, right before dinner is a quality time window. Don't feed him until he tells you about his day. But know that nothing substitutes for being available and approachable with as much quantity time as practically possible. Validation of this was provided by a dad that was heavily involved with his son's passion for baseball. They would spend hours of what he called windshield time together every week going to practices,

games and weekend tournaments. Sometimes there was silence and other times there was great conversation. The lesson is that providing significant chunks of quantity time result with a blessing of quality time that may not have happened otherwise.

The investment of T I M E with our children early and often is similar to the investment of money. If a young couple can agree early in the marriage to practice financial discipline with their income giving 10% to their church, putting 10% to savings, paying the respective taxes and living on the rest, there will be a strong likelihood that financial challenges down the road will be minimal. Likewise, if dads will invest heavily in their children's emotional bank accounts early on, the withdrawals during the teenage years will not bankrupt the relationship. One dad confided that he found the teenage years the most satisfying. Certainly there were challenges: emotions around failed relationships, bad test grades, wrong group of kids, maturing physically, etc. But watching his kids pick themselves up after a failure and seeing them learn from bad decisions, provided a powerful return on his investment of time earlier. Being a faithful father – prioritizing physical presence, being engaged emotionally and leading spiritually by example at every opportunity has dividends in this world and beyond.

Faithful fathers commit to growing everyday. Practicing the spiritual disciplines of daily time in prayer, scripture, worship and study can guide a man in the ways of the Father. Establishing a small group of battle buddies for fellowship and accountability also serves a dad well on the journey of becoming the father he is called to be.

To quantify where you are and where you would like to go with your level of commitment, complete the “Commitment Check-up” on page 49.

NOTES & ACTION

[illegible]



COMMITMENT CHECK-UP

Rate 1–5: 1 being poor, 5 being very good and total

1. Spending a few minutes of additional time with each child everyday; _____
2. Eating the evening meal together as a family five times a week; _____
3. Putting time in my schedule to attend my children's activities; _____
4. Giving time to my children when they need me; _____
5. Sacrificing some of my activities to spend time with my children; _____
6. Scheduling time to spend with my children. _____

(total: 26+ very good; 20–25 good; 15–19 fair; 6–14 poor)

Reflection/small group discussion

Review your ‘Commitment check-up’ result.

Where is there need for renewed focus?

Write down and discuss a specific area of strength you have identified as key to your fathering role.

Write down and discuss a specific area of weakness you have identified as an inhibitor to your fathering role.

Initiate your personal **FAMILY PLAN** on page 52 to become a faithful father, and boldly step forward as the father the next generation needs.

FAMILY PLAN

FAMILY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In reflection, I realize...

My strengths are:

My weaknesses are:

I feel I am particularly vulnerable in the area of:

I need help with:

I commit to:

FAMILY PLAN

DRAFT: BECOMING A FAITHFUL FATHER

HERITAGE: I will claim the heritage of my Heavenly Father through Jesus the Christ. I commit to grow in relationship with Him by spending time daily in prayer and scripture.

NURTURING & CONSISTENCY: I will work on these dimensions of my role in family by:

(Ex.- showing appropriate affection; effective discipline; using words of encouragement; establishing consistency in my schedule & moods, etc..)

INVOLVEMENT & AWARENESS: I will work on these dimensions by:

(Ex.- being more selfless with my time; dating my wife regularly; spending one-on-one time w/kids; chaperone an event; coaching or spending time on kids' turf; asking open-ended questions and listening; etc..)

COMMITMENT: I will become a hero in my children's eyes by:

(Ex.- being a faithful father; leading a family devotion time; praying for my family daily; etc..)

I will establish accountability through weekly fellowship and study with a group of battle buddies initially using the devotions in the back of this booklet.



FAMILY PLAN BECOMING A FAITHFUL FATHER



HERITAGE: I will claim the heritage of my Heavenly Father through Jesus the Christ. I commit to grow in relationship with Him by spending time daily in prayer and scripture.

