

STRONGER DADS



STRONGER FAMILIES

LEADER'S GUIDE





Championship Dads

Leader's Guide

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in partnership through TANF funding.





Championship Dads

The Championship Dads Curriculum was created by Arkansas Better Dads to help men in Arkansas become better dads. Funding for Arkansas Better Dads and this program was provided by Arkansas Department of Workforce Services through the TANF program.

We at Arkansas Better Dads are grateful for leaders in the state of Arkansas who have worked hard to help Arkansans be, and have, better dads. Governor Asa Hutchinson, Secretary of Labor Daryl Bassett, ADWS Director Charisse Childers and TANF Director Phil Harris have been instrumental in making this project possible.

This curriculum was written and organized in large part by Dennis Jumper. Dennis is a father of three, grandfather to nine, and an inspiration to his church and community. Whether at home, on the basketball court or the local church, Dennis has proven himself to be a Championship Dad.

No father begins as an expert and no father is perfect. Yet any father can be great. Any father can be significant. Dennis is both. I'm grateful for this Champion.

Randy Jumper

Arkansas Better Dads



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Introduction to Championship Dads

To make Dads better Dads. No Dad is perfect and every Dad can improve. The course is not focused on how Dad's fail, but on how Dads can become better.

This course is split into four lessons, which each represent a session you will run with your group of Dads. In this guide, you'll find an introduction to each lesson, giving you an idea of how to approach the material and prepare for teaching. Prayerfully study the lesson introduction and material and consider how you will teach your Dads.

Each lesson has four 'Better Dads Tips', with content supporting each Tip. In addition, discussion questions will help reinforce the content and help engage the Dads in conversations. These discussions provide great opportunities for the Dads to learn from each other. Finally, a very important part of each Tip is a section called 'Get In the Game', where Dads are challenged to come up with specific actions and strategies that they can take to be a better Dad.



Championship Dads Leaders Checklist

Before The Class Begins

- ☐ Welcome and register Make sure the room is comfortable for attendees.
- ☐ Arrange seating to encourage group discussion (4 to 6 people at a table works well).
- ☐ Set up and test any equipment that will be used.
- ☐ Know location of restrooms, drinking fountains, exits, parking, etc.
- ☐ Bring extra copies of workbooks, forms, and handouts.
- ☐ Set up refreshments if available.
- ☐ Have pencils or pens available.
- ☐ Provide name tags or tent cards on tables.
- ☐ Study and become familiar with the Course Material, Participant Workbook, and Leaders Guide.
- ☐ Pray that this course will help every Dad become a better Dad.

Beginning of Class

- ☐ Welcome and register participants as they arrive.
- ☐ Start on time.
- ☐ Familiarize participants with the location of facilities.
- ☐ Discuss the objectives of *Championship Dads*.
- ☐ Review the agenda, time frame, and format of class.
- ☐ Encourage participation.
- ☐ Discuss ground rules.
- ☐ Utilize some form of icebreaker so that people get to know one another.



Nine Things You Can Do To Be An Effective Class Leader

#1 Understand Your Role As A Leader

Championship Dads is discussion-based. However, as the leader, you must lead. While your teaching and experiences will drive the instruction, this course is not about you; it's about the Dads in the class. Your role is to guide these Dads through the material, helping them to understand how to be a better Dad and put into action what they are learning. You will find other Dads in the class will help you 'teach' as they share their experiences. What they learn from each other may be more valuable than the actual course material.

#2 Know The Material Before You Start

For the class to be effective, a leader must know the material. Prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. The better you know the material, the more successful you will be in presenting it. Try to avoid reading to the class as much as possible by putting things into your own words. Think about stories from your own experience to illustrate a particular point. Speak from your heart, not from your head. Don't be afraid to use visual aids, such as PowerPoint or marker boards. Again, prepare, prepare, prepare, and pray for God's help. You do your part and you can count on God to do His part. Spending time in prayer as part of your preparation is critical. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom and the right words to say as you lead this group of Dads.

#3 Be Comfortable With Your Own Limitations and What You 'Don't Know'

The good news is that you don't have to know everything. None of us have been perfect Dads. We have all made mistakes. It is okay as the leader to admit you don't know the answer to a particular question. It is likely someone will ask you how to

handle a situation and you will not have an exact reply. That's okay. You could respond with, "That's a great question. I'm not sure what the right answer is, but let me do some research and I will get back with you on this." Being transparent will help you better relate to everyone and earn their respect.

#4 Show Care & Concern For Each Dad

There is an old saying that goes like this: *'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care... about them.'* Not everyone is easy to love. As the group leader, you set the atmosphere with how you treat those in the group. Make every effort to treat all the Dads with respect and to show God's love to them. Pray that those in your class will feel the love of God as you interact with them. If the study lasts several weeks, email the guys who come; call or text them outside of class. Try to be involved in their lives. This means you will need to *listen*, not just talk.

#5 Make The Class A 'Safe' Place

The class environment should encourage Dads to ask questions, share their feelings, and be transparent. It should inspire rather than discourage, building hope rather than despair. Your goal as the leader is that every Dad leaves the class believing that they can be a better Dad and knowing specific steps they can take to do so. This course covers most of the typical issues that Dads face. In this short time frame, you can only do so much. You may encounter a Dad with a very serious situation; don't try to solve a complex problem in the class. Know your limitations. Some things are better handled in private. Know when someone needs help that you can't provide and direct them to someone who can help them. Undoubtedly, the sessions will also bring up areas of weakness and hurt. Don't avoid tough subjects; be sensitive to people's needs as they process the class material.

#6 Center Everything Around The Biblical View Of Fatherhood

This course is based upon the Biblical view of fatherhood. While you may refer to outside 'experts' or sources, our primary guidance on being a better Dad is rooted in Biblical principles. One of the key objectives of the course is that Dads will learn that the Bible can help them be a better Dad. As the leader, you should refer to Biblical

principles often and encourage the Dads to grow spiritually and become involved in a local church that will help them apply these principles to their lives.

#7 Set The Ground Rules Up Front

The ground rules will help the class get the most from this course. They should be covered at the beginning of the class and you should ask for their agreement to abide by these rules. We suggest the following as good guidelines to follow:

- We will practice confidentiality.
- We will show respect to everyone, both personally and their time.
- We will listen when someone else is talking, with no side conversations.
When we talk, we will not be long winded.
- We will participate in all the activities.
- We will not try to 'fix' other people's problems.
- We will stay focused on the subject matter and not get sidetracked on other issues. (politics, sports, agendas, etc.)
- We will follow the leader's directions.

#8 Be Flexible, But Try To Stay On Track

Be sensitive to what is happening in the group; if a topic is striking a chord and generating some obvious excitement and interest, don't be bound to the clock. Our real goal is transformation and growth not 'completion' of an assignment.

#9 Use Questions Effectively

Use open ended questions frequently. Asking *why* or *how* questions forces the Dads to be more thoughtful and detailed in their response. Questions break the monotony of your own voice; if you are doing all the talking, then it is very likely that the quality of communication may not be very good. Questions give you, as the leader, the opportunity to check and see if effective learning is taking place.



Lesson 1 Provide Spiritual Leadership

Introduction to Teaching

This lesson strongly emphasizes the importance of Dads being in a right relationship with God. The Bible has much guidance in relation to being a good Dad. Feel free to tailor this lesson to where your Dads may be spiritually. There is a lot of content; try to not spend too much time in one area.

Introduction for Dads

Dads have the duty and the privilege to provide for the emotional and physical needs of their children. Children also have spiritual needs and a Dad must be equally concerned about these as well. This lesson helps Dads provide the Godly leadership that their children need.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

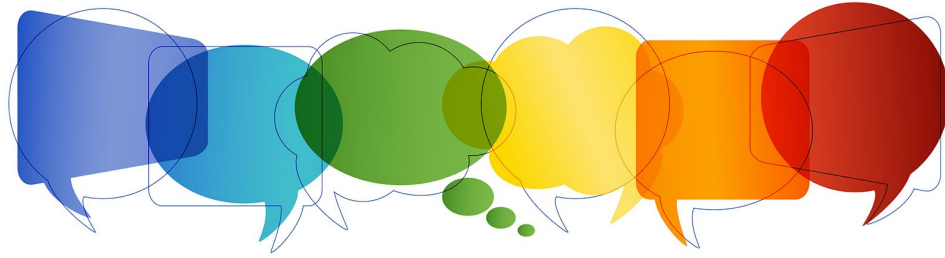
Lesson Timings	Better Dad Tip #1	Better Dad Tip #2	Better Dad Tip #3	Better Dad Tip #4
	Instruction Time			
	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
	Discussion & Get In The Game			
	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes

Be a Godly Leader

Becoming a Godly leader for your family simply means that, as a Dad, you do your best to reflect the character of God as revealed in the Bible. We also find in the Bible that man has a body, soul, and a spirit. It is our spirit that is able to communicate and be in a relationship with God. John 3:6 tells us that God is a Spirit and that we must worship him in spirit and in truth. Through sin, the world's relationship with God is broken. God sent Jesus to the world so that that relationship could be restored. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (NIV)

A Dad who repents of his sin, believes in Jesus as his Lord and Savior, and decides to follow after Jesus (becoming His disciple) is dramatically changed. He is a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) and all things have become new. He is now spiritually 'alive'. Dads who are 'spiritually alive' are best suited for meeting the spiritual needs of their children and leading their family in the ways of God.

Dads have a divine command to be the spiritual leader of the family. Being the spiritual leader of the family is not easy and, unfortunately, too many Dads do not take this role seriously. They will defer to their wife and let her assume that responsibility, or sometimes they will even let a child fill that role. Dads who do not fulfill their roles as spiritual leaders rob their families of important elements that they need for healthy spiritual growth.



Time Out for Discussion

What can stop a Dad from taking on the role of spiritual leader in the family?

The spiritual development of the family is usually linked directly to the spirituality of the Dad. A Dad who wants his children to be spiritually-minded must be an example of one who is spiritually-minded. If Dads tell their children to 'do as I say, not as I do,' they will lose the respect of their children and their leadership will be ineffective.

The Bible has much to say about leading by example. Paul instructed young Timothy to *"let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."* 1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

Paul told the Philippian Church: *"What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."* Philippians 4:9 (ESV)

Dads who are Godly Leaders of their family:

Understand the value of spiritual leadership in the family.

The Bible teaches parents in Prov. 22:6 (AMP), *“Train up a child in the way he should go [teaching him to seek God’s wisdom and will for his abilities and talents], Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

Lead their families to God.

