

Father's Day Encouragement: 15 Tips to Leave a Lasting Legacy

For Father's Day, let's linger for a little while on legacy but remember it's being written every day.

After 50 years as a Christian—47 in ministry and 44 in marriage—I concur with Dr. James Dobson: “There is no area in life where I am more dependent on God than in the raising of my family.”

Raising four children and helping now with seven grandchildren, quality decisions we made early enabled us to come to the place where we are today. We do not enjoy perfection but experience God's faithfulness in this 4th quarter of life. No matter where we're at on our journey, God guides us and reminds us that He is working “all things together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

Crises of American Manhood

To leave a legacy that lasts, it's imperative we start dependent on God, devoted to His Word and develop after the image of biblical manhood. As Bible teacher Ed Cole said, “You're male by birth but a man by choice.”

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 airbrushed away! Gullible guys become men without chests, resembling the weird “Pat” character of bygone *Saturday Night Live* comedy skits.

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.”

Men of Steel and Velvet

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!

Unfortunately the person of Jesus in artwork often conjures up images of a poker-faced, wimpy killjoy who never smiled, appeared somewhat emaciated and had chubby little cherubs floating about his haloed head. This meek, mild, milquetoast image of Jesus is a distortion of the Son of God.

Although we aren’t told much about the appearance of Jesus in scripture, there’s evidence He not only embodied character traits of servanthood, meekness, (not weakness), compassion and generosity but physical strength as well.

—Imagine what 20 years of carpentry work did for His muscular development.

—He walked miles in the grueling sun and then ministered to crowds of thousands, addressing them without amplification.

—Visualize Jesus grabbing a whip, overturning tables and

driving out money-changers from the temple.

–Picture those “boys on the dock,” burly fishermen dropping their nets to follow Him.

–Use your sanctified imagination to ponder His horrific flogging and enduring the infamous crucifixion depicted vividly in Mel Gibson’s *Passion of the Christ*.

Scores have engendered an anemic view of Christian manhood. It’s resulted in churches where women outnumber men 2, 3, even 5 to 1!

“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.

As a father I knew early on that I had to give my children roots before wings. I also knew that no amount of success at work or in ministry would ever compensate for failure at home. We repeatedly made intentional decisions to reduce our standard of living to improve our quality of life. They’ve paid off with great rewards, so I offer them to you as we celebrate Father’s Day 2020.

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” (Josh. 1:8b).

1. Commit to the practice of prayer for your children daily.
2. Remain in a posture of faith no matter what comes your way.
3. Endeavor to be led by the Spirit in line with the Word of God.
4. Obey God's Word in everything, being quick to repent for laziness, compromise or disobedience.
5. Focus more on building character than bringing creature comforts.
6. Reinforce New Testament Christianity by meaningful church involvement, service and support.
7. Be vigilant monitoring all areas of media and relational influence affecting your children (association brings assimilation).
8. Celebrate family Scripture study but keep it meaningful, relevant and short!
9. Communicate love and encouragement consistently, knowing rules without relationship can foster rebellion.
10. Schedule regular family fun times to make memories and keep their emotional tanks full!
11. Honor Christian education reinforcing values taught at home.
12. Be intentional with consistent family mealtimes to enhance communication and stay current.
13. Plan individual "date times" and mission trips for your children.
14. Cultivate a culture of honor regarding spouses, grandparents, widows and orphans, plus church and civic leaders.

15. Celebrate with creativity life's seasons, passages and family traditions.

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! {eoa}