NURTURING & CONSISTENCY: I will work on these dimensions of my role in family by:

INVOLVEMENT & AWARENESS: I will work on these dimensions by:

COMMITMENT: I will become a hero in my children's eyes by:

I will establish accountability through weekly fellowship and study with a group of battle buddies initially using the devotions in the back of this booklet.

Signature: _____

Witnesses: _____

COMMIT TO PRAY DAILY

Prayer guide

Praise be to You Lord for my child...

Lord, I ask that You protect and guide my child...
specific activities, etc...

Lord, I ask that Your strength be in and with my child...
specific gifts, events, etc...

As she matures, surround her with Christian friends...
in school, sports, other environments, etc...

And help her be a Christian friend to others...

In Your time Lord, bring a young man into her life that is well grounded in his Christian faith, that is growing in his walk with You, that will love and care for her as You love and care for Your church. Teach her to love and respect him as Your church loves and respects You. Bless them with a happy and healthful marriage and family with children that come to know You just as they have,

And that their children, and their children will grow in Your word and in Your love, thanks to the seeds planted and nurtured this day. Amen.

Personalize prayer for each child:

REVIEW WHAT SCRIPTURE HAS TO SAY

I. Be Nurturing

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." - John 15:1-2

II. Be Consistent

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. ... The Word became flesh... "- John 1:1-3,14

III. Be Involved

"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." - John 5:19

IV. Be Aware

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep." - John 10:14-15

V . Be Committed

"Father, the time has come. ..." - John 17:1-5

HERO

A MAN OF GREAT STRENGTH AND COURAGE; ANY MAN ADMIRER FOR HIS COURAGE, NOBILITY, OR EXPLOITS, ESPECIALLY IN WAR.

NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT A MAN DOES IN HIS OWN STRENGTH;

ALL TO DO WITH WHAT A MAN IS BECOMING IN THE LORD'S STRENGTH;

A FAITHFUL FATHER PRIORITIZES HIS PHYSICAL PRESENCE, IS ENGAGED EMOTIONALLY, AND LEADS SPIRITUALLY BY EXAMPLE.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed the Dads Becoming Heroes study!
Embrace this blessing:

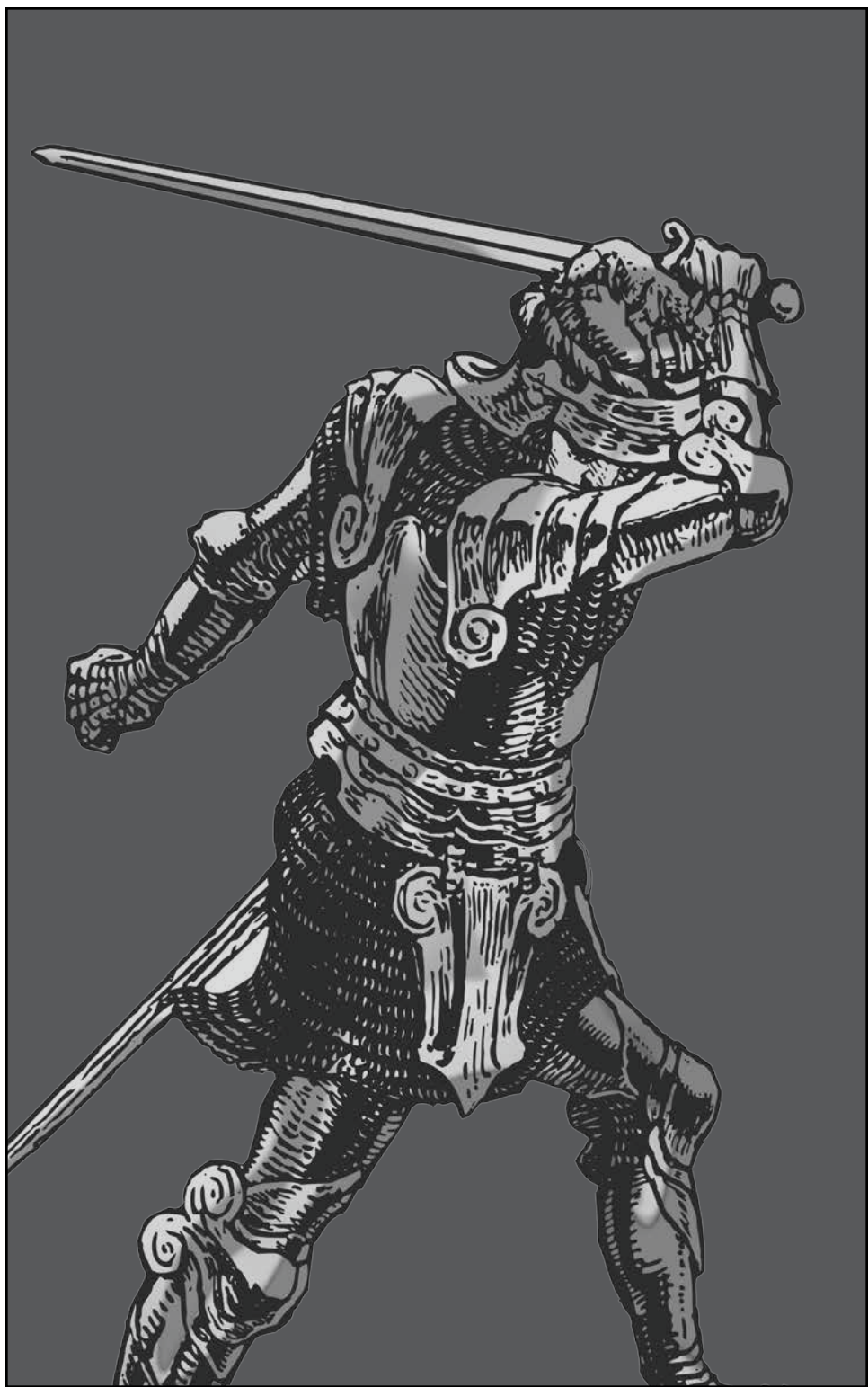
"THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;
THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU AND BE
GRACIOUS TO YOU;
THE LORD TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU AND GIVE
YOU PEACE." (NUMBERS 6:24-26)

Know that "peace" is the translation of the Hebrew "shalom", which in its most expressive fullness does not mean the absence of war, but a positive state of rightness & wellbeing in the face of war. Wars will continue and battles will ensue. Stand firm in —who you are and Whose you are with eyes focused on Jesus, the author and founder of our faith.

Please know that prayers are with you on your journey to become the dad God calls you to be – to be a faithful father, a dad that prioritizes his physical presence, is engaged emotionally and leads spiritually by example.

We praise the Lord for the intentionality shown to grow in your walk as a father and encourage you to continue on utilizing the "R U the dad ..." series on the following pages.

Your feedback, thoughts and comments on the study would be a blessing. Please contact FAITHFUL FATHERING through www.faithfulfathering.org or email directly to admin@faithfulfathering.org.



R U THE DAD GOD CALLS U 2 B?

4-Week Small Group Study

R U THE DAD GOD CALLS U 2 B?

4-Week Small Group Study

R U the dad ...??? It is a big question! Tough question! It probably will not be answered until you meet the Savior face to face.

The more pertinent question today is:

R U INTENTIONAL IN EFFORTS TO BECOME THE DAD GOD CALLS U 2 B?

Still a big question and a tough question!

It requires a serious look inside and being REAL in your response.

Following are four **R U ... ???** devotions to help you take that serious look inside and be REAL with at least one other dad. FAITHFUL FATHERING's hope is that you will be intentional in the effort to continue the small group synergy that has been initiated through the **Dads Becoming Heroes** study.