Dads cannot force their family to serve God, but they can lead their family in a way that makes it natural, logical, and even easier for them to make the decision to serve God.

Look for ‘teachable moments.’

Every day in family life there are many opportunities to demonstrate and teach our children about the things of God and make spiritual application to the activities of daily life. These ‘teachable moments’ are crucial in shaping our children’s understanding of God and developing Godly values in their lives.

Demonstrate that God is the most important thing in their life.

What we love can be seen in our priorities. Dads must be very cautious in what they prioritize in their life.

Sadly, too many priority lists look something like this...

1.
Job

2.
Hobbies

3.
Friends

4.
Family

5.
God

Throughout history, men and women have struggled with how much they should love God and the priority that love for God should take in their lives. In Matthew 22: 36-38 (NLT), Jesus was asked a very important question regarding this matter...

36 “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” 37 Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.”

This statement makes it very clear that the most important thing we can do as individuals and Dads is to love God more than anything or anyone else. He truly wants ‘all’ of us. Jesus also showed the priority that should be placed on loving God when He called His disciples and told them they must leave all and follow after Him.

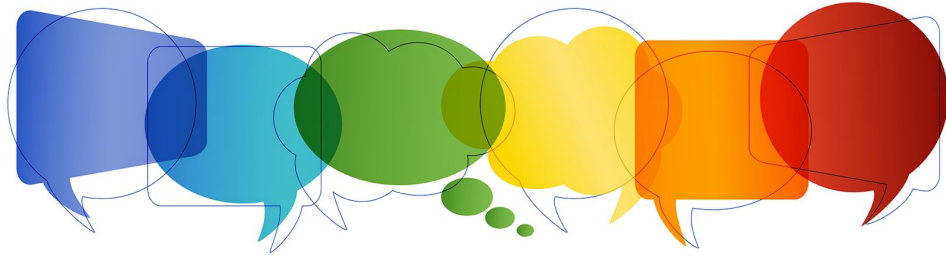
This command presents a great challenge to all of us. The love that a Dad feels for his family can be very powerful and the idea that this love is to be secondary to one’s love for God is sometimes difficult to comprehend. In addition, the things of this world can sometimes be very important to us. Prioritizing these affections is a daily battle for Dads.

How can we love God so completely? How can we *increase* our love for God? It all starts with Jesus’ words in John 14:15 when He said,

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

Our first priority in our relationship with God is to know His commandments. Those commandments are found in the Bible. The Bible is the revelation of God to man and our love for God will grow in proportion to our knowledge of God as revealed through scripture.

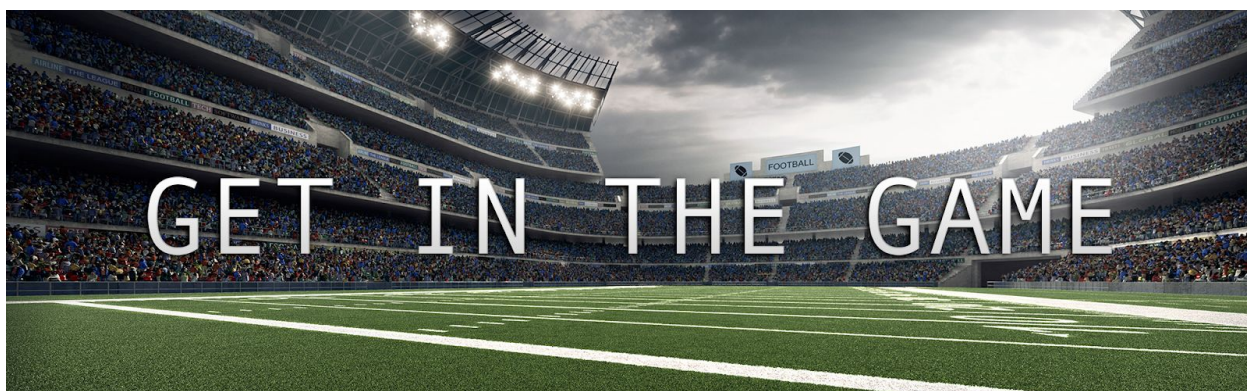
Another way to increase our love for God is to spend time with Him. To know God is to love Him, therefore being in His presence will increase our love for Him. Love for God is more than just knowing about God, it also involves our heart. When we are praying, reading the Bible, and worshipping, we fall more in love with Him.



Time Out for Discussion

How can busy Dads find more time to spend with God?

What do you think the impact will be on a family that sees Dad pursuing after God and placing Him first in his life?



For me to become the Godly leader of my family, I need to (be specific):



Live with Integrity

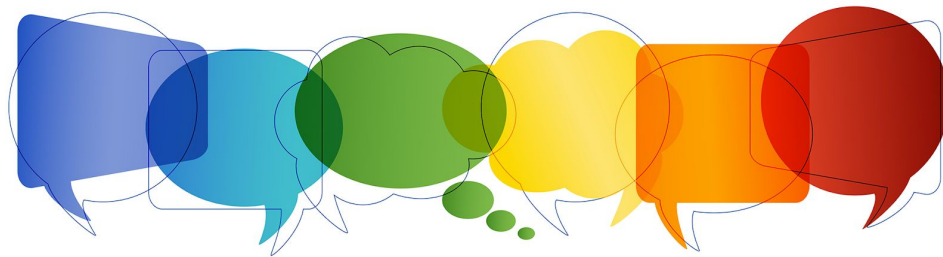
Integrity is consistently living one's life according to a set of moral values. Dads who have integrity have a clearly defined set of *internal* values that can be seen *externally* through their words and actions. For example, a Dad who values honesty will not be a liar. He will be true to himself and his beliefs.

Becoming a man of integrity begins with self-examination. Knowing who you are and what you value is what every Dad needs to know about himself. Most Dads have some values, but realize that there are others that they need to develop in their life. By focusing on values – both those that we have and those we want to have – it is easier for us to incorporate them into our lives. Knowing our values allows us to

continually reinforce those values. In other words, we will read, listen, think, view, and act in ways that will support those values.

The process of becoming a Dad of integrity takes time; it will not happen overnight. There will be times when you will do something that is not consistent with your values. When you mess up, acknowledge what you did and determine not to make that mistake again. Continually ask God to help you become the Dad you want to be. He will always be there to help you.

Having integrity as a Dad may be the most important thing you can do to lead your family. Acting with integrity in ALL areas of your life sends a powerful message to them; it is one of the biggest things you can do to earn their respect and admiration.



Time Out for Discussion

Think of someone you respect for their integrity. What about them do you admire?

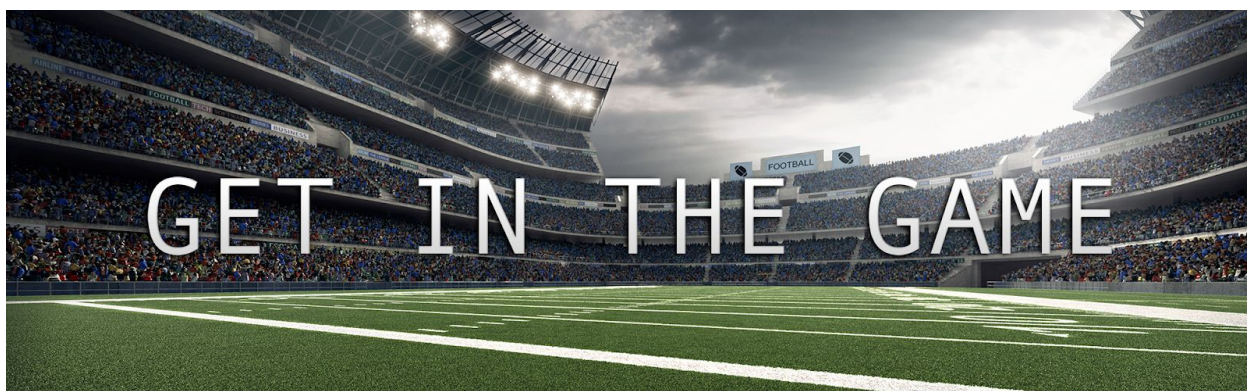
How do you know that they are a person of integrity? Make a list of the characteristics of such a person with the people in your group:

As we see from our discussion, there are a number of things that we value in people of integrity. Being a person of integrity can be boiled down to:

Doing the right thing, the right way, for the right reason, at the right time.

This sounds like an impossible task; after all, none of us are perfect. We all have strengths and weaknesses. The good news is that God helps us in our weakness. Dads who give their lives to Jesus are not alone in the parenting process; Jesus is with them. **What does “integrity” look like for a Dad?** Consider the following...





Where in your life do you need to work on your integrity?

Where in your life do you need to make some course corrections:

BETTER
DADS
TIP

#3

Guide Your Family's Spiritual Journey

Dads play an important role in their family's spiritual life. A strong spiritual foundation helps children grow up to be healthy adults by helping them understand their identity, develop moral values, deal with the difficulties of life, and realize their purpose in life. Championship Dads guide their family's spiritual journey by taking the lead and setting the example for their families. Two areas of spiritual development that Dads guide are in spiritual disciplines and prioritizing church involvement.

A. Spiritual Disciplines

There are a number of religious activities (called spiritual disciplines) families can engage in to grow spiritually. Dad, as the spiritual leader of the family, must be the one who initiates and fosters this in his family.

Dads not only need to be a good example of someone who is pursuing after spiritual growth in their own life, but they should also join with their families and engage in various spiritual disciplines together. These times of growing together spiritually will also result in drawing family members closer together.

There are a number of different “spiritual disciplines” that a Dad can lead his family to participate in. Many good books are available on the subject of spiritual disciplines. Here are a few:



Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life

by Donald S. Whitney



Celebration of Discipline

by Richard Foster



Disciplines of a Godly Man

by R. Kent Hughes



The Life You Always Wanted

by John Ortberg

Three important spiritual disciplines a dad can take his family through are **Bible Study, Prayer, and Worship**:

#1 Bible Study

The Bible is filled with topics suitable for all ages. Championship Dads focus on making family Bible studies a group activity rather than a lecture. Don't be afraid to talk through Bible stories or act out the stories with your children. Make the Bible come alive in front of them. Read often from the life of Jesus, use the Book of Mark, or talk about the importance of the Book of James. Be sure to use a Bible translation that is easy to read and understand for the age of your children.

Take them on a reading journey through the Bible. Don't be in a hurry; set aside an amount of time to study, not an amount of scripture to finish. Like today, I'm going to work through this passage for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, or an hour.

