

The Blessing of Fatherhood



Dads's UNI

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FATHERS MAKING FATHERS

Sometimes in life it's good to pull back a bit and look at the wider view. Like using a wide-angle lens on a camera, it allows you the opportunity to see things that you might miss ordinarily, because of your proximity. Understanding how God sees our role as fathers today requires us to look from a historical perspective of how God dealt with mankind from creation.

Our sons watch us and learn from us how to be a father

God has always had a parenting plan. It began in the Garden of Eden and will continue throughout all eternity. When God formed Adam from the dust and breathed life into him, he created him with an inbuilt ability to have children; this of course was designed to be through intimacy with his wife Eve.

God our heavenly Father created Adam the first earthly father, with the ability to have sons who would grow and become fathers in their time. A natural cycle was begun in Eden that we are now part of, and which will continue.

Unfortunately, in our modern society we see that not every man who **fathers' children biologically actually take up his responsibility and role as a father to raise his children in the right way**, and sometimes not at all. Providing the seed for children without taking responsibility for the child that you have created would, in previous generations, have been shameful and dishonourable, but is almost commonplace today. Whether we are raising boys or raising girls, doing our best as single parents or Co-parenting, we as the child's father need to be present in their lives.

There are also many men who **honestly desire to do the right thing** and raise their children but are hindered or even prevented by divorce or separation from their spouses. It is also very apparent that many men find themselves in extremely difficult situations, when the tremendous love they feel for their children is restricted from flowing freely.

Men have a God given ability and drive to create the next generation, but without the guidance and wisdom of our heavenly Father I ask the question what will the next generation be like? God originally created Adam in His own image, but after Adam and Eve fell into sin and left the Garden of Eden, the bible reveals that Adam had children in 'his' image, a fallen image and poor reflection of God's original creation.

Our own children like us are born with a fallen nature, and a potential for both great good or terrible evil. How important then is it for us as fathers to guide them on the right track in life, so that their lives do not become a shipwreck on the rocky shores of life. Even the best hopes of fathers can be lost if they are not provided with the right resources and wisdom to guide their children.

Have you ever played Chinese whispers? It's a game where you line up about ten people in a row and whisper a message in the ear of the first person and ask them to pass it on likewise to the second and so on. By the time the message reaches the tenth person it is often very funny to see how the original message has been changed.

This concept shows that it is very possible to lose some or even much of a message throughout the process of time. The message that we as fathers pass to our children, they must then pass to their children, who will also pass to their children.

How important is it then to have a written record such as the Bible so that sound fathering principles can be confidently passed on to each successive generation, and to also have the Author of those words watching over us and ready to help in time of need.

WHAT DID YOUR FATHER TEACH YOU?

Throughout life we receive information and learn from many different areas, and some of the most influential areas are from our **personal relationships**. The most influential relationships we have initially as a child are with our parents and especially with **our father**. Normally in his role as the head of the home we look to him, as the leader and mentor more than anyone else. It is from our father that we as men learn many of the attitudes and values of life, and these greatly influence who and what we become in our own life as men. We often use our father's **life example** as our parenting guide and his parenting methods as our own blueprint for fatherhood.

We learn much about how to be a dad from our own fathers example

Now it is important to realise that for several generations the skills required for successful fatherhood have been on the decline within our society. I have written about this previously in the teaching called **Why Do We Need Dads' UNI?**. We as fathers may need initially to decide whether we want to model our fathering role upon the example of our own father, or another male figure within our lives.

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If you have had a great father and dear friend or even a good father who tried hard you should be able to glean at least some positive points from their fathering example. However, there are many men in our society today who either had no father figure at all or one who lacked even the most basic skills, and in those cases, you may want to look for another male figure to model your fathering from.

What did your father teach you? If he was loving and kind, supportive and encouraging then I would dare to guess that you share many of those traits in your own character today. But if your father was emotionally cold toward you or violent you may unfortunately still carry those negative influences within your life and find it difficult to 'connect' emotionally with your own kids.

It is from our fathers that we as men learn many of the concepts that we use in daily life. Concepts such as a healthy work ethic, showing respect for authority, protecting and honouring females as the 'weaker sex', standing up for what is right, helping those in need, taking care of your mates, and 'a fair go for all'.

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I see that the lack of good role models in our society as both a cause and affect of generations of decline in fathering skills. But it is also true that even the best dad will still have faults and failures, and we as men will need to be very discerning as to what to glean and what to leave behind from their example.

There is however hope for us all as men and fathers, and an example available for us to model that is without fault or mistakes. Jesus came to show us that we all as men have access to 'our heavenly Father', and that it is from Him that we need to learn the most important lessons in life. I have found that the insights and understanding that I glean from my daily Bible reading are a light in a dark place and both inspire and comfort me in my fathering role.