Should you decide to accept the assignment to press on with a group of dads and keep us posted on insights gained through the process, you will be well on your way to becoming a faithful father, the dad God calls **U 2 B**.

WEEK 1 - **R U... COMMITTED?**

Prayerfully reflect on a time in high school when you committed to give your all for something. Was it for late summer two-a-day practices to secure a spot on the football team? Was it a new weight program to get stronger for the season? Or did you commit to attaining a certain grade point average for the new school year? What lessons were learned about committing to something or someone?

Initiate a dialogue around one or two of the questions.

Notes:

In the last paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, the founding fathers of these United States of America committed their “support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” Their signatures on the document boldly solidified the willingness to commit their lives, fortunes and honor for the sake of this new nation.

What perspective is introduced by our founding fathers?

Discuss a commitment you have made and stood by in the face of adversity.

Notes:

Commit per Webster’s New World Dictionary – to give in charge or trust; deliver for safekeeping; entrust; to bind as by a promise; pledge; engage; to make known the opinions or views of. What does ‘commit’ bring to mind for you?

Rate the following on your dad’s willingness to commit and follow through, on a scale of 1–10: with 1 being **NOT REALLY** and 10 being **ABSOLUTELY**, when it came to:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| his job/career and providing for the family; | _____ |
| promises made to you; | _____ |
| being there for you; | _____ |
| the marriage relationship; and | _____ |
| a growing relationship with Jesus the Christ. | _____ |

Rate the above again for you today. Discuss the comparisons.

The Word on commit is: “COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD; TRUST IN HIM AND HE WILL DO THIS: HE WILL MAKE YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS SHINE LIKE THE DAWN, THE JUSTICE OF YOUR CAUSE LIKE THE NOONDAY SUN.”
—Psalm 37:5–6

Reflecting on scripture: Discuss

The absolute Truth equips man to navigate through the tendency to follow the way that makes the most money, pleases the most people or is the most politically correct. **Discuss how the Truth has helped navigate you through a situation.**

A man’s way, the sum total of his thoughts, actions and intentions, is to glorify the Father.

By committing your way to the Lord, you will point your children to the Father and become the dad God calls you to be. **What does it mean to “glorify the Father”?**

Notes:

Prayer guide: Lord, I know that as commitment goes, trust goes. I confess that I fall short in my efforts to commit my way to You. A thought will percolate – “There is not enough return for the investment needed,” or “Absolute truth is not applicable in the real world” and I return to trusting me. Strengthen me Lord to commit every thought, action and intention to You through increased time with You in prayer, scripture and fasting. Keep my way in line with Your way and help me trust You in the now. By Your grace, what I commit to will be contagious in my home. Guide me as a faithful father to become the dad You call me to be. Amen.

This week I am encouraged to:

A FAITHFUL FATHER commits to grow in relationship with the Lord through increased time in prayer, scripture and fasting.

WEEK 2 - **R U... COURAGEOUS?**

Prayerfully reflect on a time growing up when you were told, ‘That took courage!’ Were you standing up for a friend that couldn’t stand up for himself? Did you take a stand for what was right against pressure from your peers? How did your parents influence your willingness to courageously take a stand?

Initiate a dialogue around one or two of the questions.

Notes:

A 22 year old young lady is taking a stand for a Christian woman named Asia Bibi on ‘death row’ ... in Pakistan ... after two of three people taking the same stand against misuse of a blasphemy law have been murdered. One of those two people was her dad, Salmaan Taseer, governor of the Pakistani province Punjab. A courageous father’s legacy of doing what is right is a courageous daughter seeking to wake up a quiet and intimidated majority of Pakistanis. Wow!

What are your thoughts on this young lady’s courage?

Discuss courage you have shown in the workplace or community.

Notes:

Courage per Webster's New World Dictionary — the attitude of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult, or painful, instead of withdrawing from it; quality of being fearless or brave; valor; mind; purpose; spirit; to do what one thinks is right. What does 'courage' bring to mind for you? Are you standing up for what you think is right?