#2 Prayer

The discipline of prayer is also well suited for families. Even young children should be encouraged to pray. These family times should be a 'safe' time for all family members to learn to pray. Opportunities should be given for each family member to lead in prayer. Teaching a child to pray is one of the most important things a Dad can do.

Prayer is personal communication with God. It seems simple, because it is simple. Prayer is spending time with God, communicating with Him. Communication is key to every relationship, especially our relationship with God. In the same way that every relationship grows and revolves around communication, so does your relationship with God. Prayer is having a conversation with God. The result of communication with God is a deeper connection to Him.

Have your children pray with you about needs in your family and friends' lives. Pray for your church and leaders in their lives. Pray for their teachers, coaches, and friends. Model the importance of praying for people by name.

#3

Worship

Worship is a very important part of a believer's life. Worship can be defined as giving God the reverence and adoration He is worthy of. Leading the family at home in a time of worship is a great way for a Dad to lead his family. Family worship takes many different forms, such as singing together, talking together about how good God is, or taking communion. It should be simple and fitting for the ages of the children.

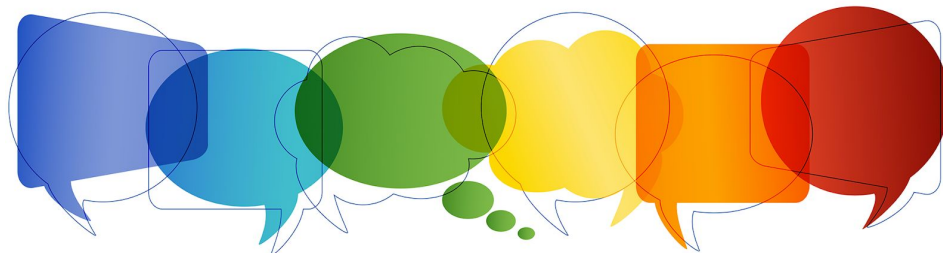
All family members should attend and be engaged in worship activities. Family worship times should allow for open discussion; questions and comments should be welcomed. Family worship time is not a substitute for church, but is something that should complement the worship experience at church. Many families use family worship to reinforce what was preached or taught that week at church.

The benefits from having a family worship time in the home include:

Increased Spiritual Understanding

Drawing Families Closer Together

Honoring God



Time Out for Discussion

Has your family ever had a time when they read the Bible, prayed or worshipped together? If you have, share with the group. For those who haven't, what makes it hard for men to do?

B. Church Involvement

Spiritual leadership means Dads make church attendance a priority, both for themselves and their families. Being a part of a local church body characterized the early church and, as believers, we are admonished in Hebrews 10:25 to “not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.” Children will not always appreciate the importance of regular church attendance; however, Dads must be firm and insist that church attendance is one of the ways that we show our obedience and love for God and his people.

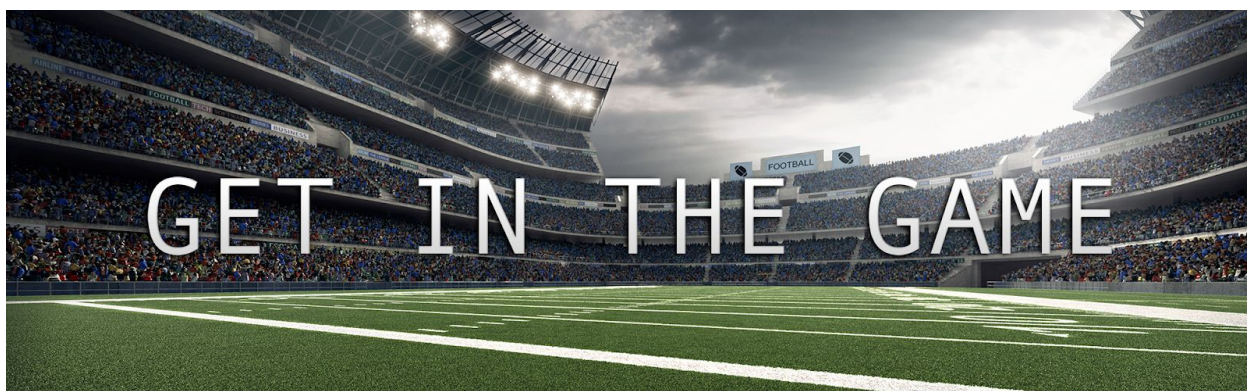
#1 Establish Patterns of Church Attendance

Children learn patterns of behavior from their parents. What you do as a father is what your children will do in the future. Pastor Rod Loy says, “What a parent does in moderation, a child will do in excess.” You get to help establish a dependence upon God through church involvement when your children are young.

#2 Get Involved in Church Ministry

Dads should lead the family in volunteering and ministry involvement. There are a wide range of opportunities to serve in the local church. Dads must find their area of gifting and help their children discover their gifts as well. When all members of the family are actively engaged in the ministries of the local church, it benefits not just the local church, but also the family.

Too often, we think of opportunities for Christian service in the context of the church, but opportunities also abound outside the church for volunteering as well. Dads who serve send a powerful message to their children of what being a Christian is really all about.



On a scale of **1** to **10**, circle how would you rate your leadership in the following areas:

Spiritual Disciplines:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How can you improve?

Church Involvement:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

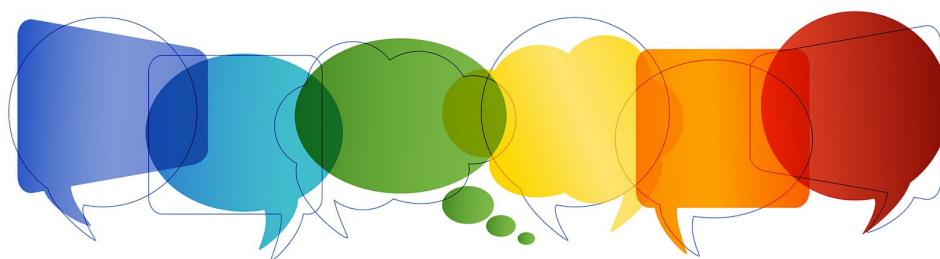
How can you improve?

Serve With Humility

It has long been recognized that organizations tend to mirror the example of the leader or boss. In the family, this same imitation can be found. The culture of a family is a product of how parents lead. Godly leadership in a family must be servant leadership.

The servant-leader leadership style has been discussed for a long time. Jesus himself modeled this style. In 1970, Robert K. Greenleaf brought this style to the modern business world through his leadership writings. He said, “The servant leader is a servant first.”

A servant-leader Dad will focus on how best to serve his family. Dads who lead their families using the servant-leader model instill important values of how to treat others and how to act as a family. These values of servanthood impact a child’s entire life.



Time Out for Discussion

How did Jesus model the servant-leadership style? What are some examples?

The key characteristic of a servant leader is humility. Championship Dads understand this important principle. Jesus' humility is the pattern for Dads to follow. In Mark's gospel we find these words in chapter 10:43-45:

"...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:43-45 (NIV)

Jesus' humble life was simply a reflection or example of the value that God places on humility. The Old Testament speaks to God's view on humility often.

"Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble."
Proverbs 3:34 (NKJV)

"Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honor and life."
Proverbs 22:4 (NIV)

"The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way."
Psalms 25:9 (NKJV)

God places a high importance on humility. This humility is required in all areas of life. Dads who walk in humility before their family reap the many rewards God has promised to the humble.

True humility is an attitude of the heart. It is having the desire to serve rather than be served. A Dad who embraces an authoritarian, dictator-like style of leadership and wants to be "the boss" does not reflect the servant heart of Christ. If you do this, you may create deep resentments and anger, triggering family members to rebel. Children raised in this atmosphere often question the love that their Dad has for them or develop deep insecurities. The great Christian writer C. S. Lewis defined humility this way...

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.”

What does “humility” look like for a Dad? Consider the following...

**Are Quick To
Ask For And
Give
Forgiveness**

**Do Not Need To
Be The Center
Of Attention**

**Do Not Mind
Getting Their
Hands “Dirty”**

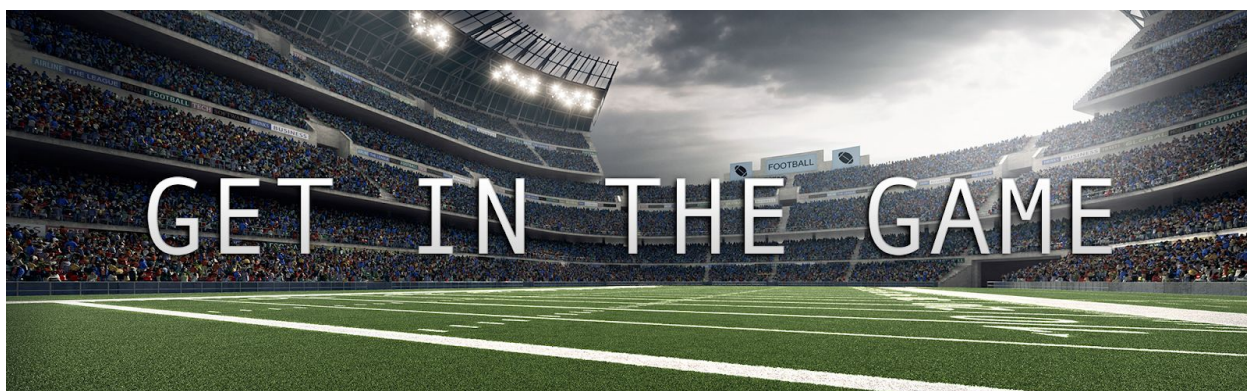
**Are Transparent
And Open**

**Humble
Dads**

**Know They Are
Not Perfect**

**Know Their Own Weakness
And Rely On God’s Strength**

**Admit Their
Mistakes**



Which of the above 7 characteristics is easiest for you as a Dad to do with your family?

Which is the hardest for you and why do you find it so hard?



Lesson 2

Be a Loving Dad

Introduction to Teaching

Lesson Two gives very important information on the importance of expressing love. Dads often are weak in this area. Let your focus be on helping the Dads see, not just the importance of expressing their love, but also the need to express that love in different ways.

