



What makes an effective father? Are there any common characteristics that separate great dads from good dads? Are there any special abilities or actions that make some dads more successful with their children? Is there such a thing as a “super dad?” Let’s look at six characteristics of fathers who are “making a difference.”

### The Importance of Fathers...THINK YOU DON'T MATTER?

- ✓ 90% of runaway children are from fatherless homes
- ✓ 90% of inmates on death row are from fatherless homes
- ✓ 85% of youth in prison are from fatherless homes
- ✓ 71% of high school dropouts are from fatherless homes

Dads make a difference...

#### I. **Forgiveness** ... Pursue it! (Col. 3:13)

*<sup>13</sup>Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Col. 3:13*

##### A. Observations

1. If you have kids, you will be disappointed. They will hurt your feelings, take you for granted, and even offend you somewhere along the way.
2. Forgiveness needs to be pursued because it isn't usually our natural bent. It is hard to admit we are wrong. Don't just say "I'm sorry" say "I was wrong would you forgive me"? Don't hold grudges!
3. We do it because God models it in his relationship to us.
4. **Quote – “Love looks through a telescope, not a microscope”.**

B. Consequences if you don't forgive. If you don't forgive you'll have ...

1. Apathy:
2. Bitterness:
3. Conflict:

C. Issue at stake: When we don't forgive it puts the whole relationship in jeopardy ...Forgiveness is foundational to healthy relationships!

D. Do I readily forgive and let go of things?

## II. **Affirmation** ... Prescribe it! (Gen. 49:28)

Jacob was by no means a perfect Father, but he got this one right! Jacob shared a blessing with each of his sons before he died.

*<sup>28</sup> All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him. Gen. 49:28*

A. The power of our words can affect our kids both positively and negatively. The spoken word combined with expressing high value are the 2 ingredients needed (Gary Smalley). The need to be blessed and affirmed is in our DNA. When it doesn't happen from our parents we often compensate by...

1. Becoming a **Workaholic** – Striving to seek “The blessing”! Our kids light up when we say Good job. God will say “Well done my good and faithful servant some day.
2. **Withdrawal** – Movie “Cipher in the Snow”

B. Our tendency is to criticize vs. commend; to attack vs. affirm. We see what isn't happening vs. what is happening! We are negative vs. positive.

1. **I can live for two months on a good compliment.**  
**Mark Twain**
2. “Sticks and stones do break our bones! Bullying is one of the leading causes of suicide. *“The tongue has the power of life and death” (Prov. 18:21)*

3. Many of us weren't affirmed by our fathers and have had to overcome the deficit. Hard to give what you never received!
4. We can't over affirm (unless it is just isn't true) our kids it is not like perfume!

C. Issue at stake: Motivation – How are your kids motivated because of your positive affirmations? Do you withhold them or freely give them positive encouragement?

### III. **Touch** ... Provide it! (Mk. 10:13-16)

A. Physical touch is modeled in the OT between Fathers and sons! Touch of tenderness!

*Please come close and kiss me my son" (Isaac to Jacob) Gen. 27:26 -*

1. "**Come close**" – armies drawn in battle; overlapping scales of crocodile skin. Lit – A bear hug;
2. Jacob is probably about 40 years old. Our kids are never too old to hug and kiss.

B. Jesus' example

1. Touched the leper –

*"And moved with compassion, he stretched out his hand and touched him" Mark 1:40-42*

2. Held the children

*<sup>13</sup> People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus saw this, he was indignant... <sup>16</sup> And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)*

- Rebukes them: Disciples' perspective: Jesus you have more important things to do – teach, heal, etc.
- Jesus thinks otherwise. Parents do you take the time to hug your kids? Don't let it be crowded from your schedule!
- **Illustration: The importance of bed time rituals.**

C. Benefits of physical touch (ULCA Study from *The Blessing* by Gary Smalley, p. 40-42)

1. 1/3 of 5 million touch receptors are in the hands.
2. Hemoglobin levels go up
3. 8-10 meaningful touches to stay healthy
4. **Illustration: Animal shelters and nursing homes**

D. Consequences if we aren't touched in a meaningful way.

1. We look to have that need met in all the wrong places, especially girls. There is a higher degree of promiscuity in relationships.
2. Caution: appropriate touch as they get older.
3. The lure of the cults

E. Issue at Stake: Responsiveness. Our kids get clues from us about appropriate touching. Help them not to be cold and indifferent. Don't just tell them, touch them!

