

Dads, Your Impact Is Greater Than You Know

The small child froze in her footsteps and slightly cocked her head to listen more carefully. What was that sound?

In the stillness of the hallway near the family bedrooms, she heard it again. It sounded like a low, mournful cry ... a soulful weeping.

Knowing that her daddy was the only other person home, she tiptoed silently and slowly toward his room, filled with concern and curiosity. As she drew closer, the little girl could see that the door stood slightly ajar. She gently pushed it open just enough to peer inside.

A sense of holiness permeated the air, and in an instant her impressionable young mind and spirit were impacted so deeply that she would embrace the memory of that moment countless times throughout her life.

I was that little girl. And what I experienced that day some 50 years ago would forever define my father and guide my faith.

In the solace of his room, I saw my daddy, who was a pediatrician, kneeling beside his bed weeping and praying from the depths of his soul for one of his young patients. As the sobs and tears flowed freely from this great man, I lingered for a moment in breathless awe as I felt my faith in God soar beyond my own understanding.

My Papa Doc, as he affectionately became known in his later years, was a Johns Hopkins-educated pediatrician. He was the epitome of the brilliant, loving physician often portrayed in Norman Rockwell paintings. But as I peeked into my father's room to discover the source of the mysterious sound, it became

clear that my daddy relied on the awesome power and wisdom of the Great Physician to guide him.

This Father's Day I'm so grateful that I experienced the life-changing difference that Christ-centered, Bible-believing, Holy Spirit-filled fathers can make in the lives of their children.

Humble in spirit, yet confident in the Word of God, Dad didn't just "practice" his faith—he lived it. He studied diligently, worked tirelessly and prayed endlessly. He was a quiet man, but his actions boldly proclaimed the hope and grace of Jesus.

Dad loved, trusted and adored my mother in a manner rarely found in marriages today. His actions and heart toward Mom exemplified a biblical command that many don't even know exists: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, and even gave Himself up for her" (see Eph. 5:25).

He was a man of honor and the quintessential Southern gentleman. He approached others with the greatest of respect, defended those unjustly treated and kept silent when personally offended. I remember his telling me, "Becks, I just don't think it's right to question the word or the memory of another Christian in public."

For Dad, honesty wasn't the best policy, it was the only policy. I recall driving by a beautiful Georgia cotton field during a family vacation one summer. Having never seen a "snow-topped" crop before, my brothers and sister and I started begging Mom and Dad to stop so we could pick a few. Dad explained that it wouldn't be right to take even one of what didn't belong to us.

We then proceeded to drive for several miles well out of our way in search of the farmer's house to ask permission. The farmer graciously gave us our cotton, but the real gift that day came from our dad. Ever mindful of his own shortcomings and imperfections, Dad privately called on the mercy, wisdom

and grace of God throughout each day. As he worked, walked or read, if you looked closely, you'd often see his lips moving ever so slightly in prayer.

Dr. Henry J. Redd Jr. lived the life we should all strive for. He wasn't just a good man; he was extraordinary. I count it among the greatest of blessings to have been his daughter. And although he purposefully and intentionally taught me well, the greatest impact he had on me was that morning when he thought no one was looking.

Dads, your impact is far greater on your children than you may ever know. I'm sure there are days when you wonder if your tears and prayers and sacrifices have been worth it. But be encouraged ... your children "peek around the corner," listen intently and remember your actions. Your faithful example will make an eternal difference in their lives. {eoa}

Rebecca Hagelin and her husband live in Placida, Florida.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA APP.