As you prepare for this lesson, take particular care with '*Better Dads Tip #7*'. This Tip is probably the hardest one to teach. As you begin, take a minute to explain the terms "custodial" and "non-custodial" Dads. Keep it simple by just explaining that custodial dads have their children living with them and non-custodial dads don't. The "non-custodial" Dads have special problems because of their limited time with their children. There are no discussion questions in this tip. The focus should be more on teaching. Tip #7 is a very sensitive area for some Dads; because of relationship problems, they may find it very difficult to accept what is being presented. Stay with the course material. Stress the reasons why it is important for Dads to love their child's mother, no matter how difficult the situation might be. Keep the Biblical view of love at the center of this teaching.

Introduction for Dads

For a Dad to be described as a "loving Dad" is the ultimate compliment. The power of love to impact another person's life is amazing. Dads, through their love, can have a positive effect on their families. This lesson will highlight a few ways a Dad can show his love for his family.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

Lesson Timings	Better Dad Tip #5	Better Dad Tip #6	Better Dad Tip #7	Better Dad Tip #8
	Instruction Time			
	10 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes	10 minutes
	Discussion & Get In The Game			
	10 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes



Love Your Child Like God Loves You

Dads who are followers of Christ are actually children themselves, since they are in a relationship with their Heavenly Father. Dads can look to their relationship with God the Father for direction and guidance as to how their relationship should be with their own children. Here are some ways God loves his children:

A. God Knows His Children

"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways." Psalm 139: 1-3

After reading this verse you might think, "How can I know my child like God knows me?" After all, you are not God. Remember two things: first, this verse speaks of

God's desire to know all about His children; secondly, it demonstrates that God is active in His pursuit to know all about His children. God wants to know all of this because He loves his children. When a Dad takes a strong interest in all aspects of his child's life, it assures the child that they are both valued and loved by their Dad. Get to know your child's likes and dislikes. 'Study' your children. Don't assume they are all the same. Know what is different about each one of your children.

B. God Provides For His Children

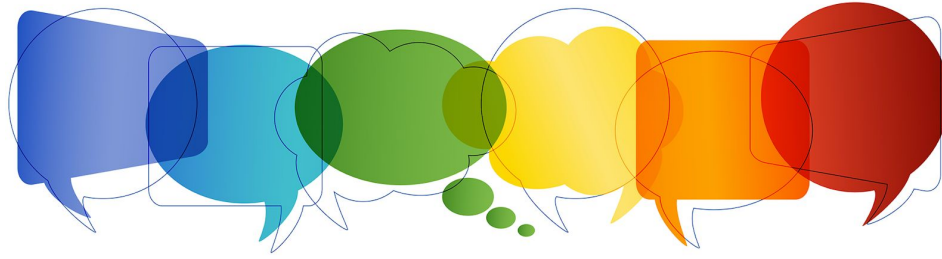
"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

Providing for our children's physical needs is important. However, being a provider is more than providing food and shelter. Dads are critical providers of emotional and spiritual needs of their children. Be present for your child. Too many dads assume providing for their child means making money to pay the bills; that is just part of what you need to do to provide for your child. Provide a shoulder to cry on. Provide a smile to brighten their day. Provide an encouraging text message to help them on a tough morning. Provide for all of your child's needs.

C. God Is Accessible To His Children

"Draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

God the Father invites his children to come to Him. We can approach Him with confidence knowing that He cares for us and that His ear is always open to our cry. How available are you to your children? Do they feel like they can come to you with their questions? With their fears? With their hopes and dreams?



Time Out for Discussion

As Dads, how can we become more accessible and approachable to our children?

D. God Has His Children's Best Interests At Heart

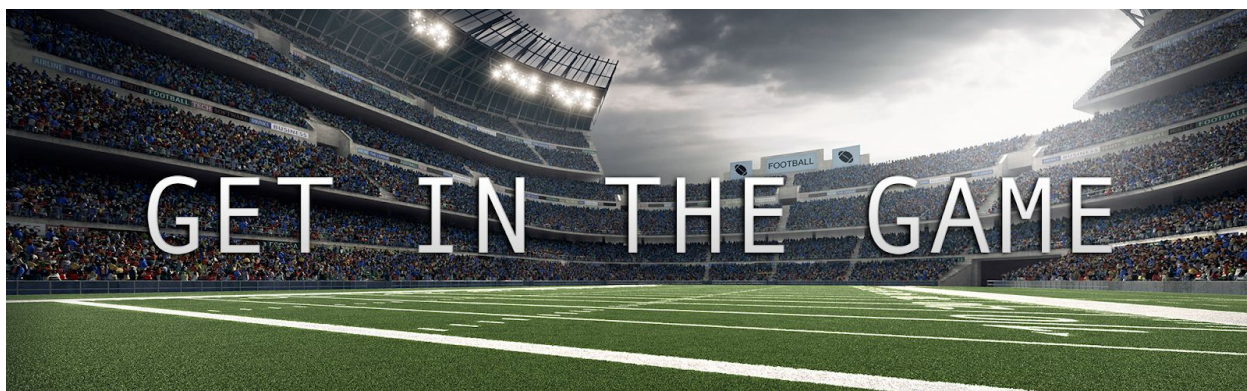
"For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Dads who love as they are loved by God are always looking out for their children's best interest. A lot of tension in the home occurs when that love is not expressed. Dads must understand that a child often does not have the maturity to see what is in their best interest. A child will focus on the moment, but a loving Dad will focus not just on the moment but on the future as well. He won't give in when he knows that the child he loves will be harmed if a particular course of action is taken. This is particularly applicable to younger children. As a child matures and becomes of age, Dads – as loving parents – may give them more freedom to make decisions. They may make some wrong choices with this freedom and choose not to accept our guidance. However, learning from their mistakes is an important part of their growth process.

E. God's Love For His Children Never Changes

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” James 1:17 (ESV)

The gift of God's love is unchanging. It cannot be bought or earned. It is given freely. A Dad's love should follow this example. There is great security in the Dad-child relationship when the child understands that they are loved because of who they are not because of what they might do. Do not misunderstand, this does not mean that if the child does wrong, a loving Dad will not discipline them. A Dad may strongly disapprove of some behavior and still love his child. Many times, a Dad must *“speak the truth in love.”* (Ephesians 4:15).



Complete the following statement: In view of God's love towards me, I feel I need to love my children more by:

Creatively Communicate Your Love

D. Ross Campbell, in his book *How to Really Love Your Child*, tells us, "A child is the most needy person in our society, and the greatest need is love."

A Dad who does not show love to his children can harm his children in many ways. Lack of love can lead to low esteem and feelings of isolation. Misbehavior is common among children who do not feel loved; their misbehavior is many times a cry for love. When Dads do not show their children love, they may turn to other people or things to satisfy their desire to be loved; this search for love often leads them to very detrimental relationships.

Dads cannot assume that their children know that they love them. Even if you are a good provider and do things for them, your children still need to hear three powerful little words: "I love you." Those three spoken words will help your child:

"I Love You."

Those three spoken words will help your child to...

#1

Have A Healthy View Of Themselves

When a child hears "I love you" from their Dad and it is said often, even when they have been acting badly, this lets the child know that they are loved not because of what they do, but because of who they are.

#2

Have A Greater Sense Of Security

Children who are told they are loved are less likely to develop unhealthy fears and phobias. Their home is a 'safe' place.

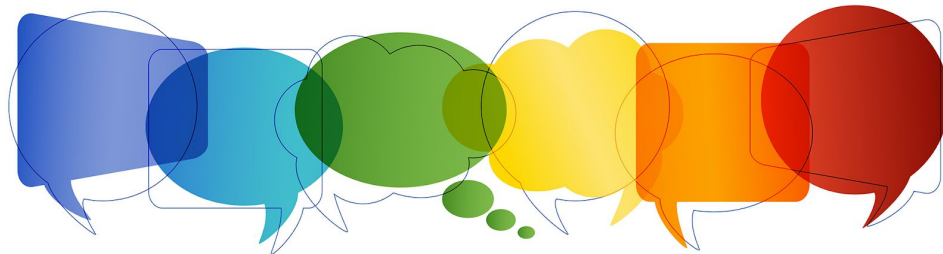
#3

Have A Better Understanding Of Emotions

Dads who say **“I love you”** with feeling and sincerity help their children learn about one of the most important emotions in life. Their future relationships will be patterned after their Dads expressions of love.

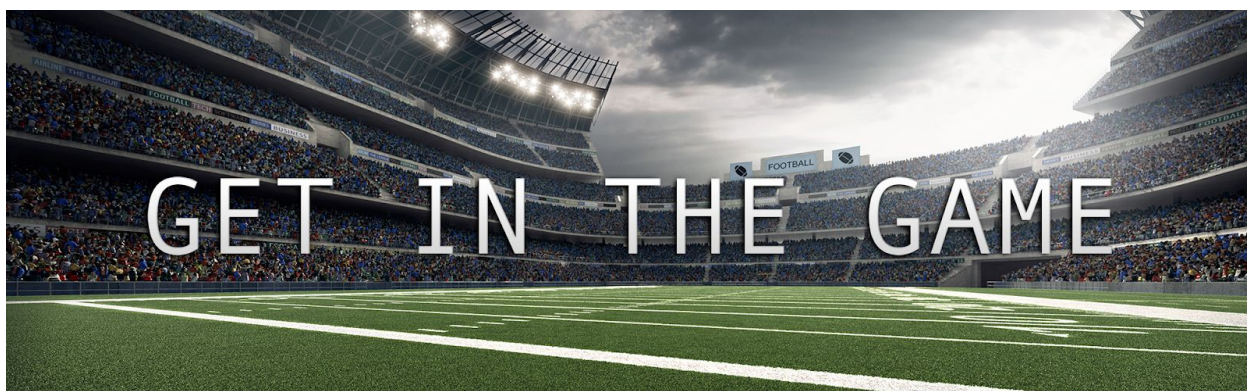
Saying **“I love you”** does not always have to be verbalized. A very effective non-verbal way is to put it in writing. Seeing Dad take the time to write out his feelings for a child can make a big impact.

Saying **“I love you”** can be communicated in other creative ways. Some families have developed ‘code’ words or phrases that everyone knows to mean ‘I love you.’ Others have come up with hand signals or some other creative signal that sends this important message. These do not take the place of the verbal expression, but are simple ways to add depth and significance to expressions of love.



Time Out for Discussion

Why do dads sometimes have problems saying
“I love you?”



Make a list of times when it would be good for you to tell your child “I love you.”

Love Your Child's Mother

A century ago, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh made this profound statement: "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother."

These words are still true today. Children need their Dad to love their mom. Relationships between parents are often filled with tension and fighting; these battles take place in both custodial and non-custodial settings. When parents do not treat each other with respect, it creates an environment that may be very harmful to a child.

