

God Brings Adult Child of an Alcoholic Into Life-Impacting Ministry

Growing up in an Irish Catholic family with eight kids? Fun. Growing up with four deaf brothers and sisters? Challenging. Growing up with an alcoholic father? Even more challenging.

“It was hard for me to be a kid,” Tom “Papa Tom” Clark, who grew up in this exact situation, tells Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of the *Greenelines* podcast.

Two stories about Clark’s youth define how he handled things, he says. “When I graduated from high school at 18 years old, he didn’t have a job. So I wanted to celebrate my high school graduation, obviously. So I ended up paying for everything. I took the family out to Peter Luger’s, which is a famous steak place out on Long Island ... And we acted like all the other kids in my class, whose parents were paying for everything. But I was the one who was paying for it because my father didn’t have a job.

“And exactly the same thing happened four years later, when I graduated from Georgetown University, he says. “My parents were at that time living in St. Louis. And I paid for both of their round-trip tickets, put them in an area hotels, here in Washington, D.C., and paid for their entire weekend, which at that time was probably about \$1000-\$1500. I paid out of my pocket.

Clark’s painful past gives him great empathy for the thousands of young people who are growing up today in a fatherless situation—either because their father is genuinely absent or because he is effectively absent from his parental responsibilities.

“I remember a statistic somewhere that said 85% of what children believe about themselves comes from their father,” he says. “Well, if you don’t have that, where do you find out information about life or about yourself? It’s absolutely missing. So you tend to replace it with other sources of information, fill in the gap, and there’s often the wrong source.”

Through his personal ministry that now extends to a podcast, *The Father’s Heart*, on the Charisma Podcast Network, Clark seeks to tap into the heavenly Father’s heart, sharing wisdom and insights with those who may need it today. He has also written a series of 12 books for children, *Papa Tom’s Tales*, that contain wisdom from “Papa Tom.”

For more wisdom from Clark on parenting, grandparenting and seeking God’s desires for your family, listen to the entire episode of *Greenelines* here, and be sure to check out The Father’s Heart podcast as well. Subscribe to both *Greenelines* and *The Father’s Heart* for more inspiring, informative episodes! {eoa}

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