Rate the following for your dad or father-figure on a scale of 1-10: with 1 being **LOW** and 10 being **HIGH** on his practice of leading courageously. Did he:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| Serve in the United States military; | _____ |
| Step up as a Scout leader, youth leader or coach; | _____ |
| Conduct a family devotion time in the home; | _____ |
| Get involved in local, state or national politics; and | _____ |
| Convey a Biblical worldview in his thoughts and actions? | _____ |

Rate the above again for you today. Discuss the comparisons.

The Word on courageous is: "BE STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS. BE CAREFUL TO OBEY ALL THE LAW MY SERVANT MOSES GAVE YOU; DO NOT TURN FROM IT TO THE RIGHT OR TO THE LEFT, THAT YOU MAY BE SUCCESSFUL WHEREVER YOU GO." – Joshua 1:7

Reflecting on scripture:

Walking in Moses' shadow, Joshua needed all his physical, emotional and spiritual strength to muster the courage to obey the Law himself and lead in the Law as the Israelites took possession of the land beyond the Jordan.

How can you be more of a Joshua in your home?

Notes:

Prayer guide: Lord, You know that just as in Joshua’s day, many gods are at work trying to turn my eyes from You. Grant me the physical, emotional and spiritual strength to courageously stand in Your truth, to do what is right. Help me be the man, husband and father that will lead the way for my family, church and community to be an influence in this world with a legacy of courage grounded in You. I also pray for Shehrbano Taseer and Asia Bibi – guide and protect them. Amen.

This week I am encouraged to:

A FAITHFUL FATHER is strong and very courageous in obeying the word of God, not turning to the right or to the left as he leads his family.

WEEK 3 - R U ... RESPONSIBLE?

Prayerfully reflect on a time growing up when you were given some responsibility maybe it was in the form of doing chores, keeping the yard mowed or getting a job to help provide some income for the family. Did you step up as a responsible young man?

Initiate a dialogue on what the reflection stirs up.

Notes:

There seem to be more examples of irresponsibility in the world today than ones of taking responsibility. Our financial situation as a nation comes to mind. A recent non-partisan research project, 'USA Inc.,' attempted to review the country's finances assuming they were analyzed and accounted for like those of a business. If Congress had submitted fiscal year 2010 financial reports of our country in a fashion similar to a corporation, the U.S. would show a negative net worth of \$44 trillion, an operating loss of \$817 billion, and \$1.3 trillion of negative cash flow. We the people need to be more responsible!

What are your thoughts on fiscal responsibility as an individual?

What responsibilities do you accept as a man, husband & father?

Notes:

Responsible per Webster's New World Dictionary – expected or obliged to account for something, or to someone; able to distinguish between right and wrong and to think and act rationally; readily assuming obligations, duties, etc... What does 'responsible' bring to mind for you? Are you readily assuming obligations, duties today?

Rate the following for your dad or father-figure on a scale of 1–10: with 1 being **LOW** and 10 being **HIGH** on the level of which he embraced responsibilities in the area of:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| Financial provision for the family; | _____ |
| Discipline – self and in family; | _____ |
| Education in school and in the Way; | _____ |
| Being a good role model; and, | _____ |
| Spiritual leadership in the home, church and community. | _____ |

Rate the above again for you today. Discuss the comparisons.

The Word on responsible is: "THE LORD GOD TOOK THE MAN AND PUT HIM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN TO WORK IT AND TAKE CARE OF IT. AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN, 'YOU ARE FREE TO EAT FROM ANY TREE IN THE GARDEN; BUT YOU MUST NOT EAT FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL, FOR WHEN YOU EAT OF IT YOU WILL SURELY DIE.'" – Genesis 2:15–17

Reflecting on scripture:

Adam was given a work to do, a will to obey, and a woman to love in the Garden of Eden. Why didn't he stand in the gap for his wife as soon as that snake started talking?
--

Read Gen.3:6 to see how passively Adam responded to the responsibilities given him.