This *'Better Dads Tip'* will be hard for some of you. In today's culture, the traditional family is no longer the norm. You can be a championship Dad even if your kids are not living with you. According to the US Census Bureau, one in three children are growing up in homes without their biological father. Studies have shown that over half of all marriages end in divorce. Your child's mother may be difficult to love. She may have done things that cause her to be difficult to love. She may even be difficult for your children to love. Your child's mother might not be your current spouse – which means showing love to your ex-wife can be both difficult and dangerous!

For others, loving and honoring your child's mother is no problem. She is the love of your life. You might think you can't do any better in this area. But, just as every man can be a better father, you can also be a better husband.

Regardless of whether your child's mother is with you or not, how you treat your child's mother will make a lasting impression on your child. Part of being a Championship Dad is that you do what's right in any situation.

Why should a Dad love the mother of his children?

#1 It Develops a Sense of Security

When a Dad loves his child's mother, it fills the need a child has for a security. Children need a sense of security during their formative years. A child's world is constantly changing, and Dads and Moms who constantly fight create further instability. Children see their friend's families breaking apart and wonder if theirs will be next. Children of parents who divorce already have their security damaged and when parents continue to fight it further erodes their sense of security. With God's help, a Dad can overcome those very negative feelings and strive to be at peace with his child's mother.

#2 It Creates Healthy Views of Relationships

When a Dad loves his child's mother, the child forms a healthier view of relationships. Children replicate their parents' relationships. Dads shape their children's future relationships whether they realize it or not. Their children learn valuable life lessons that will affect future relationships with the opposite sex. Boys learn how to treat women and how to be a husband. Girls learn what true love really is and how they should be treated by men.

#3 It Improves the Quality of Relationship with the Child

When a Dad loves his child's mother, it improves the quality of his relationship with his child. In *Exodus 20:10*, children are commanded to honor their father and mother. A Dad who dishonors his child's mother makes it hard for his child to honor him. A child will be protective of a mother. Children resent someone mistreating or disrespecting their mother. Dads should realize that when they show love and respect to their child's mother, it makes it easy for the child to respect them and have a meaningful relationship.

Dads show love for a child's mother in a variety of ways. It is important a child sees their Dad express love and respect towards their mother.

A. Custodial Dads

If you are married to your children's mother, the Bible gives very clear guidance as to how marriage relationships should be. How does a Dad measure his love for his wife? The Bible says...

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

The love a Dad has for his wife is measured against the great love Christ has for the church. While 'romantic' love (*eros*) is very important to the relationship, the most important love is *agape* love. This is the self-sacrificing love that Christ has for his church. This kind of love cannot be done in your own strength. It is a love that comes to us through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This *agape* love is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit.

At the heart of a Dad's love for his wife must be the understanding that she and he are "one." In marriage, they become one in their purpose and they became one in their intimacy with each other. This unique relationship in marriage is sacred and it is to be a reflection of the sacred relationship between Christ and the Church. We become "one flesh" in marriage and we become "one body" with Christ when we are saved.

Actions	Respect For Her	Protection
Words	A Dad shows his love for his wife by his...	Provision
Faithfulness To Her	Spending Time With Her	Intimacy With Her

The Song of Solomon has much to say about love. One of the things that stands out as you read this book is how often Solomon praises the woman he describes. He is continuously complimenting her looks and her actions. Solomon, being a wise man, understood how important praise is to a woman. A Championship Dad understands his wife needs to hear she is attractive to him and that she is of great value to him. Solomon's advice for Dads can be summed up here...

“Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your earthly toil.” Ecclesiastes 9:9 (NLT)

Other translations say “enjoy your wife that you love.” This is God's perfect plan for marriage: that husband and wife love and enjoy each other. Each should find great satisfaction in striving to meet the needs of the other, including the emotional and physical needs that both have.

B. Non-Custodial Dads

For the non-custodial Dad, his relationship with the mother of his children involves complexities not experienced by the custodial Dad. Chief among these is the fact that the non-custodial Dad's relationship with his child's mother has been strained, resulting in his current position as a non-custodial Dad. The blame for this disruption of a family's life is usually shared by both parents.

Dads, for the sake of their children, must be able to overcome any negative feelings toward their child's mother. Children have real difficulty dealing with these issues and Dads must be careful not to put their children in the position of having to take sides.

His Respect For Her

His Actions

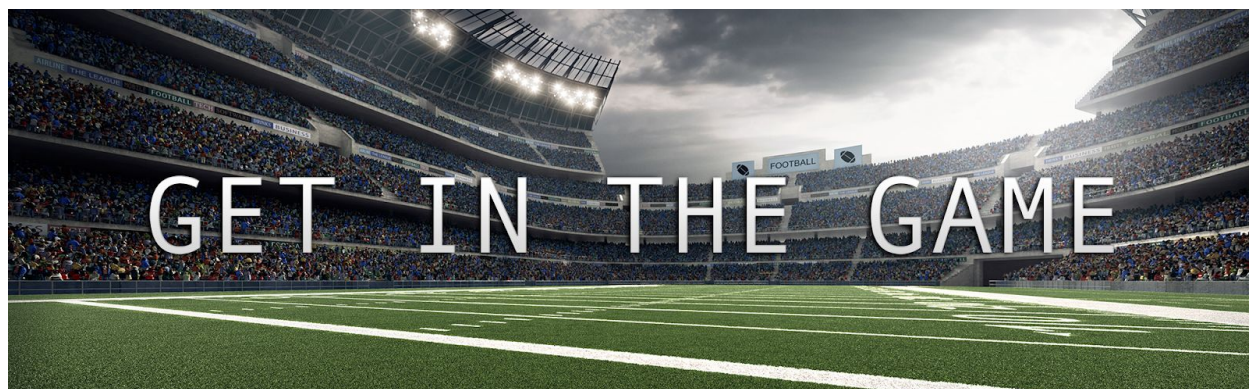
There are definite things that the non-custodial Dad can do to love the mother of his children. He does this through:

His Words

Keeping His Commitments & Responsibilities

Loving and honoring your child's mother means you follow the biblical commands to forgive. It means telling the truth about what has happened, while at the same time speaking with dignity and respect. You can tell the truth in love. It also means at the appropriate time and in the appropriate ways you take responsibility for your actions that are wrong.

Even though it will take effort, no matter what the relationship you have with your child's mother, you can still love and honor her. After all, Jesus even said, "Love your enemies."



List at least two things you can do in the next two weeks to show your child you honor, respect, and love his or her mother.

BETTER
DADS
TIP



Make Time for Your Child

As a busy Dad, it may be hard to find time for your child. In fact, finding “time” may be almost impossible when you have a busy schedule. After all, there are only 24 hours in a day. This is why Championship Dads don’t *find* time, they *make* time to spend with their kids.

The time, a Dad spends with his child can be very beneficial...

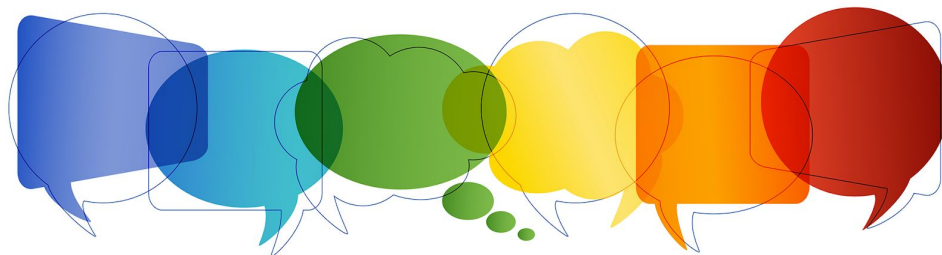


The amount of time a Dad can spend with a child can vary considerably. A custodial Dad will usually have much more time available than a non-custodial Dad. The question that often comes up as Dads deal with the ‘time for kids’ issue is... which is most important: quantity or quality of time? Dr. James Dobson of *Focus on the Family* says about children:

“They need quality and quantity of time with loving, and committed parents.”

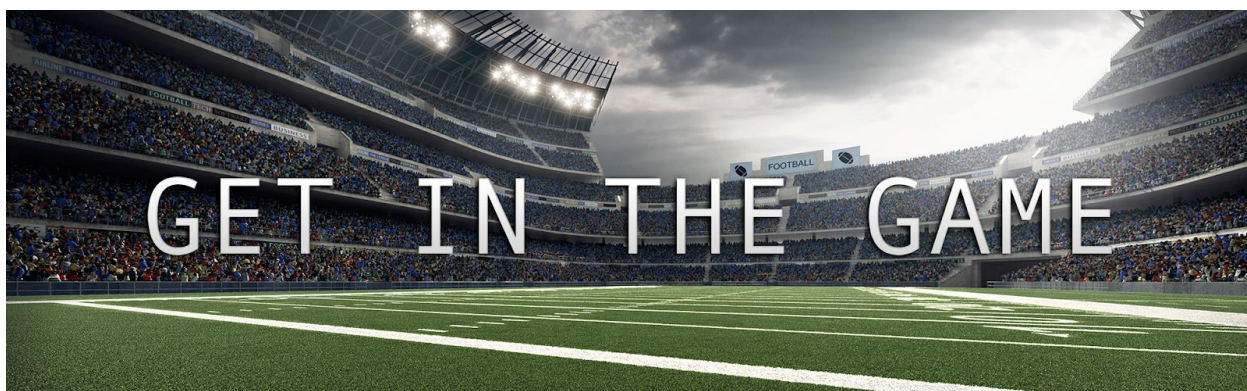
Common sense tells us that if we do not have much time to spend with our child, then that time should be highly valued and the quality of the time should be emphasized. A key part of making quality time is to schedule it. While it is true that some great quality times may just ‘happen,’ for most Dads, good quality time is planned and scheduled.

When Dads have more than one child, there is the possibility of Dads’ time being monopolized by one child over another. Some children by nature seem to get left out. We may not even realize that this is happening; Dads need to know their children so well that they can meet the individual needs of each. One of the ways to address this problem is having one-on-one time with each child. This special time alone can be very meaningful to your child. It sends them a very important message that they are important and valued by you. As Dad and child get to know each other better, the relationship strengthens. These times also gives Dads the chance to address the unique needs that a particular child may have.



Time Out for Discussion

Discuss in your group different ways that a Dad can spend time with his child. What are some creative options?



Write down how you can improve the time spent with your child.

What are some new places you can go with your child?

