

What Fathers Leave Behind

A clipping from a Dutch magazine a number of years ago described a child's attitude toward his father as the years pass by. At age 4, the child says, "My daddy can do anything." At age 7, "My daddy knows a lot. A whole lot." At age 8 he says, "Well my father doesn't quite know everything." At age 12 he says, "Naturally, my father doesn't know that either." At 14, "My dad is so hopelessly old-fashioned." Age 21, "That man is so out of date." At 25 years, "Dad knows a little, but not too much." At 30 years, "I must find out what Dad thinks about this." At 35 years, "Before we decide, let's get dad's idea first." At 50, "What would Dad have thought about that?" At 60 years, "My dad knew literally everything." At 65 years he says, "I wish I could talk it over with Dad one more time."

How important good and godly fathers are. The father who faithfully stands beside his wife and children is becoming more and more of a rarity in our society. I believe America needs fathers more than ever because of what we are facing today. While the Marine Corps slogan is, "looking for a few good men," I think our country's new slogan ought to be: "Looking for a few godly men."

A few years ago, L.A. Times Magazine ran an article about the invisible dad. It pointed out, "many American men are disconnecting from family life and society is paying the price. Consider two of the nation's most serious problems: crime and teenage pregnancy. Studies show that the most reliable predictor of these behaviors is not income. It's not race. It's family structure. Pregnant teenage girls and criminal teenage boys tend to come from fatherless families. An astonishing 70 percent of imprisoned minors have spent at least part of their lives without fathers.

Fathers are so important because they are a visible link between their children and the Father in Heaven. Many of the attitudes children will develop toward God will be connected to the ones they have toward their fathers. The potential impact of a good and godly father is immeasurable. Don't believe it when people say children don't need a mother and a father. They need both as much as possible.

Certainly many pressures come with fatherhood. Some of us feel ill-equipped. But it's better to be a learning father than an absent one. A father's influence will not only impact his children, it will impact his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and his great-great-grandchildren. The values fathers pass on to their children today, whether sinful or godly, will be passed on to their children in the future.

Donald