THE CHANGING ROLES OF MANHOOD

Most living things that grow start off in a seed form, usually in a smaller and less developed form than that which it will mature into, it's the same way with men. From the moment of conception, we begin a process of transformation that continues throughout our entire life as we mature physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

As a man our lives transition through many stages and roles

Throughout this process we as men also take on a series of ever-changing roles, it is sometimes described as having to wear many different hats as we continue upon our life's journey. What follows is a list identifying some of the major roles we transition through in life as a man and what we learn through them.

The role of son

We all start off wearing the hat of being a son. It is in this role that we begin to learn about the importance of respect and responsibility as we gain an understanding of the role that our father plays within the family. Father-son relationships ultimately create the next generation of father-son relationships, it is therefore an important time of learning in the life of every son.

The role of friend

Throughout life we often make many friendships and understanding what being a friend entails is important if we are to ultimately maintain those relationships long-term. It is as we wear the hat of being a friend that we learn many lessons about loyalty.

The role of boyfriend

When we finally make the connection with the girl who will become our future wife we begin to learn many new life lessons. Some of the more important lessons we learn as we wear the hat of being a boyfriend are about emotional sensitivity and treating our girlfriend with the honour she deserves as our future wife. We also begin to realise that for a relationship to truly work we must continue to work on ourselves as a man in the area of selflessness.

The role of husband

After we are married our opportunity and the need to change ourselves is magnified, as we begin the life-long process of becoming one married couple rather than two single individuals. It is within the blessed sanctity of marriage as we wear the hat of being a husband that we learn much about the character trait of faithfulness. It is in this role especially that we need to learn how to lay down our own desires and understand the importance of living a life of service. As head of the home we have much to learn if we are to become effective in our leadership role.

The role of provider

Traditionally most men wear the hat of being the principal provider for the marriage although in more recent times this is no longer universally accepted. Wisdom and practicality should be used as the couple assess everyone's earning capacity and choose what is right for their situation. It is often advantageous for both to work to help them become financially secure as a couple, especially in the early stages of marriage, before the arrival of any children.

The role of father

Certainly, wearing the hat of being a father is one of the most challenging but also most fulfilling aspects of a man's life. From the moment our child is born we will carry the responsibilities of fatherhood, as we lay down our own life for our family. It is in this role that we must attempt to master being an **example** to our children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and although none of us do it perfectly we should strive toward this goal. It is as a father that we learn about the incredible **power of encouragement** in the life of a child, and that our words can either hurt or heal. We also learn the value of **consistency in discipline** and our need for **discernment** in our relationship with our children and their peer groups. Also, as a father one of our most primary roles is that of **protector** of the family and especially the well-being of our children.

The role of coach

As our children grow, we often have opportunities to wear the hat of being a coach to them and to **pass on the skills and experience** that we have learnt in a sport or hobby. There is a great deal of satisfaction in watching your child pick up a skill you have taught them and reproduce it well on the playing field. Our role of encouraging them as a coach in their life often has a major influence in assisting the development of a long-term bond between you, that you can enjoy for years to come.

The role of guide and counsellor

As we watch our children grow and stand with them through the many challenges that they will face we are able to **offer both guidance and counsel** to help them navigate through life's obstacles. As we wear the hat of being a guide to our child, we can offer understanding and direction in specific situations to assist them. It is as we wear the hat of being a counsellor that we can assist their self-development into maturity. By not doing everything for them and sometimes allowing them to learn from their own mistakes along the way they learn to use reason to understand the consequences of their actions.

The role of mentor

Later in life when our children have grown up and we have already achieved credibility as a guide and counsellor, we can begin to wear the hat of being a mentor. As an adult they should now be making their own decisions, but when they are facing things beyond their knowledge and experience they can still come to you for **advice on important matters**. The role of a mentor is that of a person with credibility, experience and wisdom that can assist another person through a respectful relationship as peers.

It is because of the **natural evolution** of the relationship over time that the father/mentor is no longer seen as an authority figure in their life that needs to be obeyed, but rather a friend to be looked to in times of need.

It is helpful to realise that as men we continue to grow into the roles of manhood along the way even as our children also grow. Although we may not be ready with all the answers for our children when they are born, we can confidently expect that our wisdom and understanding will grow through life's experiences and we will be able to be there for them in their times of need.

MODERN FATHERING STYLES

As we grow into our role as a father, whether we are raising sons or raising daughters we will eventually develop our own parenting style. Practically put, this is the way we operate as a father, and is often influenced by the male role models we have had in life. You may find yourself repeating something that your dad said to you as a child, and this may or may not be a good thing depending upon their fathering style.