Make a plan for each of your children in the next month:



Lesson 3 Teach Healthy Behavior

Introduction to Teaching

Lesson Three has the most content, so you will have to spend more time teaching. Because of the nature of the topics, it will be easy to get sidetracked or spend too much time in one area. Remember that the objective is not to go in great detail, but just to focus on the main points.

In Lessons Three and Four there will be several references to how coaching and being a Dad are connected. Refer to the suggested timings, but you may have to shorten some discussion time to fit the needs of the lesson and cover these metaphors.

Introduction for Dads

Many Dads can relate to coaching. You probably had a coach at some point in your life. Good coaches like to win and, as a Dad, you want your child to be a 'winner' in life as well. There are three key things that winning coaches do that we should remember as we discuss how Dads like you can take on the responsibility of being a 'coach' to your child.

Teaching

Coaching is more about teaching than modeling. Coaches are not on the field playing the game. Coaching is letting the players 'play' the game and coaching them from the sidelines.

Preparation

Coaching is about preparation. It is primarily done before the actual game on the practice field. Coaches make their players better through repeated practice sessions.

Improvement

Coaching is about improvement. Coaches analyze the players' actions and then give them ways to improve problem areas.

Good coaches help their players improve their performance, so that the player has a better chance at winning. As a Dad, you want to 'coach' or teach your child so that

they develop the skills necessary to come out a winner in the game of life. Children will engage in both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. Championship Dads coach for healthy behavior; they recognize the negative impact that unhealthy behaviors can have on their child. This lesson will help Dads teach healthy behavior, identify the causes of unhealthy behavior, and provide constructive ways to handle the problem of unhealthy behavior.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

Lesson Timings	Better Dad Tip #9	Better Dad Tip #10	Better Dad Tip #11	Better Dad Tip #12
	Instruction Time			
	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
	Discussion & Get In The Game			
	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes

Help Your Child Develop in All Areas of Life

There are four main areas that a child needs to have healthy growth and development. The first is spiritual growth, and we have covered that in Lesson One. Dads should make sure that they are involved in each one of these other areas. Championship Dads help their children:

A. Develop Emotional Health

Emotional health is important for a child. A Dad can help shape this. Emotional health includes the thoughts, feelings, and accompanying behaviors of a person. A child is usually considered emotionally healthy when their behavior is appropriate for their age and has positive outcomes. In children, these thoughts and feelings are continually evolving.

Listen to your child. Listening is not just hearing, but it is also watching. Their behavior may be speaking volumes as to what they are feeling. It is natural for children to become angry and get upset from time to time. Many things happen to them that they feel they have no control over. For children, life is often very confusing. They need to let their feelings be known. Holding those feelings inside can lead to a number of serious problems. Dads, sometimes when you get upset, you need someone to talk to; it is your way of venting. Your children are the same way. Sometimes the best thing you can do is listen. After you give them the chance to 'vent,' most children will begin to calm down. As they calm down, you can talk about the emotions they are feeling and how best to deal with them.

These times when children become upset should be viewed as opportunities to help children become more aware of their feelings and to problem solve and teach. Strong emotional feelings are normal for many circumstances. A Dad can show empathy for their child and acknowledge that they understand why they are upset. Real growth and maturity comes when Dad leads the child into problem solving. Problem solving is just helping your child learn other ways to deal with their being emotionally upset. This opportunity is all about your child learning self-control.

The role a Dad can play in shaping how his child thinks and feels cannot be overstated. There are two aspects of emotional health a Dad can focus on:

#1

Help Your Child Develop Their Unique Identity

Identity is defined as having a sense of who you are and why you are here. Dads can help their children find their identity. Children who do not have a strong sense of identity may be adversely impacted by the negative labels that others might place upon them.

#2

Help Your Child Develop Healthy Self-esteem

Self-esteem is closely linked to identity/self-image and is centered upon the 'value' we place on ourselves. Healthy self-esteem is very important and Dads must help develop it in their child. Low self-esteem and insecurity are rampant in this generation. A good Dad makes sure they affirm their child and build them up, while at the same time not letting them think more highly of themselves than is healthy. Dads should teach their kids to see themselves for who they are in Christ and teach them not to be consumed and shaped by how others might view them.

B. Develop Healthy Social Skills

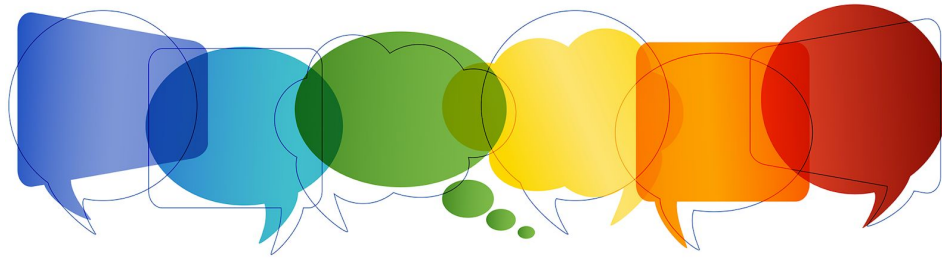
Social skills include talking to others, listening, getting along, having good manners, and having empathy for others. Social skills play a very important part in all of our lives; we interact with others daily, so our ability to interact socially will impact all areas of our life. This is why Dads must be concerned about how their child is interacting with others. Much of their future success in life will depend upon how well they develop social skills.

The learning of social skills starts in the home when children are very young. Dads must always remember that they are being watched. Much of what they learn in social skills will come not from what you tell them, but from what they see you do. The following are ways to help a child develop social skills:



It has often been said that the best way to learn is by doing. Dads should always be looking for opportunities where their child can use the skills you have been teaching them. Encouraging friendships, joining groups, and participating in sports activities are all ways for children to become socially involved. Dads should closely observe how their child is interacting with others. Problem areas should be addressed at the appropriate time. Remember, children don't always 'get it' the first time. It is normal that your child may require you to explain to them multiple times how to deal with certain issues.

Technology is great, but it can have a detrimental impact on the development of social skills in children. A number of studies show children spend 5 to 8 hours or more using some form of digital screen (phone, TV, computer, gaming device). Today's children are missing person to person interaction. The result is children having fewer friends and limited social interaction. They are not getting the physical activity they need for good health because of spending so much time in front of media devices. One result is a growing problem of obesity among children.



Time Out for Discussion

What can you do to make sure “screen time” is not taking over a child’s life?

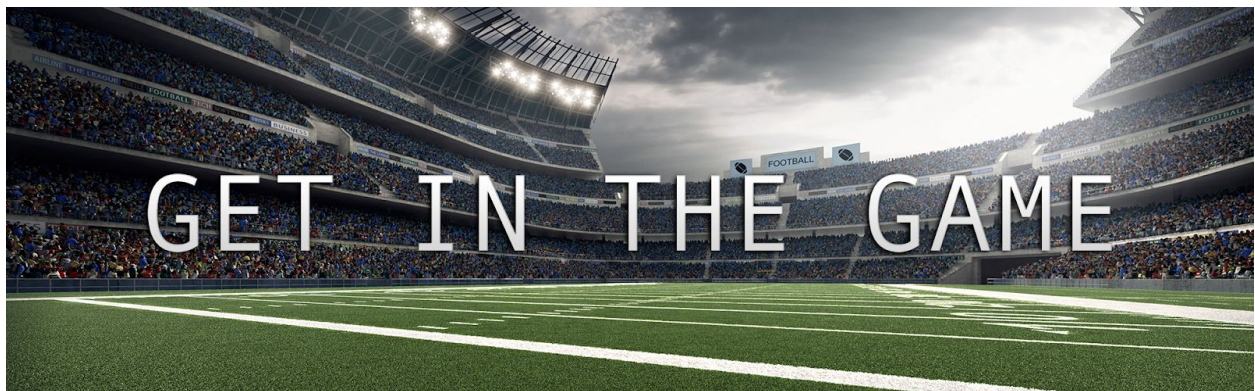
How much is “too much”?

C. Encourage Intellectual Growth

Intellectual growth – or, as it is often called, ‘cognitive development’ – begins soon after birth. We often refer to it as just ‘learning.’ Sadly, the desire to learn seems to decline in the early teens for many children.

Encouraging a child’s intellectual growth and motivating them to want to learn is not always easy. There are no precise ways to accomplish this goal. A big problem for a Dad is that what motivates one child doesn’t motivate another. Children are different in many ways and finding out their passion or interest can sometimes be difficult. Dads must also be careful not to project their own interests onto their children. When a child’s ‘interest area’ is found, then Dad should encourage and support that interest if it is an appropriate one.

This topic is very broad and is sometimes difficult to address, because learning starts at such an early age and continues throughout life. The following are some ways that a Dad might help encourage the intellectual development of their child:



As your child's life coach, analyze your child's strengths and weaknesses in each of these three areas. What steps can you take to help coach them in their area of weakness?

Know Why Your Child Misbehaves

When bad behavior occurs, Dads should try to determine what might have caused the bad behavior. Many times, bad behavior is just a symptom of something else that is going on with the child. Treating only the symptoms usually doesn't solve the problem. **There are many reasons why children misbehave. Some of the more common reasons are...**

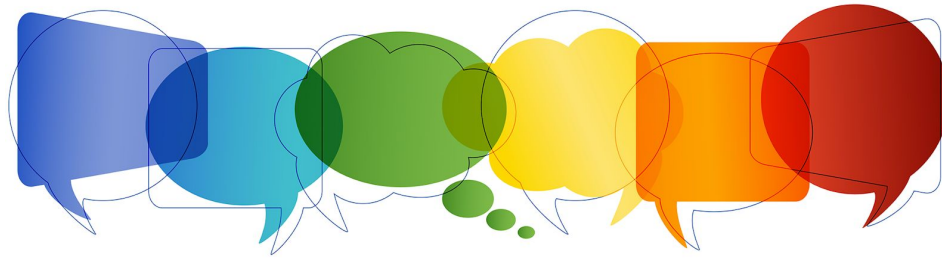
Sickness	Learning and/or Behavioral Impairments: ADD, ADHD, etc.	Tiredness
Not Understanding The Rules	Common Reasons Children Misbehave	Hunger
Desire To Test The Rules	Disbelief That You Really Mean What You Say	A Desire For Attention

Anytime you see an unusual change in your child's behavior, it usually means that something or someone has influenced them. They may be simply copying someone else's behavior. Dads should know who their children are spending their time with.

Bad behavior can also be a result of some bad experience the child has gone through or is currently experiencing. The value of communication is extremely important in these situations. You want your child to feel that they can talk to you about anything that is going on in their life.

