

Father's Day Is a Time to Heal

Dads play such a formative role in our lives. Sometimes, this can be immensely positive, but for so many, their relationship with their father has become devastatingly destructive.

Father's Day is meant to be a celebration, but it often serves as a painful reminder of the neglect, abandonment or abuse sons and daughters have experienced at the hand of the father figure in their lives.

These father wounds result in deep-seated fears embedded in the brain. Those fears play out in our actions as the brain subconsciously defends itself from experiencing the same pain over again. The result for 68 percent of men in the church has been habitual pornography use resulting in bondage, broken marriages and fathers perpetuating the very same neglect on their sons that had led them to this place to begin with.

Former Marine Fighter Pilot and Host of the Conquer Series, Dr. Ted Roberts, has helped thousands of men find freedom from pornography. He knows these father wounds all too well,

"Most of the men that I counsel have deep father wounds. And I did also. With seven abusive fathers, all I knew was a father smashing me in the face," says Dr. Ted.

Not everyone has a story as intense as Dr. Ted's, but father wounds can occur even in a loving Christian home. To admit this is not to blame or shame our fathers. In most cases, they were doing the best they could from what they had learned from their parents. But when we understand these wounds, it opens us up to experience the grace and healing that only comes through our loving Father in heaven.

Dr. Paul Cole from the Christian Men's Network speaks in the

Conquer Series about how Jesus teaches us to pray the Lord's prayer, specifically to "Our Father." Dr. Cole describes that Jesus is saying:

When you think of God, think of a Father with all the aspects of a father. A father who loves you, who affirms you, who gives you His name, a father who's there to provide security, a father who loves you without regard of what you did today ...

A lot of people struggle to relate to this beautiful picture of God as Father because their personal experience of a father cannot measure up to that.

"God wants to heal the father-wounds in men and women's hearts because that is what has caused us so often to make wrong choices and wrong decisions," explains Dr. Cole.

For some children, it wasn't just their fatherhood wounds that led them to pornography, but their father's own struggle with it. I have heard so many stories from those who have stumbled across their dad's porn stash.

A daughter who found images on her dad's computer which rocked her identity: "You were my only example of what I should look for in a husband; how could you? Is this how you see me?"

A son who finds the internet history on his dad's phone: "I know I struggle with this dad, but you? You were my only example of a good, godly man. How could you do this when you have such an incredible wife? How could you do this to Mom?"

There is a welling of hurt when we think of these situations because they run in such contradiction to God's desire for us. Thankfully, He is constantly bringing healing and wholeness to fathers and their children.

There is a profound line in the Bible within the first chapter of Luke when an angel appears to Zechariah explaining that he will have a son who will be filled with the Holy Spirit, to

prepare the people for the coming of Jesus, and “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children.” This is an echo of Malachi 4:6, “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.”

God is at work bringing restoration between fathers and their children. When we fall to our knees and cry out to Jesus, “I have not been the perfect father,” or “I have not been the perfect child,” He hears us. The great wonderment of our God in Trinity is that He is both the perfect Father and the perfect Son, able to draw us nearer to that perfection through the power of his Holy Spirit.

A beautiful manifestation of this is through the stories we hear of fathers walking their sons through the Conquer Series, a powerful cinematic DVD series that has helped more than 400,000 men start the journey to freedom from pornography.

One grandfather shared his story of going through the Conquer Series with his grandson. His grandson, who has Asperger’s Syndrome, had been exposed to pornography because his mother’s boyfriend used to watch it with the young boy in the room. At age 15, the boy moved in with his grandparents, who soon realized the extent of his porn addiction.

“We tried everything we knew to make him stop, and we all know how that works,” said the boy’s grandfather.

“When he was 18, he got in trouble with the law because of it, and the night he got arrested, we prayed with him, that it would somehow turn into a testimony.”

The boy’s grandparents were desperate to help their grandson, so when they came across the ad for the Conquer Series on Facebook, they decided to order it in the hope that it would make a difference.

“Now I lead a [Conquer Series] group with him in it, he has

learned how to overcome this and wants to eventually lead a group alone or with me," said the grandfather.

What a beautiful picture of how God works to bring healing through those who love Him. Is there a father or a child you need to reconcile with this Father's Day?

While it isn't always possible to seek reconciliation, or find healing with your earthly dad, may you find grace and healing in your good, good Father, God. {eoa}