

The Power of Being Present - How to be a successful father

A child asked his pregnant mother: "Mom, what do you have in your belly?", "A baby", she replied. "Who gave it to you?" "Well, it was your dad." The kids runs off looking for his father and tells him: "Dad, don't give mummy any more babies because she eats them!"

Mark 10:13-16 One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them. We can see that Jesus not only welcomed children but He blessed them by laying his hands on them.

Mark 9:36-37 says: Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me." Mark 9:42 adds: But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck. These verses give us a clear idea not only of how God sees children but also that He cares what happens to them. It is important that parents do not forget that. God is by your children, so be careful not to let them fall.

A football coach once said that when we stray from the fundamental things we walk towards defeat. All sports require that we obey the basics of the game if we are to succeed. This is also true regarding marriage, finances, school and many other areas of life. If you want to be a successful parent, you have to do at least 4 basic things for your children:

1. You must bless them with your presence - Did you know that the number one fear of adolescents is that their parents die? Your presence in their lives is very important. But we are talking about more than just being physically present, we are talking about participation in all aspects of the lives of your sons and daughters.

My father was not involved in my life because he died when I was a kid and I think everyone understands if I say that I was profoundly impacted by that. Many fathers participate so little in the lives of their children that it is like if they were dead. They are always busy, always working, always with important projects, always tired, etc. etc. etc. and that prevents them from being present in the lives of their children.

My life was shaped by not having a father to the point that when it was time for me to be a father I was afraid because I didn't know how to be one since I had no example in my life. Even my view of God was affected because when people referred to God as "Father in Heaven" I did not understand! For me, and because of my experience, a father was someone I could not count on, someone who did not hear me, someone that wasn't on my side when I needed. So I did not like to refer to God as a "Father". I wonder what your children have thought of God through your life as a father? Is God a angry father, critical, absent or a loving, dedicated, patient, present, forgiving father?

Bless your children by offering them your presence because there is no substitute for you in their lives. Your ordinary, consistent presence means a lot to them even if they don't know it.

In the last 15 years I have attended many piano recitals of my children. I remember one in particular where I had to listen to 17 different musicians playing more than 30 songs. Although I didn't like the recitals, I missed only one. Why? Because I wanted to be with my children, I wanted to be present and demonstrate that they are important to me. Parents, your presence is important in the activities of your children. Fathers, bless them with your presence and secondly:

2. Bless them with affection - Studies show that there is a direct relationship between the emotional health of children and physical and verbal expressions of affection from their parents. For children to feel safe they need to see and feel expressions of love from people who love them.

The parents of a teenager found her daughter in bed with a boy and decided to seek help from a counselor. The daughter went to a Christian school and the parents were active members of their church, but despite their commitment to Christ the counselor noticed that as the girl grew older, the parents of the teenager, had stopped giving her the affection she needed. So she sought the love of boys who hugged and loved her. She sought elsewhere the love that she didn't receive from their parents.

It is essential to show affection to our children. Sexual promiscuity is a false signal of sexual intimacy. Pornography and the ugly things happening in the world today are a sign that people crave affection and intimacy. Do not forget to bless your children with love and affection. Then, you have to:

3. Bless them with positive words - A son asks his father: "Dad, Am I adopted?" "Of course not", he replied, "if you were do you think we would have chosen you?" This makes us laugh but they are harsh words that would hurt the heart of any child. We might have not said this but we say other things that deeply hurt our children and mark them for life.

Prov. 15.4 says that **The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.** Our words have the power to destroy or to build. Be careful so that our words don't destroy the spirit of our children. To bless someone actually means "to speak well of." Parents should affirm their children verbally for what they are but also to inspire them towards future success. What message is your child getting from your words? Then you have to:

4. Bless them with spiritual influence - Prov. 22.6 says: **Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.** Fathers should put their children in the way of the things of God. Not only to show them the way but also demonstrate through their own lives. We must help them fall in love with God. But we can't do it unless we are ourselves are in love with God.

All fathers have a call from God to be a spiritual example for their children. We must do what we want our children to do in their lives. If you want them to seek God, you have to seek God, if you want them to serve God, or pray, or read the Bible, or come to church, or love God, etc. you have to be doing that. They must see in us those things we want to see in them. As you know, they may not listen to what we say but they watch what we do. Walk in the path you want to see your children walking.

Life is a battle, thus prepare your children for the battlefield and not for the playground. There are parents who constantly buy their children electronic toys, games, sweets, etc. but our children need more than entertainment, they need to be equipped so that they can survive the difficulties, challenges and trials that they will face in life. If you don't equip them and influence spiritually you'll be making a terrible mistake.

Father's Day is a great opportunity to assess of our performance and is an opportunity to re-evaluate our work and make the necessary adjustments. If you are a single mother, follow this same advice for fathers.

If you want to be a successful Christian father:

- 1. Bless them with your presence.**
- 2. Bless them with affection**
- 3. Bless them with positive words**
- 4. Bless them with spiritual influence.**