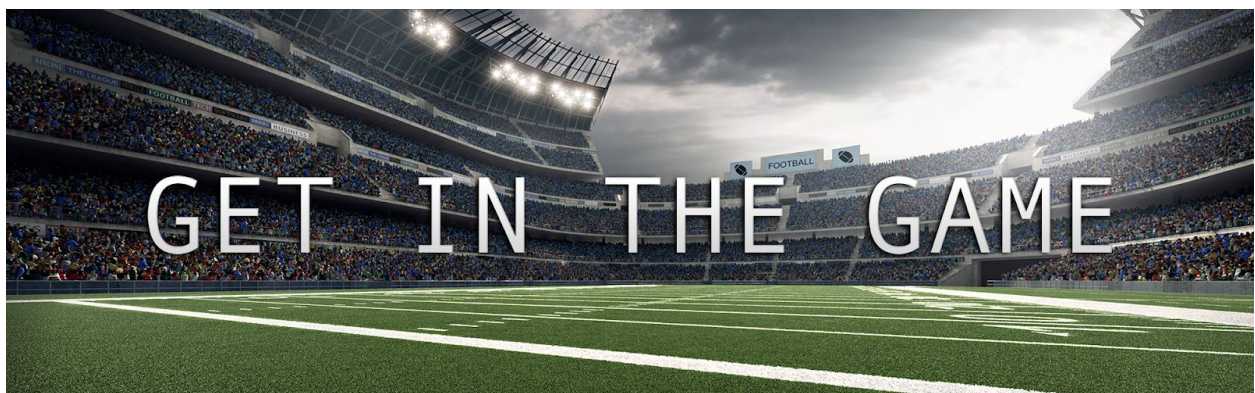
Some bad behavior is preventable. A good first step is to always make sure the rules and expectations are clearly understood. Dads who take an active interest in their child and provide a safe physical and emotional environment for them will have

fewer behavioral problems to deal with. Modeling and rewarding good behavior also helps reduce inappropriate behavior.



Time Out for Discussion

Why is it important for a Dad to know what's causing misbehavior?



Communication between a dad and child is critical. What steps can you take to build trust with your child so that they can feel “safe” talking to you?

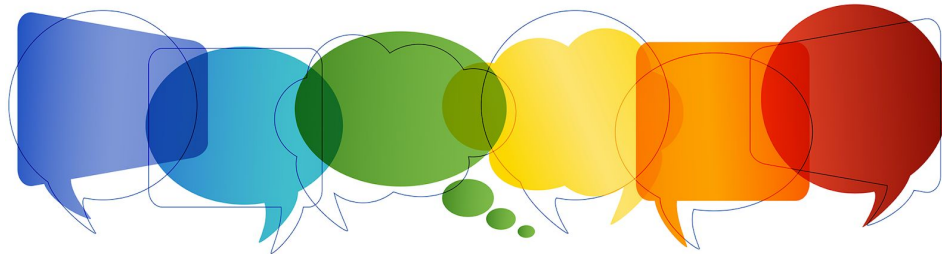
Help Your Child to Learn Self-Control

Self-control is largely a learned behavior. The earlier a child learns self-control, the more likely the child will grow up to be a productive and mature adult. The ability to regulate one's behavior varies from child to child; as a child ages, their ability to control behavior increases. Some children have severe problems with controlling their behavior and the ability to control their impulses is impaired.

For Dads with children who suffer from ADD and ADHD and other learning impairments, teaching self-control can seem overwhelming. With God's help, community assistance programs, and sometimes medication, it is possible to make it through these trying years and help your child learn self-control.

Dads play a major role in helping their children learn self-control. It begins with Dad staying in control. When you lose control, it sends the message that it is OK to be out of control. Dads can help create an atmosphere where self-control is rewarded. Children have a desire to please and often respond well to the smallest gestures of love and approval that parents can give.

Dads can play games or do activities that require self-control. These are great teaching tools.



Time Out for Discussion

With your group, name some games or activities that teach self-control.

The Bible's perspective on self-control is clear. Consider this scripture:

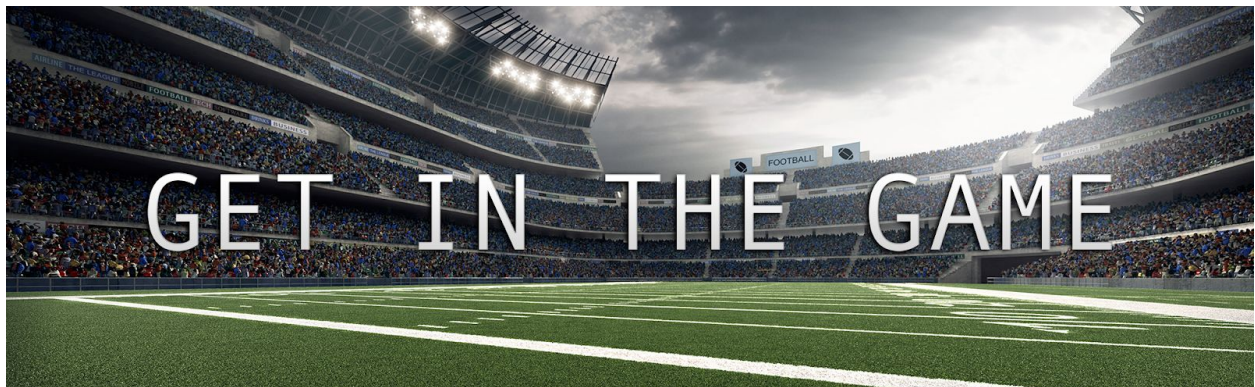
**"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a
wise man keeps himself under control."**

Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

The New Testament shows the importance of self-control, as it is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Dads have a clear responsibility to help their children develop self-control.

One of the dangers that Dads must avoid is the natural tendency to use discipline just for the sake of controlling behavior. The primary purpose of discipline should always be to *change* behavior, not just to punish or control it.

Dads that use only threats, intimidation, and the fear of punishment to try to control behavior will only temporarily control behavior at surface level. Self-control development is internal and unless Dads focus on shaping the internal values of the child, he will have minimal success at developing self-control in his child. Patience is required because the development of self-control continues throughout life.



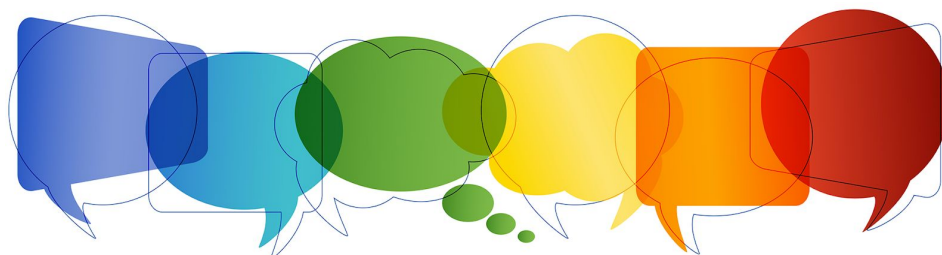
Identify a self control problem area in your child(s) life and think about ways you might help them exercise more self-control.

Balance Discipline with Grace

You have a Biblical mandate to train your child to do what is right (*Proverbs 22:6*). This training includes discipline. In fact, the word ‘discipline’ means ‘to train.’ Too many Dads see discipline as nothing but administering punishment for wrongdoing. But, the primary objective of Biblical discipline is not punishment, but learning that changes behavior.

Many Dads struggle when it comes to disciplining children. Too many times they find themselves either being too lenient or too hard with their children. To complicate matters further, each child is different and their response to different forms of discipline varies. What works well with one child may have no effect on another. To complicate matters further, when a child engages in bad behavior it often triggers an emotional response from you. You may begin to lose control and take your disappointment and anger out on the child in an inappropriate way.

Discipline isn’t easy. Dads must realize that, although it is hard, the benefits of bringing discipline into a child’s life can be the most loving thing you can do for your child.



Time Out for Discussion

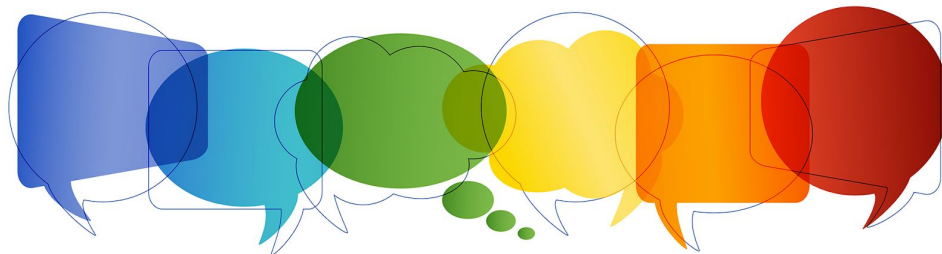
How can the lack of discipline in a child’s life affect them? How can discipline help a child? Discuss in your group.

Discipline has already been defined for us earlier in this lesson. What about grace? How is it defined? The classic Christian definition of grace is 'unmerited favor'. In the context of discipline, grace can be best understood as 'unconditional love'; after all, that is what grace is.

Don't misunderstand the meaning of grace when it comes to child discipline. Some think that showing grace means we do not punish children, that they do not have to face the consequences of their actions because we have removed the punishment for their behavior. While it is true that Jesus took the punishment for our sins when He died on the cross – which was grace in action – this does not mean that punishment should never be used. In the context of child discipline, the definition of grace as 'unconditional love' helps us better understand the relationship between grace and discipline.

The following example should clarify the relationship:

Joe Jr. is playing with his new bat inside the house. His Dad told him not to swing the bat in the house because he might break something. Joe Jr. begins to swing his new bat and hits his Dad's favorite picture that hangs on the wall in the hall, the one of him holding up that 8 lb. bass he caught last year. Dad shows grace (unconditional love) as he explains to Joe Jr. that even though he broke something very important to his Dad, this act did not affect his love for Joe Jr. His Dad loves him unconditionally. However, because he disobeyed he must be punished.



Time Out for Discussion

Can you give other examples of how grace and discipline work together?
Why is grace difficult to give when a child misbehaves?

How to Discipline with Grace

Dads must remember that the purpose of discipline is not to punish but to *change* behavior. Discipline is training a child to do what is right. It works best when it incorporates love, grace, and punishment. Punishment by itself may do nothing but put a 'pause' on bad behavior. Discipline's objective is not just to alter the child's behavior on the outside; for the desired change to have lasting impact, it must be internalized. Discipline is most effective when it creates a desire in the child to adopt the right behavior.