Our parenting style often reflects the way we ourselves were raised

We often unwittingly take on the attitudes and mannerisms of our own fathers, although we are not bound to stick with those fathering styles if we do not find them beneficial to our own family.

What is your style of being a father? Following is a simplified list of some (but not all) of the most typical fathering styles adopted in modern times. Each of these styles of fathering brings with it a set of consequences that will either improve or trouble your future relationship with your children.

The absent Dad

The absent Dad is characterised as the man who has fathered a child but takes little or no part in the child's life. This may or may not be his desire as sometimes relationship breakdowns result in the father being isolated from his child from no fault of his own.

The 'ask Mum' Dad

The 'ask Mum' Dad is the father who although present in body, has yielded much of the daily decision making and disciplining of the children to his wife. He is often characterised by the man who is caught up with so many external things outside the family unit that he has nothing left mentally or emotionally for them.

The dictator Dad

The dictator Dad is the father who runs the home like a Prisoner of War Camp and has the kids jumping incessantly through fear of punishment. This style of fathering is often characterised by shouting and threatening dire circumstances if directions are not followed immediately.

The pushover Dad

The pushover Dad is the father that is so soft emotionally that his children are able to twist him around their little fingers and get everything they want by merely batting their eyelids and saying 'Please Dad!!!!'

The involved Dad

The involved Dad is the father who has grasped the importance of taking up his role as head of the home to serve his family through leadership and self sacrifice. He ensures that he is involved in as many areas of his child's life as possible, taking an interest, encouraging and financing his child's development. He is also responsible for the loving application of discipline within the home, and one of his greatest roles is to lead by example.

It is possible for men to see elements of their fathering styles in more than one of those listed, or as the list is not comprehensive you may not see your style at all. The aim of this particular teaching is to help dads identify their own style of fathering and decide whether they wish to maintain it or try to improve certain areas that do not seem beneficial to their family.

How we as fathers are seen by our children is important, for not only do we shape young lives into adulthood but the relationship we have with them today will affect the relationship they will want to have with us in the future.

PROTECTORS OF INNOCENCE

From the moment you transition from being a 'dad to be' to holding your new-born child in your arms you realise that your life has just changed dramatically. This beautiful baby, your beautiful baby, has come forth from the union of yourself and your wife and millions of new possibilities are opening in front of your eyes.

Although this child carries many of the genetic traits of both your wife and you, it is also without doubt unique. The child has its own fingerprints, different from every other person who has ever lived. The child has its own personality, its own natural gifts and abilities and its own dreams and hopes, but now all we see is a tiny human being struggling to become acquainted with this strange new world it has just arrived into.

As a new father we have a wonderful opportunity to take stock of our own lives, and to assess what is still and what is no longer important to us.

Priorities change in our own heart when we perceive the value of this precious life we have been given to look after. It is important to realise that even though the challenges of being a father are sometimes difficult, the benefits we will receive are amazing. Fatherhood is not for cowards, but billions of men have done it before you and you are well able to become a great dad.

There are several main roles you will probably step into as a new father including Provider, Teacher and Friend, but one of the most important roles is that of Protector.

Being a Protector of our families is one of the most natural roles we as men fall into, it seems to be hard-wired into our manhood. Keeping our families safe from the many dangers that we as men already know are in the world, is a role that requires diligence and discernment.

What are the things in the world that you as a new dad want to protect your child from? Physical danger? Sickness or Disease? Bad Influences? Wrong Relationships? Sadly to say there are many influences in the world that would take advantage of a young innocent life and twist its beauty and uniqueness into something to be regretted.

The best way to protect our children's lives is to build a stronghold of wisdom around them, so that even as they grow up and become more independent, the life lessons that their father taught them will stay with them.

Sharing life lessons and teaching our children is not a scheduled event each week, it happens daily, moment by moment as we impart our own lives and values to them through **our own example**.

How then should we live as fathers, if our greatest ability to protect our family comes from our own life example? Do you want to see your child smoking cigarettes? Then you as their example shouldn't smoke! Do you want your child to live a healthy and active life? Then you as their example should do the same!

A father is a shining light to a child, an example to be followed, a life to emulate! Decide today to be the best example to your children that you can be, and in doing so you will go a long way toward fulfilling your role as a protector of innocence.

THE CHOICES OF A FATHER

The future that we face tomorrow as a man and father is determined to a large extent today. Our individual decisions and lifestyle choices influence the way that society is heading, for we are re-laying the foundations of society with every new generation. Therefore, we as fathers must look closely at what we do or fail to do in this life, for we hold the future of the coming generations in our hands.

The foundation of any building must be strong if it is to remain standing.

