

Dad, It's Time to Cast the Spirit of Rejection Out of Your Home

Until you have a son of your own ... you will never know the joy,

the love beyond feeling that resonates in the heart of a father as he looks upon his son.

—Kent Nerburn

My wife and I have two sons and a daughter, and when I look upon each of them, I start tearing up immediately. Why do I do this? Because it is my natural reaction as a daddy with so much love and joy bound up in my heart for these precious gifts given to us by God. When I look at my children, I see the way God sees us as his children. If an outpouring of love and tears of joy are my natural reaction to seeing my bundles of joy, I can only imagine how Abba Daddy looking down on each of us reacts as He sees us as His.

Back in 2006, I remember the Holy Spirit speaking to me as I asked His true will for humanity. His answer was as clear as my words to you here. He said, “I want people to stop trying to love me and just focus in on how much I love them.” What powerful words! What a simple revelation! This is the heart of our Father—for us to spend every waking moment in the realization that Abba Daddy loves you and me.

Sadly, however, there are fathers in full-time ministry who have forgotten how to be natural fathers to their children. I say this with as much grace as possible because many of these fathers haven't actually forgotten. They have chosen not to participate in the lives of their children. During the

research phase of my first book called *Hey, Where's My Chicken Soup?*, I was amazed by how many full-time ministry fathers never had a strong influence in the lives of their kids. In fact, I even heard one pastor say that after they're 18 years of age, they are "on their own." Stunning.

Even when they are adults, our children still need us. They need to know that we have not cut them off or are not pulling back from being a powerful voice in their lives. This is a time when, for the first time, our children start making serious decisions about their futures that will put them on one of two paths—God's or the enemy's.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." That promise has no expiration date. It doesn't say train up a child in the way he or she should go only up to the age of 18. I've heard pastors quote this Scripture, then tell me that this only applies until children graduate from high school or until they move out of the house. Not only is this thinking totally off the wall, it is a spirit of rejection that our enemy wants parents to believe.

The enemy knows that 18 is an age at which our children are highly vulnerable. Parents who use the excuse that, at this age, children no longer need parents to be responsible for them are pushing their children out of a safe spiritual covering and right into the devil's trap. In fact, parents who buy into this lie are not only being used by the devil to push their children into a vulnerable position, but they are being too plain ol' lazy. This is the time where this Scripture should be more important in the lives of both parents and children, not less.

I like what the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:15 about having enough teachers but not enough fathers. Being in full-time ministry does not mean you give up your children for it. Before God established the church, he established the family.

Family first, ministry second. I can't tell you how many sons and daughters of pastors, ministers and missionaries I've seen abandon their faith because their parents put their ministry responsibilities ahead of their kids.

Fathers, are you one of those who has pushed your child away? With everything in me, I encourage you to repent, go find your child—no matter the age—and ask for forgiveness. Perhaps in God's grace your son or daughter will allow you to help shape their spiritual lives. You're a leader in the kingdom of God and should be a leader in every area, including how to train up a child in the way he or she should go. Don't play the role of a father. Be one—for a lifetime! {eoa}

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