

15 Tips for Fathers to Leave a Lasting Legacy

Days ago we had the privilege of hosting a young man of God who lived with us for a couple years while attending college. Sitting down for a delicious salmon dinner I peppered him with questions going down memory lane.

“Eric, what are some of the things you remember most during those years with us—the good, bad and the ugly?”

What he said, immediately surprised me and really blessed me out of my socks!

“You were authentic. The man I saw during those years in your home was the same person I saw behind the pulpit in our church.”

Thanking God and my brother, the reason it meant so much to me was because the only time in 50 years of ministry I discerned the probable voice of God was early on when He said to me, “Let it never be said of me that I presented the world a caricature of Christ.”

If you’re a genuine Christian, then I believe you identify with this desire. You want to honor God and His Word in every area of your life. You want to leave a lasting legacy, especially as a husband and father.

Recently, I saw a personal documentary about former superstar Michael J. Fox who now battles Parkinson’s Disease. Once he sat at the pinnacle of fame and fortune. The end of the film shows him walking on the beach with his wife and family—a picture of what really matters most to him now.

So how can we be a real dad in a really messed up world? Granted, the challenge is enormous, but here are 15 essentials

for us to succeed in the high calling of fatherhood today.

15 Suggestions for Success

Success in marriage and family does not come from good intentions but deliberate decisions based on the Word of God. Contrary to cultural foolishness, God calls us to adhere to Scripture: “For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise” (Joshua 1:8).

After 47 years of marriage, four adult children and seven grandchildren, I offer you these time-tested principles for your path to prosper:

- Commit to the practice of prayer for your children daily.
- Remain in a posture of faith no matter what comes your way.
- Endeavor to be led by the Spirit in line with the Word of God.
- Obey God’s Word in everything, being quick to repent for laziness, compromise or disobedience.
- Focus more on building character than bringing creature comforts.
- Reinforce New Testament Christianity by meaningful church involvement, service and support.
- Be vigilant monitoring all areas of media and relational influence affecting your children (association brings assimilation).
- Celebrate family Scripture study but keep it meaningful, relevant and short!
- Communicate love and encouragement consistently knowing that rules without relationship can foster rebellion.
- Schedule regular family fun times to make memories and keep their emotional tanks full!
- Honor Christian education reinforcing values taught at home.
- Be intentional with consistent family meal times to

enhance communication and stay current.

- Plan individual “date times” and mission trips for your children.
- Cultivate a culture of honor regarding spouses, grandparents, widows and orphans plus church and civic leaders.
- Celebrate with creativity life’s seasons, passages and family traditions.

Crises of American Manhood

Today families are in crisis. Fatherlessness is epidemic. Along with it is a parallel problem: a crisis of American manhood.

On college campuses we even have classes called “Rethink Masculinity” pushed by leftists and feminists to eradicate what they call “toxic masculinity.” Proponents don’t present a positive alternative of manly virtue focused on faith, family and female protection and love, but rather neuter men until real masculinity is air-brushed away! Gullible guys become men without chests.

As Chuck Swindoll has written, “Masculinity is vanishing. Throughout the land, fathers have lost their way to true manhood and have thrown responsibility to the wind. Sex roles are blurring, masculine leadership is disappearing, and like dominoes, homes and marriages are collapsing.”

Dr. James Dobson says, “The Western world stands at a great crossroads in its history. It is my opinion that our very survival as a people will depend on the presence or absence of masculine leadership in millions of homes.”

Amidst today’s cultural counterfeits regarding manhood—macho man, marshmallow man and mixed-up man—God wants real men of steel and velvet. Our model is Jesus!

“We have a weak nation because we have weak churches. We have

weak churches because we have weak families. We have weak families because we have weak men never challenged with the true biblical standard.” – Bill Gothard

Let's consecrate ourselves to model God's ideal of authentic Christian manhood this Father's Day. Then let's learn in humility from those who've gone before us on pathways of good fruit.

Here's the Deal: As we witness the decline of the nuclear family in society, God is raising up beautiful examples of what life can be like in the kingdom of God under the benevolent reign of good King Jesus! Fathers and mothers are a team, but we dads should lead the way to excellence so we leave a legacy that lasts for the glory of God! Happy Father's Day! {eoa}