**Father’s are Worthy of Respect**

**Proverbs 1:7 and other Selected Verses**

What do Christian dads really want for Father’s Day?

I am not exactly sure what all Christian Dads want, but after thinking about it this week, I realized that my encouragement comes from seeing evidence my children are learning to live sacrificially for others.

It lifts my spirits when I see my kids walking in wisdom and thinking about how they can contribute to the lives of others. Even though I like material gifts, there is no gift better than seeing my kids showing honor, respect, and care for other people on the planet. Jesus said that “the Son of Man came to serve and not to be served.” And, as a dad, when I see my children living this way it’s best gift I could ever receive.

As dad’s our goal should be to raise children who give more to their families and the world more than they take. Success, as a father, shouldn’t be measured by our children’s status, but rather by the respect they show for others. Let’s take a look at the scriptures and I will try to communicate what I mean by that.

**If you do not have respect and awe for who God is, you cannot get started on the true path of wisdom.**

7 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge,

 but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Proverbs 1:7

10 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom.

 Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

11 Wisdom will multiply your days

 and add years to your life.

12 If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit.

 If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

Proverbs 9:10-12 NLT

20 For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

Romans 1:20-23 NLT

**Respect for your parents and other superiors is small indication of your respect for God.**

6 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. 2 “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: 3 If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6 Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

Ephesians 6:1-7 NLT

**Jesus was an earthly example of what God the Father is Like**

9 Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? 10 Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.

John 14:9-10 NLT

3 The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

Hebrews 1:3 NLT

**Jesus Willingly Laid Down His Life For Us With Hope that We would do the same for others**

16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 John 3:16 NLT

As one author wrote:

In contrast to the idea that God the Father killed his Son, Jesus declares in John 10:17-18, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” (emphasis added). Jesus could have prevented his death (Matthew 26:53). While Jesus did not desire the suffering he was going to experience, he submitted himself to it (Luke 22:42).

Being a father is like investing in the stock market during a bear market. It is a long-term strategy that can be discouraging in the short term. Especially if you are hoping that respect will be your dividend. It is very difficult for kids to respect their fathers.

Why is it difficult?

Because kids can’t usually grasp what their father’s do and who they are.

One of my sons around age 7 once said to me,

“Dad, you don’t really do anything, Mom does everything.”

I understand why he made that statement. He spent most of his life with his mom, watching her serve him and our family.

While I spent most of my time working away from their view. Food kept getting bought, the heat stayed on, the house payment kept getting paid, the water didn’t get shut off, everyone stayed clothed, we kept going on vacations, and field trips, sports teams continued to be paid for, and somehow even though their feet kept growing cleats were provided for over and over again.

Not to mention the fact that their father continued to offer practical wisdom in order to help them manage relationships and have success in the various parts of life that he was familiar with. But it is hard to respect someone, whose role you can’t comprehend.

This is how many of us are with God our heavenly Father. We don’t understand everything He does, or maybe we just don’t remember all he has done. As Samuel wrote to the Israelites:

“24 But be sure to fear the Lord and faithfully serve him. Think of all the wonderful things he has done for you.”

1 Samuel 12:24 NLT

God has done wonderful things for us. And your Father has done wonderful things for you, as well!

Respect him. Listen to him. Pay attention to the wisdom he passes down to you. He may not always do it eloquently and it probably won’t seem like an easy path to walk. But the path you take depends on the goal you have made.

God’s goal for us is that we would learn to lay down our lives for others. And if your dad is a Christian man than his goal is similar. He isn’t training you to be soft, He isn’t training you to believe that the world revolves around your every desire. He is trying to help you see God’s plan for your life. And whether you believe it or not God’s path is the path of sacrifice. Remember the Proverbs that says:

10 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom.

 Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

11 Wisdom will multiply your days

 and add years to your life.

12 If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit.

 If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

Proverbs 9:10-12 NLT

Dad’s know some stuff and whether you understand it or not dad’s do hard things that you may not be able to fathom for years and years.

Until you do understand, kids, I want to give you a few practical ways to show respect to your dad. These may seem simple, but if you do them it will mean the world to your dads.

These come from wikiHow, and I have altered them slightly, but they are very prudent.

1 Be Grateful—Thank your dad’s and tell them that you appreciate them for who they are and what they do. You can also do something that needs to be done without being asked.

2. Try to Understand your Dad—As him questions to learn more about him. Hard to be grateful for who he is if you don’t spend anytime getting to know what makes him tick.

3. Value his wisdom—You are a little league player (or maybe even a minor leaguer) when it comes to life, your dad has been playing in the big leagues for a while now.

4. Remember how much your dad loves you—Your dad disciplines you because he loves you and wants to train you for success in life.

5. Follow your dad’s rules—When you make it to the big leagues you can make many of your own rules, but until then, realize that your dad is making rules to try and to help you get there.

6. Use Manners—Say please and thank you. Phrases like “I need this,” or “Why do we have to eat this,” or “How come we never go out for ice cream,” all show disrespect.

7. Spend time with your dad—I love it when I am out working on a dirt bike in the shed and one of my kids comes out and hangs with me, even for a few minutes. Or if I am getting ready to take garbage to the dump and one of them says, can I ride along.

8. Show them affection—Tell your dad you love him or your proud of him or give him a hug.

9. Don’t talk back to your dad—Asking your dad for clarification or understanding is one thing, but sarcasm, yelling, eye rolling, or snapping tone will show the opposite of respect.

10. Make eye contact and don’t walk away when he is talking to you.

11. Agree to disagree—Sometimes you won’t agree with your dad, but respect him enough to let him have his own beliefs. It is very possible that someday you might find out he was right.

These are all ways to show respect to your dad or your mom, but since today is Father’s day we are emphasizing dad.

I would like to finish today by saying thank you to all of you dad’s who have decided to invest long-term in your kids. I know it probably feels like a bear market right now. And it may not be much of an encouragement, but I respect you for your sacrifice and even if they don’t tell you they will too…Someday.