



The Good News

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Fatherhood

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Depending upon how atheistic the person is with whom you're discussing parenthood and the "family model," the conversation can range from the other person accepting the two-parent family as being ordained by God, all the way to that same person telling you that the "nuclear family"—mother and father, two kids, dog/cat, white picket fence, etc.—is a completely new concept in the history of man and one that makes no biological sense. One of the problems (today) is that there is such a large contingent of people who either grew up or are now parents in single-parent homes. The overwhelmingly vast majority of those single-parent homes have been of the single-mother variety until very recently, and the impact of a lack of a father—not just a "male role model" but a *father*—can be seen in some startling and saddening statistics. At LEAST 70% of the following are from fatherless homes: homeless and runaway children, children with behavioral disorders, rapists with anger control issues (and 60% of all rapists), high school dropouts, children in state-run institutions (disciplinary, dept of health, etc), young adults in prison. There are more statistics, but the point is already driven home: a child cannot be properly raised without a Godly father. As depressing as these examples are, the numbers for two-parent homes are just as validating for the presence of a father. There's a reason that children who come from a home with a father are far more likely to succeed in school and graduate, attempt and achieve higher education qualifications and degrees, become more active in their community, etc.

Fatherhood is one of the most prominent and visible tenets of Christianity, illustrated by the fact that God—the Creator of all things—calls

Himself our Father. His Love for us is so strong that He chose to give His only Son for us, his children. This is our example of fatherhood; the love that God showed for us through His Son's sacrifice is the love we are to have for our children. They are *that important* to God, and thus they need to be that important to us.

Why is it so important? Why is there so much emphasis on fathers having integrity (Prov 20:7), on them using discipline (Prov 3:11-12, 13:24, Eph 6:4), being kind-hearted (Col 3:21), diligent in their daily adherence to God's Word (Psa 78:5-8), and compassionate (Psa 103:13)? Most of us are taught by our parents, but all of us eventually learn from our own experiences as well, that deeds, not words, indicate a person's character. A father is to be all of these things because it is righteous and Godly but also, and more importantly in this case, because he is to provide his children with an example of obedience to God through his own life. The Godly deeds performed by a father give his children the example *they need to see and experience* from someone who loves them the way God tells fathers to love their children. The children of a Godly father are shown through his behavior how to turn the words in the Bible into actions, how to *live* the words, The Word, in their own lives. In addition, they have someone in their lives who will watch over them and guide them away from that which children without a father all too often follow instead. As has been illustrated, the results of that Godless path are destructive to a child's life.