Any areas in your life as a man, husband or father in which you are passive?

What action do you need to initiate?

Notes:

Prayer guide: Lord, the first Adam failed to step up to the responsibility You gave him. Thank You for the second Adam, Jesus the Christ (1Cor.15:45), Who did step up to the work of taking on the sins of the world; Who did step up with a will to obey all the way to the cross; and, Who did step up to love the woman You gave Him, the Church. I understand what I inherited from the first Adam. Help me step up daily as a responsible man, husband and father in the strength of the second Adam, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

This week I am encouraged to:

A FAITHFUL FATHER rejects passivity and accepts responsibility to do the work in front of him, to walk in obedience to the Way and love the woman he has been given.

WEEK 4 - R U... ACCOUNTABLE?

Prayerfully reflect on a time in life when it became clear that you were being held accountable for your actions. Did you have to repair or replace something you damaged; or, talk to the boss the first time you were late to work? Do you remember embracing accountability, or was there a tendency to put the blame elsewhere?

Initiate a dialogue on what the reflection stirs up.

Notes:

Times like these: At the RESPONSE we witnessed 35,000 plus folks gathering at Reliant Stadium in Houston, Texas, to pray and fast for our nation, showing accountability for the status quo. Several prominent leaders were among those praying including governors from Texas and Kansas. Will the rest of the Church step up to being present and accounted for as Christians beyond the church walls? What about in your life – Do you reflect your Christian faith in all you do? Do you have a friend who holds you accountable to that? What about in your home – Are you leading spiritually by example?

What are your thoughts on accountability as a Christian in the world? What role does accountability play in your walk as a Christian?

Notes:

Accountable per Webster's New World Dictionary —to give satisfactory reasons or an explanation; to make satisfactory amends. What does "accountable" bring to mind for you? Who are you accountable to today?

Rate the following for your dad or father-figure on a scale of 1–10: with 1 being **LOW** and 10 being **HIGH** on the intentional effort made to be accountable to:

Himself;	_____
The company or individual he worked for;	_____
A group of friends;	_____
His wife and family; and,	_____
The Body of Christ, the Church.	_____

Rate the above again for you today. Discuss the comparisons.

The Word on accountability is: "IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU, GO AND SHOW HIM HIS FAULT, JUST BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU. IF HE LISTENS TO YOU, YOU HAVE WON YOUR BROTHER OVER. BUT IF HE WILL NOT LISTEN, TAKE ONE OR TWO OTHERS ALONG, SO THAT 'EVERY MATTER MAY BE ESTABLISHED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.' IF HE REFUSES TO LISTEN TO THEM, TELL IT TO THE CHURCH; AND IF HE REFUSES TO LISTEN EVEN TO THE CHURCH, TREAT HIM AS YOU WOULD A PAGAN OR TAX COLLECTOR." - Matthew 18:15–17

Reflecting on scripture:

One-on-one accountability is foundational for understanding and staying in Truth;

A 'band of brothers' is not easily swayed by the relative truth of the world;

The Lord will take care of judgment in His time. In the interim, brothers in Christ are to be accountable to each other in order to navigate faithfully through distractions in the world.

How can you be more accountable as a man of God?

