

# ***What Wives Wish Husbands Knew***

## **Session 7—Every Kid’s Dream**

### **“I Wish You Knew How to be an Involved Father”**

Many of us grew up in a slice of time when men weren’t expected to be family oriented. Dads didn’t change diapers so much, if at all, and they didn’t hug their kids very often, didn’t kiss them either, especially if the little one was a little guy. Most men in my generation never heard our dads say, “I love you”. Society told our dads a lie that too many of them believed:

- That being a father primarily meant that a man was the bread winner in the home;
- That manhood could not survive a tender moment;
- That men never cried;
- That kids need a mother’s touch but not a dad’s.

#### **I. Dad—the most powerful word in the world...**

Honor? Love? Patriotism? Sacrifice? All powerful words and concepts. But compare them to the word “Dad” and they fall to their knees in respect.

#### **QUOTE**

“How about the word dad? Just walk through what you know about life. When it comes to power in a youngster’s world, I’ll put money on the word dad. As words go, hope, vision, and sacrifice don’t mean a whole lot to little ones, but the power of the word dad reaches far beyond a youngster’s childhood. In fact, it spans generations. There are two ways to recognize power. One is to see it at work. The other is to measure what happens when it’s gone. Either way, the word dad is pretty potent. Present or absent, positive or negative, the power of the father is incredible.” (Stu Weber, in *“Tender Warrior”*)

Fathers leave ***life-long imprints*** on their children, who in turn pass it along to their own children, who then pass it along to their children. The world is as it is because of fathers...

#### **STATISTICS**

- 63% of adolescent suicides.
- 85% of children that exhibit behavior disorders.
- 80% of convicted rapists.
- 71% of high school drop outs.
- 75% of adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers.
- 70% of juveniles incarcerated in state operated institutions.
- 85% of teenage felons serving time in prison.
- 70% of teen pregnancies.

The common thread? These are all kids that grew up without Dad...

### **QUOTE**

“Of all human relationships, the bond between father and child is one of the most powerful and complex. We may look at our mothers for unconditional love. But be we men or women, we often seek to validate our existence through the approval of our fathers. If our father dies or in some way is absent before we earn that approval, we live the rest of our lives feeling cheated.” (T. Berry Brazelton, former chief of child development at Children’s Hospital in Boston)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How close were you to your father growing up? Very close? Average? Not close at all?
2. How close are you and your father today?
3. What were some of the relationships that you had with your father? Best friend? Authoritarian figure? Teacher?
4. Why kind of relationship do you want/have with your own children?

## **II. Fathers and their sons...**

### **A. The choice every father makes...every day—hero or zero.**

I like the notion of being heroic dads for our children. You don’t have to be the Lone Ranger or Superman to be a heroic dad...

This next piece is a treasure. It was written by a friend of mine that I have as much respect for as any man alive...because he didn’t write this for any reason other than he wanted to be the man his kids needed... Give it a listen.

### ***True Manhood***

“What is a man?  
Is he someone who is strong and tall?  
Or is taut and talented as he plays ball?  
Is he someone who is hardened and tough  
who smokes and drinks and swears enough?  
Is he someone who chases women hard  
with a quest to conquer but never drops his guard?  
Is he someone with a good business mind  
who gets ahead of the others with his nose to the grind?  
Or is he someone who tries his best  
but not really caring about any of the rest?  
What is a man?  
Does anyone know?  
Tell me! Who is the prototype?  
To whom shall we go?”

### 1. Typical dads...

- We don't like to take **instruction**.
- It's a snap for us to **deny** all thoughts of our **needing help**.
- We can **reject** even the **best advice** easily.
- And we hate to stop and ask for **directions**.
- Maleness can cause **real hurt**.
- It can create **harmful memories**.
- It can be **abusive, arrogant & demanding**.

Maybe that's why this verse is in the Bible...

### **Colossians 3:21**

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

### 2. Atypical dads...

- We can be the most life-giving part of our son's lives...
- We can be for him what no one else on earth can be—a picture of God that he will carry with him for the rest of his life...

