

UNCOMMEN

Uncommon Fathers

Tom Tarantino

(Pray)

Nathan asked me to speak about what it takes to be a good father, and of course I told him I'd think about it. And sure, I like to think of myself as a good father, but I wasn't sure if I could actually offer anything of practical value in a lesson format.

In fact, when Nathan asked again through a text, I texted him back:

"I've been thinking about it... but not at all convinced I would have much to offer... other than 'fatherhood is all about love, and trusting God.' I don't know how to teach that. Just because I've been blessed with a great daughter, doesn't mean I am the reason, or that I even know, in any quantifiable way, how that really happened!"

So, a couple days later, after praying about it, I texted him again:

"I've decided to trust God, and I've started a lesson outline. Not sure yet where it's going, except that the focus could be on the fathers who are struggling; who don't think they're doing a good job. And maybe, also, on the possible pitfalls for the rest of us who THINK we have fatherhood all figured out! Please pray that God guides me, so that someone truly benefits from the lesson."

I only have ONE child; OK? So I'm by no means an expert at child rearing.

A number of us here have multiple kids and grandkids, and I tip my hat to you!

However... God has chosen to bless me, in my humble opinion, with the perfect daughter!! I think those of you who know Megan would agree; Especially Richard!

But I honestly don't know how any lesson could ever teach how much I truly love her!

That said...

1. How many fathers are here?

2. How many of us think we're doing a pretty good job raising our kids?

Tell me why... There are signs we can point to, right?

3. NOW... Here's the more important question:

How many of us DON'T think we're doing such a great job raising our kids?

How many would like to do better?

NOBODY'S A PERFECT FATHER, (except GOD The Father)!

God our father in heaven is the perfect example of what a father should be.

Strong, courageous, compassionate and even-tempered.

We would do well to follow His example in all that we do.

Psalms 127:3a says, "Children are a heritage from the Lord,"

Deut 6:6-9 says, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

OK what does all that mean? And how do we do that? I can tell with certainty it DOESN'T mean pretending to be godly, just for our kids' sake! It doesn't work that way.

It means God's word is to be in our hearts, on our lips, and in EVERYTHING WE DO AND SAY - ALL THE TIME! Our kids will pick up on the tiniest little things! They don't miss much! They'll eventually figure out if we're only on our best behavior when we're around them!

Prov 22:6 says, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

WHAT DO OUR KIDS ACTUALLY SEE US DOING?

Do they see us serving GOD and studying His word... or not?

1 Cor 15:58 says, "Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless."

2Tim 2:15 says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

Do they see us treating THEIR MOTHERS with love and respect... or not?

Eph 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."

I suppose one might think it's easy for me to preach about wives, since I don't have mine anymore... Nevertheless, I can tell you, I learned these lessons!!! (a little about Jackie)

Do they see us treating EVERYONE with love and respect... or not?

Heb 13:1-2 says, "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ²Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

Eph 4:29 says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

Prov 12:18 says, "There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Prov 15:4 says, "A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit."

Do they see us responding with grace under pressure? (...Or blowing a gasket?)

Do they see us discipline them out of love?

Prov 14:29 says, "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly."

Prov 14:17a says, "A quick-tempered person does foolish things,..."

Prov 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Mark 9:42 says, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea."

Eph 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Prov 29:17 says, "Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind and will make your heart glad."

Heb 12:7b says, "... God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?"

**Do they see us laughing ever... with cheerfulness and joy?
(...Or complaining about life?)**

Prov 15:13a "A joyful heart makes a cheerful face,..."

Proverbs 17:22a "A cheerful heart is good medicine,..."

Proverbs 14:13a "Laughter can conceal a heavy heart,..."

Proverbs 15:15b "For the happy heart, life is a continual feast."

Do they see us truly LISTENING to them? (...Or just tolerating them?)

James 1:19 says, "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,..."

Col 3:21 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so they won't become discouraged."
If we're not giving them our attention, ... pretty sure they're gonna be exasperated!!!
Our kids want and need our approval. But if they're not even getting our full attention...?

(This one is particularly interesting to me)

Psalm 116:1-2 says, "I love the Lord, for He heard my voice;
He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned his ear to me,
I will call on Him as long as I live."

(I believe this is also true for ANY child and ANY father!)

And if I were to PARAPHRASE that verse from my perspective as a father,
I'd say it like this:

"My daughter loves me, for I heard her voice;
Because I turned my ear to her,
she will call on me as long as she lives."
(Of course I'm not her God, but I think you get my drift.)

**Do they see our eyes looking into theirs for more than 10 seconds at a time?
(Or are we, instead, locking eyes on our phones during conversation with our kids?)**

Matthew 18:10 "Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father."

Col 3:21 "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."

**Will they see our gratitude; our generosity; our humility?
Will they see us admit when we're wrong?
Will they see us studying the word of God, and living it?
Will they see us on our knees in prayer?
Will they see us as genuine representations of our Heavenly Father?
Will they see and hear us singing, praising, honoring, glorifying His Holy Name?**

END:

A lot of us here are fathers, or grandfathers, and maybe even great grandfathers.

Nonetheless, we're ALL still children—sons of our parents.

But no matter how old we are, we're ALSO always gonna be children of GOD!

I'm pretty sure God loves us unimaginably more than we could ever know in this life!

And as disciples; as children of God, the last thing we wanna do is disappoint Him... right?

We're always striving to be the good and faithful servants that He created us to be.

The question is: Do our sons and daughters feel the same way... about us?

Do our kids know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, how much we really love them?

... So much so that it would pain them to know they've disappointed us?

Lastly: At some point, will our kids KNOW and SEE how much we love GOD?

And will they learn from our example how to love God, and love each other?

Our kids need and deserve Godly role models. That's us guys! We're the example! It's us!

Pray:

(Father, I pray that our kids will always bring a smile to your face for the joy that they bring. May they be trained up to be the godly faithful servants you created them to be.

Father we trust you, and ask you to please use us and guide us every step of the way as we lead our kids to know Jesus; to know you, and to serve you with their lives. As fathers, help us to be the closest possible representation of you to our kids, just as Jesus is a reflection of you to us!)