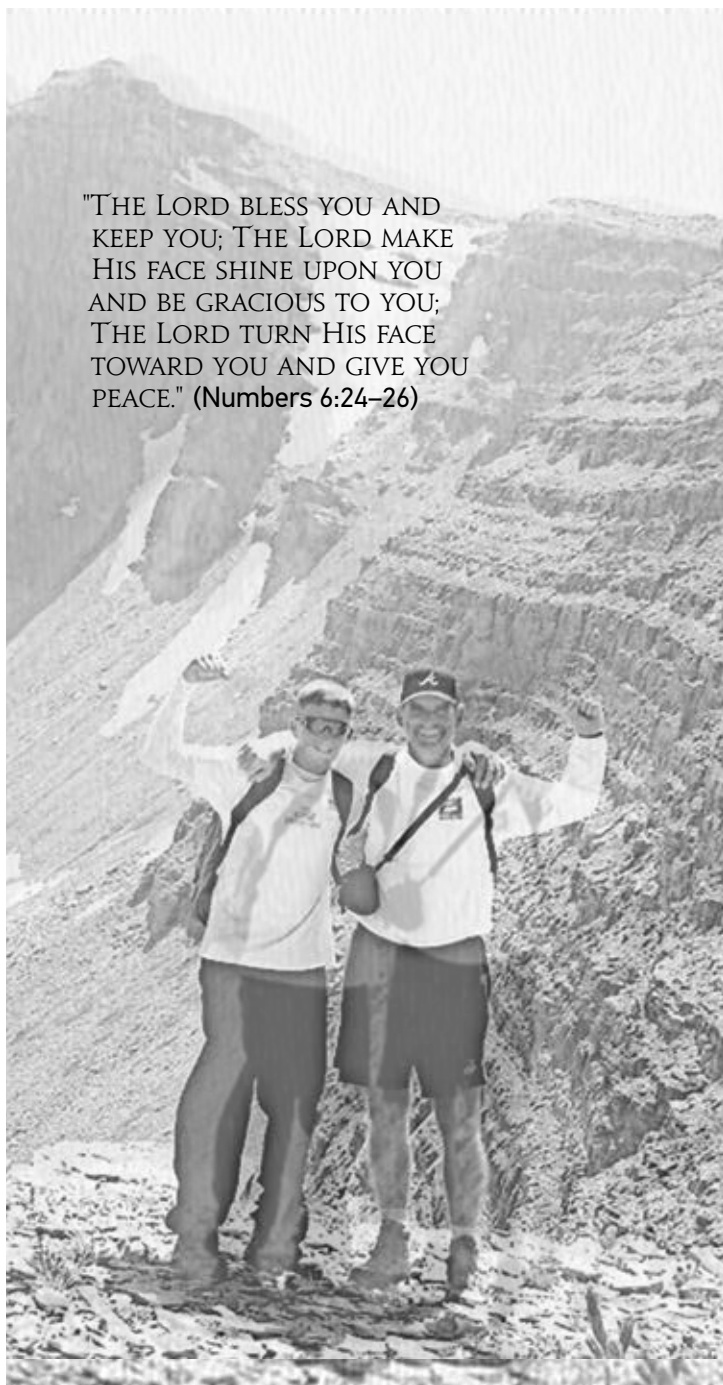
Notes:

Prayer guide: Lord, I am an easy target in the world as a lone ranger Christian. I praise You and thank You for the godly men you have brought into my life. Help me be real in those relationships to facilitate a high level of accountability in Truth, that I may be an influence for You as the man, husband and dad You call me to be in my family, church and community. Amen.

This week I am encouraged to:

A FAITHFUL FATHER establishes a group of battle buddies that accept responsibility to hold him accountable as the man, husband and father he is called to be.

"THE LORD BLESS YOU AND
KEEP YOU; THE LORD MAKE
HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU
AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;
THE LORD TURN HIS FACE
TOWARD YOU AND GIVE YOU
PEACE." (Numbers 6:24-26)



RESOURCES FOR DADS

Books

BIBLE

HEART OF A FATHER
Dr. Ken Canfield

SEVEN SECRETS OF EFFECTIVE FATHERS
Dr. Ken Canfield

DEVOTIONS FOR DADS
Rick Wertz

REVOLUTIONARY PARENTING
George Barna

Internet Filters

BSECURE ONLINE
www.bsecure.com
Endorsed by Focus on the Family and others

COVENANT EYES
www.covenanteyes.com
Endorsed by many men's groups

NET NANNY
www.netnanny.com
Endorsed by parents and tech groups

Parental Guides to Technology

TEEN TEXTING TRANSLATOR
www.lgdtxttr.com
This site defines the latest teen abbreviations,
acronyms and code words used in texting.