Without doubt we who are fathers have much to do regarding our children...and it shouldn't surprise us to learn that it's God's intention for every dad to point the hearts of our children in the right direction...

### **Psalm 45:16**

Your sons will take the place of your **fathers**.

## **B. Boys Are Growing Up Without Dads' Involvement.**

### **ILLUSTRATION**

"I was just 12 years old when my Boy Scout troop planned a father-son campout. I was thrilled and could hardly wait to rush home and give my father all the information. I wanted so much to show him all I'd learned in scouting, and I was so proud when he said he'd go with me.

"The Friday of the campout finally came, and I had all my gear out on the porch, ready to stuff it in his car the moment he arrived. We were all to meet at the school at 5 p.m. and car pool to the campground. But Dad didn't get home from work until 7 p.m. I was frantic, but he explained that things had gone wrong at work and told me not to worry. We could still get up first thing in the morning and join the others. After all, we had a map. I was disappointed, of course, but decided to make the best of it.

"First thing in the morning, I was up and had everything in his car while it was still getting light, all ready for us to catch up with my friends and their fathers at the campground. Dad had said we'd leave around 7 a.m., and I was ready a half hour before that. But he didn't even come out of his room until 9 a.m.

"When he saw me standing out front with the camping gear, he finally explained

that he had a bad back and couldn't sleep on the ground. He hoped I'd understand and that I'd be a 'big boy' about it ... but could I please get my things out of his car, because he had several commitments he had to keep.

"Just about the hardest thing I've ever done was to go to the car and take out my sleeping bag, cooking stove, pup tent, and supplies. And then, while I was putting my stuff away in the storage shed and he thought I couldn't see, I watched my father carry his golf clubs out and throw them in his trunk and drive away to keep his 'commitment.'

"That's when I realized my dad never meant to go with me to the campout. I didn't matter to him, but his golfing buddies did."

1. Women dominate boy's lives from birth through **18**.
  - a. Most moms aren't aware that they're doing this kind of thing to their boys.
  - b. She's creating him to operate in a woman's circle rather than a man's because **she doesn't have the ability to do otherwise**...that takes dad.
2. Sometimes sons become **surrogate husbands** for the absentee fathers.
  - a. If you had such a mom, when you had your first serious girlfriend, left for college, got engaged or married your mother probably hated everything about your decision because in her mind you were leaving her...it's not a pretty picture.
  - b. We've all heard that no woman is good enough to marry a mother's son in her eyes and for that reason there's typically a lot of tension between wives and mother's in law.
3. It goes a lot deeper than that in some cases—
  - a. In some cases mom's reacting out of feelings that are more like those that she would have if another woman had an affair with her husband...
  - b. I feel sorry for your wife if that's how you grew up.
4. These are the same moms that try to tell you how to raise your children, what clothes they should wear, where to buy their clothes, how to cook, clean the house, what church you should attend, who to vote for, what to believe, how to drive...and get offended when you don't go along with her.
  - a. I'm not willing to let women off the hook completely here...
  - b. But to a large degree it's a situation that might not ever have had a chance to exist if dad was really involved.

#### **QUOTE**

"The damage caused by father's absence may be severe and may last a lifetime. It is a shadow. Sons have a need for their fathers that has not been significantly explored. Today in the feminist culture in which we live manhood is being minimized, pushed to the margins.

But I have seen it in other men and I see it in my own sons...their longing for me.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **QUOTE**

“My dad was a chief of police and when he came into a room all the light and air went out of it. There was a saying in the South, ‘no man is a man until his father tells him he is.’ It means that some day when you’re 30 or 40, grown up, this man whom you love and respect and want to love you will put his arms around you and say, ‘You know, you’re a man now, you don’t have to do all those crazy things and get into fist-fights and all that. You don’t have to prove anything. You’re a man and I love you.’ But, you know, my dad never said that to me. We never hugged. We never kissed. We never said, ‘I love you.’ No, we never even cried together.” Then he paused and said, “So what happened was, was that later I was desperately looking for someone who’d say, ‘You’re grown up Burt and I approve, and love you, and you don’t have to do those things anymore.’ I was lost inside. I couldn’t connect with life. I was incomplete. I didn’t know then what I needed to know.” (Burt Reynolds)

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

A little fellow, frightened by lightning and thunder, who called out one dark night to his father, “Daddy... I’m scared.”

