

William Graham Reflects on Franklin Graham's Fatherhood

✖ When I think about my dad, Franklin Graham, I don't think about the public Franklin Graham who stands in front of the world speaking on national television or preaching in large stadiums.

I think about my dad who raised me to be the man I am today. I think about my dad who led me to Jesus Christ as a young boy. I think about my dad who fiercely protected his children from the prying eyes of others until we were old enough to handle it on our own. I think about my dad who offered strong discipline, accompanied by incredible love. I think about my dad who was the example of a godly husband.

My brothers, sister and I grew up in a farm house in the mountains of Boone, North Carolina, about two hours from Charlotte. Thanks to the wisdom of my dad, I had a blessed childhood that was all a boy could dream of. We had several animals—dogs, cats, chickens, horses, cows and even a pig—and we spent our free time riding around the farm on dirt bikes and playing in the woods. My dad is my friend.

My father's ministry laid the foundation for my own faith. I still remember the Sunday, where—after a church service—my dad told me about Jesus Christ, who came to this earth to rescue mankind, who went to the cross for my sins and who rose again. I accepted Christ that day. My dad is my witness.

As I grew older and became a teenager, there were times when people would want me to speak at different events. My dad wisely made sure that anybody who wanted something from me went through him first. The reason: He wanted to make sure that if I entered into the ministry it was because God had called me into ministry and not because I was pushed into it

simply because my last name is Graham.

As the son of Billy Graham, he had faced the burden of people assuming he would take over his father's ministry and he purposely chose to shield us from that. My dad is my protector.

I'm often asked if I—as the namesake, William Franklin Graham IV—ever felt any pressure to become a preacher, and I can honestly say that, thanks to my dad, I have not. I am an ordained minister and an evangelist now, but not because I'm the son of Franklin Graham or the grandson of Billy Graham.

During my teenage years, I distinctly felt God's calling on my life and am now acting in accordance with what I feel is His will for me, and my dad gave me the opportunity and freedom to hear that calling by not pushing me in one direction or the other. My dad is my adviser.

Even today, my dad continues to help my daily ministry by imparting bits of wisdom he has gleaned in his years. In both practical application and spiritual preparation, my dad's influence permeates my messages when I preach. My dad is my mentor.

I am so grateful to God for the friend, witness, protector, adviser and mentor that He provided to lead and guide me—my dad.

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