YES, I COMMIT TO BECOMING A

77



A dad that prioritizes his physical presence, is engaged emotionally and leads spiritually by example.

I also want to be a blessing to other fathers and families through Faithful Fathering. I will support the Initiative through my:

☐ Prayer

☐ Time / Volunteer to introduce the Initiative in my church

☐ Talent, please contact me

☐ Network / Connections

☐ Treasure / Donation*

*Amount \$ _____

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Please bill my: ☐ AmExp, ☐ Visa, ☐ Mastercard

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Online giving is available via: www.faithfulfathering.org

Please complete the back side as well, detach and mail to:

Faithful Fathering

P.O. Box 1702; Sugar Land,

Texas 77487-1702

Please take a few moments to provide information on how you utilized this booklet and any other comments you have on the content or how the study impacted you personally:

- ☐ I worked through this study on my own
- ☐ I did this study with a group of men at work
- ☐ I participated in this study with a group of men at church
- ☐ I got this book as part of a workshop at my church
- ☐ I found the additional 'R U the dad ...' sessions helpful

Other comments and reflections on Dads Becoming Heroes:

You can also email any additional thoughts/comments to:
admin@faithfulfathering.org

Personal information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

- ☐ I'd like to receive Faithful Fathering's weekly email communication to dads

Home church: _____

FAITHFUL FATHERING

Mission: ENCOURAGING AND EQUIPPING DADS TO BE FAITHFUL FATHERS. A FAITHFUL FATHER PRIORITIZES HIS PHYSICAL PRESENCE, IS ENGAGED EMOTIONALLY AND LEADS SPIRITUALLY BY EXAMPLE.

Vision: Eliminating father absence – one family, one church, one community at a time.

p. 281.491.DADS (3237)
www.faithfulfathering.org

Dads Becoming Heroes encourages and equips dads to become heroes in their children's eyes, to be faithful fathers. **A FAITHFUL FATHER PRIORITIZES HIS PHYSICAL PRESENCE, IS ENGAGED EMOTIONALLY AND LEADS SPIRITUALLY BY EXAMPLE.** This study will guide you through five key roles we have as fathers: Nurturance, Consistency, Involvement, Awareness and Commitment.

Each key role, presented as a topic, can be covered in a small group discussion setting or individual study time. You will be encouraged at the conclusion of the five sessions to draft a **Family Plan** that will identify specific action needed to build on strengths and work on challenge areas identified across the course of the study.

Are you the dad God calls you to be? The more appropriate question may be —are you intentional in your efforts to become the dad God calls you to be? Included in this study booklet are four "R U the Dad God Calls U 2 B?" devotions that facilitate ongoing small group discussion time and will challenge you to follow through on your family plan. As you are intentional in your efforts to be the dad God calls you to be, you will **become a hero** in your children's eyes.

"Rick Wertz is a dear friend and a brother in Christ. He is a veteran of spiritual wars, a trailblazer for our Lord and has the spiritual maturity to spend time on the mountain top with the Father so he can endure the valleys of ministry and lead men in godly manner. Faithful Fathering has been forged from these fires of combat. He is the real deal and personifies 1Corinthians 16:13-14 as a godly man. His motivation to teach and write is the direct result of the overflow of his love for our Lord. Since he has 'been there, done that and has the t-shirt', listen and learn from what he shares in Dads Becoming Heroes."

Buddy Griffin, Pastor of Men
Sagemont Church-Houston, TX

"Rick has provided encouragement to fathers for as long as I have known him. Dads Becoming Heroes is just another extension of his passion to follow God's calling to equip us as fathers and to lead others to be the fathers that we are called to be. This booklet is the result of years of research on understanding what the Bible says about fathering. Dads becoming Heroes will be on my desk to remind me to accept my responsibility and be a faithful father."

Chris Arend-dad
Houston, TX