

Where Have All the Fathers Gone?

“Mommy, where do daddies come from?”

In some cases, this hard question supplants the awkward query “Where do babies come from?” Mothers are sometimes stumped in their efforts to explain where daddies come from, especially when the father is absent in a child’s life. It seems that fathers, instead of being the cornerstone of the family, have become a rare commodity.

How can this generation understand the love of the heavenly Father when many do not understand the love of earthly mothers and fathers?

When we think of the effects of fatherlessness, we often think in terms of the father-son relationship and the impact it has on men. But we would be remiss to neglect the detrimental effect the lack of fathers has on women in our society.

During a tour of a juvenile justice center, one of our staff members was told that dealing with juvenile girls is among their biggest and fastest growing problems. They’re constantly getting in trouble. They’re angry, violent, uncontrollable, and mentally unstable. “You can’t put them into a residential facility,” he was told. “They’ll run away. They’re just unruly.” There is also a growing number of juvenile girls involved in gangs.

County officials have identified two primary issues at the heart of all these problems. The first problem is diet. When a person doesn’t care about herself and believes no one else does, she will not care what she eats. Such people often turn to food for comfort. The second problem is men. Most of the girls have issues with their fathers. They’re looking for an identity, so they get involved in bad relationships or gangs.

They give their bodies to boys who use them and break their hearts. Sadly, the cycle continues until they feel that they have nothing to live for.

Socialization and finding identity are necessary processes, but they are definitely harder when the family unit is fragmented, giving no parameters to help define the God-given roles of parent, daughter and sister. Without a place to find identity, young people create their own worlds and families. Sometimes this occurs by joining gangs. We see it with street kids, too, who create their own family dynamics and even find identity in their street names.

“Covering” is a church term for the sense of protection we feel from right relationships, both spiritually and physically. Spiritually, the Bible tells us that the moment we receive Christ, a canopy of protection is stretched out over our lives. We see this truth pictured in the description of the Passover. While the children of Israel were preparing to flee Egypt, a spirit of death was being released against the firstborn of the land. The only protection for Israel was the shed blood of a spotless lamb on the doorposts of their dwellings. If the blood was in place, they were spared. (See Ex. 12:21–27.) Today, Christ is our Passover Lamb. (See 1 Cor. 5:7.) His blood keeps us safe and secure. This is the glorious work of the cross in our lives and the inheritance of every believer.

When there is a breach of covering in our physical, earthly lives, we feel exposed, vulnerable and even unwanted. When a woman feels uncovered by her husband, there is disarray in the home. When a girl feels uncovered by her parents, especially by her father, she looks elsewhere to find the strength God designed to come from him. She looks for identity in places outside the realm of God’s intended plan. And when a girl has not experienced the love of a father, she will look to other men for that love.

One of my daughters in the faith, Laura, ministers to young women all over the world, and she also has an ongoing group that meets in her home. Before her father went to be with Jesus, he asked me to help watch over Laura and her mother, and she now considers me a spiritual father.

Laura said, "A few years ago, the Lord opened my eyes to the desperate need of this generation's young women and how they need to be spiritually mothered and fathered."

"I found myself surrounded by the most beautiful, precious young women," she said. "They all loved the Lord passionately and wanted nothing more than to please Him. As I developed sweet friendships with these precious souls, I began to hear their stories. To my sad surprise, almost all of them were stories of woundedness and brokenness."

Laura asked me to speak to the young ladies she mentors, believing that I could minister God's healing heart to heal them from their "daddy issues." I spoke to them with the heart of a father, repented to them on behalf of any men who had hurt them and released them into their destinies by praying over them and giving them a father's blessing.

One of the girls in the group, Adriana, has not seen her biological father since she was 5 years old, and she shared her story with us:

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