



Empowering People to Change the World

Fatherhood

Steve Holt

Fatherhood: Top 3 Priorities of a Successful Father

When you hear the “dad” or “father,” all of us have different responses. There are many shades to that name:

- For some of you it is a dark shade—it means disappointment, anger, drug addiction or alcoholism.
- For some of us it is a beautiful shade—the name of “dad” is full of security, protection, love and generosity.
- For most us, it is a mixed bag of dark and light shades—good and bad, angry and joyful, protection sometimes and uncertainty in others.
- For example, as a pastor, here is what’s amazing: I have discovered that people make their life, no matter their background with their earthly father, they choose a way, a road for themselves.
 - I have seen so many men and women with no fathers, completely abandoned by their dad, who have found a New Father in Heaven, who are walking in victory, forgiveness and joy.
 - I have seen others who had wonderful homes who have chosen to abandon the vision and values of their Christian home and are systematically dismantling the happiness they once experienced in their home.
 - But what shows up more than anything else, are men and women who had come out of homes with powerful, loving, caring fathers—they are more stable, more secure and more successful than most others. *Being a good dad, being a Christian father really makes a huge difference.*
- Today is Father’s Day and I want to address this topic. It could be that this is the most important job we men do.

“Of all the titles I’ve been privileged to have, ‘Dad’ has always been the best.”

Ken Norton (WBC World Heavyweight Champion)

“Every father should remember one day his son will follow his example, not his advice.”

Charles Kettering (American inventor, engineer, businessman, and the holder of 186 patents. Founder of Delco, and was head of research at General Motors)

“My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me.”

Jim Valvano (Head Coach NC State Basketball, 1983 NCAA National Champion)

“My father didn’t tell me how to live. He lived and let me watch him do it.”

Clarence Budington Kelland (Syndicated writer and prolific writer of novels)

“It’s only when you grow up and step back from him—or leave him for your own home—it’s only then that you can measure his greatness and fully appreciate it.”

Margaret Truman (Daughter of President Harry Truman)

“If homes are going to survive, it will be because husbands and fathers again place their families at the highest level of their system of priorities”

James Dobson (Founder of Focus on the Family and Family Talk)

I have been a father for 30 years and it has proved to be the most rewarding, adventurous and difficult thing I have ever done.

My Top 3 hardest things about being a dad:

- 1. Give them just enough to have resources to work with, but not too much to spoil them.**
- 2. Being a Protector of their heart without Fighting their Battles for them.**
- 3. Moving from being the Leader of the Family, who's word is the vision for our family, to being a Friend, who's word is only advice.**
 - a. For me that has meant not initiating anymore, but waiting on my young adults to come to me.

Top 3 Priorities of a Successful Father:

- I. A Father must Prioritize his Relationship with his Father.**
 - Every father must have a model for fathering—some of us were blessed with great earthly fathers and some us with not so good, but every Christian father has a Heavenly Father.
 - There is no such thing as a “fatherless Jesus disciple.” You have a Father and His name is Jesus and He is the perfect Father.
 - The first priority of a successful father is his relationship with God! The greatest commandment applies to fatherhood.

“The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)

- Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven...”
- Every small f father must cultivate as his number 1 priority a growing intimacy with capital F Father.

- The greatest gift a father can give his wife and children is a passionate love for Jesus.
- The most impactful thing we do as fathers is how we start our day. It is not making phone calls, brokering deals or showing up on time, rather it is beginning each day with God.
 - Opening the Word
 - Worshipping
 - Prayer
 - Journaling
 - PB&J
- Cultivating and contending for intimacy with the King of kings and Lord of lords.
- Beholding the Lord!! The fountainhead feeds the stream. Drink from the fountain!
- You show me a dad who is daily contending to love Jesus with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, and I will show you wife and children that are being loved toward the same direction.
- You show me a father who is loving God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and I will show you a family that can weather poverty, cancer, hardships and even death with the power and presence of God over their lives.
- I am talking about being a “mountain moving man!”

II. A Father must see the Future

- Every successful father must have a vision, a mission for his life—his work, his family and his marriage.
- Without a vision a marriage will perish; without a vision a family will perish!

Prov. 29:18 “without a vision (or a revelation) the people perish (unrestrained)”

- How many have you seen unrestrained families? There is not vision, there is revelation.
- Men, you need a vision for your life! You need a vision for your marriage and your children. Why did God put your lives together? Why did God give you these children?
- Live the Life of Your Dreams: Be brave enough to live the life of your dreams according to your **vision** and purpose instead of the expectations and opinions of others.
- Helen Keller said, “The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but no **vision**.”
- It takes courage to seek God for His vision for your life—it is a revelation from God. But you must seek after it.

Proverbs 2

My son, if you accept my words

and store up my commands within you,

² turning your ear to wisdom

and applying your heart to understanding—

³ indeed, if you call out for insight

and cry aloud for understanding,

⁴ and if you look for it as for silver

and search for it as for hidden treasure,

⁵ then you will understand the fear of the Lord

and find the knowledge of God.

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom;

from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

⁷ He holds success in store for the upright,

he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,

⁸ for he guards the course of the just

and protects the way of his faithful ones.

⁹ Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.

- Priorities and desires flow out of a vision! What is your mission for being a father? What is your mission for your marriage? Your family?

1st Priority: A Father must have a Father

2nd Priority: A Father must see the Future

III. A Father must stay Focused

- A father absolutely must stay in the game! Quitting is highly overrated.
 - You and I know the quitters and they are some of the most unhappy people on the earth.
 - Dad's who do not quit are men of focus.
- Keep your eye on the ball and stay in the game! This takes discipline.
- For example, what most people comment on about our family is how joyful, fun and hardworking our kids are! I love that. Everyone loves Jesus and everyone works hard, but that took a lot of work. Liz and I never quit.
- Even while starting a church twice, being a missionary, going to graduate school or having \$100 to our name. We did not quit.
- Do not quit. Stay focused!

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

- Here is the difference as I see it:
 - Focused Dads, work hard on being a good model to their wife and kids—character matters to them.

- Focused Dads, work hard at having quality and quantity time with their family.
 - Focused Dads, experience the joy of kids that love him—which by the way, it does not get much better than that.
 - Focused Dads, have to surrender some of their hobbies, TV time and recreation to build into their marriage and family.
 - Focused Dads, apologize when they are wrong and ask for forgiveness from their wife and kids.
- One of the most important things a father give his son is his masculinity; a mother her daughter, her femininity.
 - All of us have made mistakes and we always start afresh—there is a second chance, third chance in the kingdom of God.