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Becoming a father brings many changes into our lives as men, just as becoming a husband brings changes into our lives as single men. There is a responsibility that comes with relationships of any kind, and if we handle those responsibilities well our relationship has the best chance of prospering. If we treat our wife with love and respect, we have a far greater chance of staying married than if we are uncaring or abusive towards her. If we build a loving and caring relationship with our children from the moment of their birth, then there is a far greater chance that they will want to continue that relationship with us when we are old.

When a building of any size is constructed what is most important initially is the laying of a strong and stable foundation, so it is with building a family. There are many things that we can do as a father or fail to do that will either strengthen or weaken the foundations of our family. Every society is built up of individual families, they are the building blocks used in its construction. When individual families are strong then society is strong, when individual families fail then society also begins to fail.

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Throughout ancient history we see the rise and fall of many influential societies and cultures, whether it be Greek or Roman, Babylonian or Assyrian. Each of these cultures had a time of influence upon the world stage and became the dominant 'super powers' of their time. But the influence of these 'super powers' waned as was eventually replaced by another, often because of the mistakes made by those who carried the responsibility to decide the future of that society.

Newton's Third Law states that 'for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction' or in other words there are consequences for everything we do in life, either good or bad. Good decisions lead to good consequences, bad decisions lead to bad consequences. Good parenting decisions are most often made by those who have taken the time to consider the path they want to lead their children along in life. Therefore, we as fathers need to ensure to the best of our ability that we make well-informed and well-considered decisions if the future of our family is to be a successful one.

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Each day we as fathers make choices that determine the direction that our family is going, and when enough families are heading in the same direction then society is too. The question I ask is this: Will the generations to come thank you for the decisions you are making today? Or will they regret decisions that ultimately proved to be short-sighted and resulted in destruction rather than blessing? **Choose Well!**

A LIFE OF HONOUR

I think one of the most beneficial ways for us as men to improve the way we feel about ourselves is to live a life of honour. The word 'honour' is rarely used in modern speech and understood even less in our society.

Self respect comes when we live the way we know we should!

To live a life of honour we as men must live by a code or belief in something greater than ourselves, something worth living for or even dying for.

Living a life of honour means living a life of integrity and being a man of your word even in the face of adversity. Standing up for those values you believe in doesn't always make you a lot of friends immediately, but what it does earn you is respect. When other men look at you, they may not fully understand why you live this way, but deep inside themselves they often wish they had the strength and belief to live like you do.

Being a man of honour goes a long way toward developing a healthy self-respect, and often adds meaning and a sense of fulfilment to our lives.

In the books of ancient times we see the knights in shining armour fighting off the dragon and saving the fair maiden in distress and we think that's **heroic**. We see Sir Walter Raleigh throwing down his cloak so that Queen Elizabeth 1 didn't have to get her shoes dirty while crossing over a puddle of water, and we think that's **chivalrous**. We see the Christians of the early church worshipping God in song as they were preparing to be martyred by being fed to the lions in the Roman Colosseum, and we think that's **real faith**.

As men we have an inherent desire to be a protector and defender of those weaker than ourselves, and it is often this compulsion that causes us to perform great acts of bravery. This desire stems from a deep place within ourselves where our core values exist and reveals the true way that we see our world and how we believe the world should be. Living by these **core values** whether it be through acts of heroism, acts of chivalry or demonstrations of incredible faith, enables us as men to live a life of honour.

Living a life of honour can be something as little as standing up in a bus and giving your seat to a woman or taking back the excess money to the store owner when you were under-charged for a purchase. Living a life of honour may mean telling the truth even though you know that you will suffer for it. Living a life of honour may mean defending someone who is being bullied or rescuing a child's cat that is stuck up a tree.

Honour is that indefinable something that rises within a man when they see injustice in the world and know that it is up to them to change it.

Men of honour lead the way in the world, they shine as lights in a dark place and illuminate the path we are all called to walk upon. They are men that are known in their region as someone who can be trusted, and when the going gets tough they are the one everyone turns to for help or advice.

We all can influence our world for the better and that opportunity begins with living a life of honour. Fathers by their example, have great influence upon the future direction that their children will choose in life, one of the best parenting decisions we can make is to live a life of honour.

The Ministry Of Dads' UNI

Dads' UNI is an Online Ministry based in Australia and is focused on providing simple biblical teaching to assist young men in Growing Families God's Way.

All Dads' UNI resources are provided free of charge, and we encourage those who enjoy our teachings to share them freely among family and friends.

Dads' UNI can be found online in the following locations:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Dadsuni/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dadsuni/>

You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV1vuth1FMmKxiJw_xQZpQg

Website: <https://www.dadsuni.com/>

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We would also like to thank the Photographer for our wonderful Cover Photo

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