“Son,” the father said, “God loves you and he’ll take care of you.”

“I know God loves me,” the boy replied. “But right now I want somebody who has skin on.”

If I were starting my family again, that is what I would want to be above all else, God’s love with skin on...

### **III. Dads and their daughters...**

#### **QUOTE**

“He shaped me as a person more than any other man. It was the dream of my life to have a father. And that is why I sought him everywhere. I spent most of my life looking for substitutes for him. I still wonder what he was thinking as he saw me up there on the movie screen. With all the grandiose gifts I have received in my life, my most treasured possession is the only toy my father ever gave me—a little blue car with my name on it.” (Sophia Loren, who only saw her father six times)

#### **A. If dad chooses not to be there...**

According to *The Institute of Sexual Research*, if dad’s aren’t deeply involved in their daughter’s lives, there are two predictable outcomes:

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<sup>1</sup> Lance Morrow, writer for *Time Magazine* and the Library of Congress in *Civilization Magazine*

1. They either develop personalities that are **insecure**, **anxious**, and will **have difficulty forming relationships**.
2. OR...they become inappropriately **self-assertive**, **angry**, or **promiscuous**.

### **B. If dad chooses to be there...**

Again, according to *The Institute of Sexual Research* Dad, **if** he's a leading presence in the home, **if** he's loving to his daughter, **if** he's emotionally involved with her, **if** he's expressive of his love to her, **if** he interacts with his daughter frequently thereby providing a stable, strong relationship with her...he will provide her with three things:

1. She will be secure in her **identity** as a woman.
  - a. Because of your proper involvement in her life as the primary male figure in her life for the first 15 years of her life, your daughter will feel secure in her identity as a woman.
  - b. You will have shown her how valuable she is as a female and how thrilled you are that she is a female.
  - c. You will cause her to feel good about herself.
2. She will **relate** to the opposite sex in a healthy way:
  - a. By virtue of your relationship with your daughter, given that it is a healthy one, you will have taught your daughter how to properly relate to men.
  - b. The ability of a woman to trust a man begins with her thoughts and opinions of her own father.
3. She will often enjoy a highly fulfilling **sex life** with their husband.
  - a. I know, you don't even want to think about this...
  - b. But once you get past that part of having a daughter you'll have to admit that it's very important.
  - c. For most women the ability to enjoy and express sexual love is directly related to their ability to trust and admire the man with whom they are involved...

### **ILLUSTRATION**

A couple of years ago in the cartoon strip, For Better or for Worse, the Father's teenage daughter was sitting on the couch watching television while munching popcorn.

In the next panel Dad sits next to her and has some of her popcorn. As he does that little cloud-looking balloon appears over his head that tells us he's thinking but not talking: "I remember when she was so young. Now look at her. She's all grown up, and such a beautiful girl, too. I wonder what she would think if I held her like I used to and told her I loved her?" He finally concludes that she would

be uncomfortable if he did that.

In the final panel while he sits eating popcorn there's a little cloud-like balloon over the daughter's head. She's thinking to herself: "I wonder why Dad never hugs me anymore?"

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is raising sons different from raising daughters?
2. What are some of the pitfalls you can help others avoid?
3. What are some of the victories you can recommend?

#### IV. The Transcendent Dad.

Dads, what are you leaving preparing to give to your children that will continue to give them life after you're gone?

##### A. Convictions

- If you have well balanced biblical convictions...
- If you live by those convictions...
- If you have the skill to communicate those convictions...
- Then you may very well be the most important person in the life of your children.
- And you are the dad that most kids never get to have.