F. Do my kids feel loved through my hugs and kisses?

IV. **Hearing (Listening)** ... Practice it! (James 1:19)

*<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,*

A. Two major barriers to listening:

1. Too quick to speak! *He who gives an answer before he hears...it is folly and shame to him. Prov.18:13*
  - Judgmental/critical
  - We interrupt ... Listen to the whole story!
  - *When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise. Prov. 10:19*
  - *A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Prov. 17:27*
  - *If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight reign on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. James 1:26*
2. We are prone to angry outbursts!

*A soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger.  
Prov.15:1*

*A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel. Prov. 15:18*

- Anger shuts out the other person and shuts off communication. Anger sends a mixed message
- Quick to hear – 2 ears...Slow to speak – 1 mouth!
- Do I listen thoughtfully?

B. Issue ... Communication is at stake; or maybe your pride! Maybe you aren't as good a listener as you think? What are their perceptions? **Video clip: Listening Vignettes.**

V. **Example** ... Protect it! (I Cor. 11:1)

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ”) Lit. it means to leave an impression. More is caught than taught.

- A. “Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing” (Albert Schweitzer).
- B. Toddler in pajamas standing at the door waving goodbye to his dad. Caption reads: "Bye, Daddy! Be a good boy!"The Family Circus by Bill Keane, 10-5-01
- C. Involves integrity and modeling
  1. Turn off the TV when suggestive material is on. What's on your computer?
  2. Q.T. in front of kids – pray with kids at night
  3. How you drive the car. Speed limits and how you show restraint when someone cuts you off)
  4. Income taxes: Don't fudge on business expenses
  5. **Illustration:** Inconsistency confuses our kids. **With Katie at Harbor House Café**

D. James Baldwin – “Children have never been good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them”

E. Issue at stake: When we are hypocritical it puts our credibility at risk!

“As I grow older I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do!” (Andrew Carnegie)

F. Do I model the kind of lifestyle my kids can follow?

VI. **Release Them**... Promote it! (Prov. 22:6)

*Trains up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

A. Let your kids grow up. Don't smother them by being overprotective. We have a hard time letting go sometimes! Trust that God is going to “bring home” all you have taught them or trained them for.

B. **Illustration: Movie... Failure to launch with Matthew McConaughey.**

C. How do we do let go?

1. Recognize the unique difference of each child. Each child matures at different times.
2. Allow for privacy as they get older. Don't be a FB spy!
3. Allow for alternatives, not just ultimatums.
4. Say yes as often as possible (within reason)
5. **“God is more interested in their direction than their perfection!”**

D. Issue at stake: Your future! You want a healthy not a co-dependent relationship as they become adults.

E. Think how hard it was for God the Father to release his son to come to earth to die for our sins!

- F. Am I letting my kids go and grow?
- VII. How do we do this? Can we do this?
- A. Not apart from God. Doing these things apart from Him is fruitless.
  - B. *Romans 11:36, "For everything comes from God alone, everything lives by His power, and everything is intended for His glory." (TLB)*  
Everything on the planet and in the universe was created for God's glory!
  - C. Pleasing God has to be your first priority. Matthew 22 says, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." (NIV)*
  - D. *May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 (TEV)*
  - E. Dad's: You live this way, not just to have a great family, but to please God! You will make a difference in your family if you glorify Him!

### **Family Time Table Talk**

Father's Day is a great day to have a Table Talk. In our KidVenture classes today, your kids made Father's Day cards. Start your Table Talk by having the kids give their card to Dad.

#### **For the Kids:**

1. Share 3 things you love about Dad. There is a catch! No one can repeat someone else's answer! Go around the table 3 times. If you have 4 kids, that will be 12 positive affirmations!
2. Share your favorite Dad story. Mom you may need to prime the pump on this one!
3. Dad, share a prayer request. Have your kids pray for you.

## For the Parents:

1. Evaluate how you are doing in relationship to what makes a Great Dad (or mom!). Since school just got out, give yourself a letter grade: A, B, C, D, F!
  - **F**orgiveness: Do I readily forgive?  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **A**ffirmation: Do I freely give it?  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **T**ouch: Do my kids feel loved through my hugs and kisses? Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **H**earing (Listening): Do I listen thoughtfully?  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **E**xample: Do I model the kind of lifestyle my kids can follow? Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **R**elease: Am I letting my kids go and grow?  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Pick one area to work on. What is your action plan to “improve” in this area?

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