**DON'T DOUBT THAT  
DON'T IGNORE THAT  
DON'T ABDICATE THAT ROLE  
DON'T RELINQUISH THAT ROLE  
NO ONE CAN BE BETTER FOR YOUR KIDS THAN YOU CAN BE...  
IF YOU CHOOSE TO BE  
BECAUSE YOU CAN BE THE KIND OF DAD YOUR KIDS NEED**

- If you haven't formed solid convictions that are both fair and biblical, then it's just not possible for you to teach them to your kids.
- You've heard it, maybe said it, "Do as I say, not as I do." It won't work...not once they pass the age of nine or ten.
- If you don't teach them, it's a crap-shoot as to whether or not they'll ever learn it.

##### B. Values

American values, as a whole, really could use a shot in the arm. I'm not critical of people working hard and enjoying the fruit of their labor. As a matter of fact, I think it's the way it's supposed to be. I'm no fan of laziness or entitlement.

The medical community tells us that stress is at an all time high in the US. And they tell us that we really don't deal with it too well, primarily because we're willing to live under stressful conditions for the sake of having more stuff.

Wouldn't you think it wise to teach our kids to work hard and earn well, but that having a lot of money really shouldn't belong at the top of every list?

A lot of us are working pretty hard, and have plans to leave an inheritance to our kids. I think that's great, but I also know that *too much too soon* isn't good for anyone.

**IT'S A TRAGEDY WHEN WE GIVE OUR KIDS PLENTY TO LIVE ON  
BUT NOTHING TO LIVE FOR...**

**C. Memories**

The first time I made this statement I was rebuked by a semi-self-righteous religious addict. But I still think it's right...

- I don't care if Jennifer ever remembers a single thing I said in the pulpit.
- I don't care if she ever even thinks about the fact that I earned my doctorate and was the pastor of a church.
- What I hope she does remember was that it was fun growing up in our house.
  - It wasn't all fun.
  - But more than anything else I ever said, I hope she remembers the sound of my laughter.

**ILLUSTRATION**

Robert Fulgem wrote a book entitled, "Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." In his latest book he says that it's normal when grown kids come back home, for them to reminisce about things they got by with when they were younger, that mom and dad never found out about.

He recalls that when his children began reminiscing, that his oldest son said, "Dad, when I was 14 & you & mom were gone for a while, I went out in the garage and got in the car, started it up, backed it out, drove it around the block several times, and then put it back in the garage. And you never knew it." Everybody laughed, and then he went on, "Another time when you and mom went to the grocery store, we went out in the back yard and smoked a cigar...and we got away with it."

Then Fulgem waited till their laughter, at his expense, had died down. Then he told his children, "You know all the times that grandma sent you kids money for Christmas? Your mom and I always took a cut!" Guess who laughed then?

**V. Conclusion**

**Luke 1:13b-17**

Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. <sup>14</sup> He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. <sup>16</sup> Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, **to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children** and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

## **QUOTE**

“Sons love their mothers, but follow their fathers.” (Anonymous)

## **POEM**

“To get her good-night kiss she stood beside my chair one night,  
And raised an eager face to me, a face with love alight.  
As I gathered in my arms the child God gave to me,  
I thanked her for being good, & hoped she'd always be.  
Her little arms crept around my neck, and then I heard her say,  
Four simple words I can't forget, words that made me pray.  
They turned a mirror on my soul, on secrets no one knew.  
They startled me. I hear them yet; 'I wanna be just like you.'” (Anonymous)

## **POEM**

Mender of toys, leader of boys,  
Changer of fuses, kisser of bruises,  
Bless him, O Lord.

Mover of couches, soother of ouches,  
Pounder of nails, teller of tales,  
Reward him, O Lord.

Hanger of screens, counselor of teens,  
Fixer of bikes, chastiser of tykes,  
Help him, O Lord.

Raker of leaves, cleaner of eaves,  
Dryer of dishes, fulfiller of wishes,  
Bless him, O Lord.