The disciplinary process for children can be broken down into three parts:

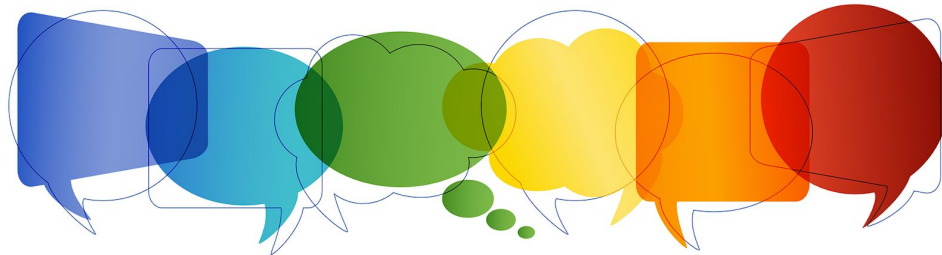
#1 Define Your Expectations

You cannot hold your child accountable for things they do not know they are supposed to do or not do. Often we do not clearly communicate to our children what we expect of them. The younger and more inexperienced the child, the more clear and concrete the explanation of desired behavior needs to be.

#2

Reinforce Desired Behavior

Discipline is not just punishment; it is also the rewarding of good behavior. Good Dads use creative methods to foster desired outcomes in their child's behavior. This is not 'buying' good behavior, but showing the proper response to preferred outcome.



Time Out for Discussion

Share with the group some good ways to define expectations of behavior.
Talk through positive ways to reinforce desired behavior.

#3

Administer Appropriate Punishment for Bad Behavior

Children may behave inappropriately even after we have encouraged the desired behavior. Even though we have warned them of the consequences, they still misbehave. Some form of corrective action or punishment is needed in these situations.

Before taking action at this point, it may be helpful to analyze the misbehavior that has occurred. Answering these questions may help clarify the problem and lead to the best form of discipline or corrective action:

- **Did the child know that their behavior was wrong?**
- **Are your expectations consistent with what the child is truly capable of doing?**
- **Is the misbehavior serious or are you overreacting due to your own tiredness or just lack of patience?**
- **Was this an accident or something that the child could not control?**

Depending on the answers to these questions, Dads can know how to proceed in the discipline process. The effectiveness of discipline is going to largely depend upon the punishment or corrective action that is used. Before deciding on which form of discipline to use, you should consider the age, mental capacity, and uniqueness of the child.

Finally, the seriousness and frequency of the offense should be considered. Additionally, you should ask yourself:

- **Does the punishment fit the offense?**
- **Is it fair to punish the child?**
- **Are my emotions under control?**

Many times, Dads will need to be creative. Special circumstances may call for special treatment. The following are a few of the more commonly utilized forms of punishment/corrective actions:



Assigning Work

Assigning additional work or some form of activity that the child will view as burdensome, but which produces something of value.

Taking Away Privileges



Grounding



Time-Out and/or Isolation Periods



Physical Punishment

It is important a Dad never strike a child in anger or when emotions are not under control. In today's environment, forms of corporal punishment are often viewed as mistreatment of children. Regardless of your personal beliefs on this subject, the use of corporal punishment carries with it the risk of legal action being taken against you. If you choose to do this, do so understanding the realities of our current world views.

Sometimes, the best discipline decision you can make is to not take action, but allow the natural actions of a child's decisions to play out. While you would never put your child in danger by inaction, sometimes the lesson is best learned by reaping the consequences of actions. Sometimes, parents create patterns of misbehavior when they stop natural consequences by rescuing their child.

When administering punishment or corrective action, Dads need to understand the power of words. Be careful of what you say and how you say it. Avoid shaming your child. Public humiliation can do severe harm to the psyche of a child.



As you reflect back on times you have disciplined your child, what if anything would you do differently after hearing this information?



Lesson 4 Inspire Your Child's Future

Introduction to Teaching

This final lesson is shorter than the other lessons, however, it is just as important. The goal is for these last four '*Better Dads Tips*' to be presented in an upbeat and positive way. The material lends itself to this end. Make it inspirational. For your class to be successful, Dads need to understand the importance of inspiring their children to great things in life. These Dads also need to be inspired themselves. Help them see the tremendous potential in their children. These Tips will address some things that a Dad can do to bring out the best in their child and make a huge difference in their child's life both today and in the future.

Introduction for Dads

The word 'inspire' has its roots in the Latin word '*inspirare*', meaning 'to fill or breathe into something'. *Championship Dads* can inspire their children by filling their lives with hope, expectation, and excitement regarding the future. They can continually offer positive encouragement as to the possibilities that the future holds for their children. Dads can 'breathe' into their children a strong sense of self-confidence and motivate them to want to do great things. This lesson will help you inspire your children in some very positive ways.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

Lesson Timings	Better Dad Tip #13	Better Dad Tip #14	Better Dad Tip #15	Better Dad Tip #16
	Instruction Time			
	15 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
	Discussion & Get In The Game			
	10 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes

BETTER
DADS
TIP

#13

Challenge Your Child to Dream BIG!

Dreaming comes naturally to children; their imagination can be very active. Their minds are not full of all the realities of life, and thus their dreams can be really big. For adults, this unbridled optimism may seem to be just foolishness. However, dreams are very important for children. Their dreams give them hope and something to work for. There is a strong correlation between children who have big dreams and successful adults. Our greatest achievements and inventions have come from those who continued to dream big after childhood and be passionate about the future. Sadly, adults sometimes kill the dreams and passions of a child. What could those children have become if their dreams and passions had been nurtured and encouraged?

One of the greatest things a Dad can do for his family is be a dreamer. Not the kind who just dreams, but one who dreams and then takes action to make those dreams come true. Children are watching, and they know when Dad has given up hope and stopped dreaming. A Dad who has a passion for life and hope for the future will see those same attributes in his child. Former President John Quincy Adams said this about leaders and dreams:

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

There are many things a Dad can do to help coach their children to dream big. The following are some additional things that can be done:

5 Ways You Can Coach Your Child To Dream BIG!

#1 Expose your children to big dreamers

History is full of people like Amelia Earhart, Martin Luther King, and Thomas Edison, just to name a few. Don't be limited to historical figures. Let them meet or have an opportunity to be around someone who has big dreams.

#2 Do something new with your child

Going to a new place or meeting someone new and different may plant a seed from which a big dream will grow. Perhaps a museum might encourage your children in their own dreams or inspire new ones. You could also look around for classes and hobbies your children might enjoy.

#3 Encourage curiosity and creativity

Don't ignore questions. Play games that require creativity and play with toys that require creativity. Encourage building things and repairing things. This could take the form of Legos and building blocks, puzzles, role-playing games, arts and crafts, costumes – the possibilities are endless! Play with your child and encourage them to see the big picture by looking to the future.

#4

Be there for support when a dream seems to fall apart

Help them see that sometimes success comes through failures, from big life-changing things to small and simple games and tasks. These times are great 'teachable moments'. Help them see the value in being persistent and patient, even when the task is difficult or long. Focus on the process more than the outcome.

#5

Help your child set goals that are part of their dream

Remember, it is their dream, not yours! Make the goals realistic and let them be achievable in a short period of time. Small successful steps toward their dream will build confidence and give hope that will keep their passion alive.

Dads can again look to the Church and the Bible for assistance in this area of helping your child to dream big dreams. Pastor Tommy Barnett, the founder of the *Dream Center* and pastor of a church in Phoenix, Arizona has written this about dreams:

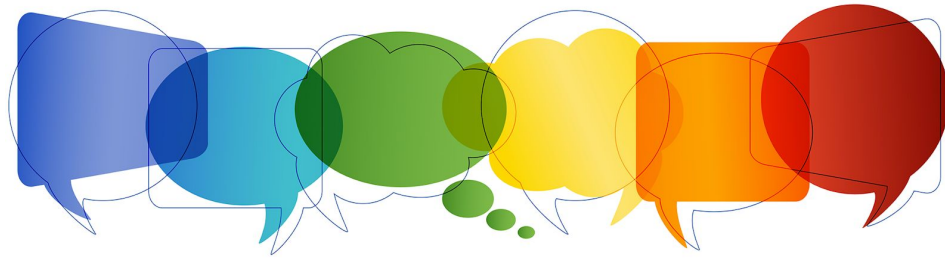
“ Dreams are not merely the nightly thoughts you experience as the brain sorts out the day's events. They are the goals and visions that fire your heart and saturate your soul with joy at the very thought of them. They are those continuing visions of what you want your life to be at its highest level of fulfillment – what you want to do, how you want to do it, what kind of person you want to become in the process.”

“ Your destiny and reason for living are wrapped up tightly in your dreams and desires, like the genetic information inside a seed. That dream in your heart contains your spiritual ‘DNA,’ the very blueprint for who you are. Your dream is that idea, that vision for your life that burns inside of you – something you can't ignore for long. It keeps coming back to your mind because it is part of who you are; it will never leave you alone.”

“ A dream doesn't drive you; it draws you. It is like a big magnet that pulls you toward itself. I don't believe that there is a man or woman without a dream, because God designed every member of the human race to have dreams. Without a dream, a person will be frustrated in the present and will miss his or her future.”

“ Your dream did not even originate with you. It resides within you, but God put it there. He is the source of your dream. When people dream without God, they find it hollow and unsatisfying. Every person must come to Jesus for his or her dream to make sense. In fact, without Jesus, you might follow a dream for your life that God never put in your heart.”

“ Not every dream is from God. There is such a thing as godless dreams. But when your dream is God's dream, it's unstoppable.”



Time Out for Discussion

What stands out to you about what Pastor Barnett said about our dreams?

There are some key biblical points that Dads should always keep in mind as they help their children dream:

#1

Our Abilities Come From God

Dads should point their children to God as their source. James 1:17 (NKJV): *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”*

#2

God Is Working With Us When We Love Him

Romans 8:28 (NKJV): *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*

#3 Our Dreams Must Bring Glory To God

1 Corinthians 10:31: *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*



Do you have a dream for your family and can you name your children's individual dreams?

Be Your Child's Biggest Cheerleader

We have discussed how Dads coach their children, but there is another role that a Dad needs to play in their child's life: Dad needs to be their biggest cheerleader. Cheerleaders do many things, but the most important thing they do is 'cheer.' The word 'cheer' means to shout for joy, to encourage, and to praise. As a Dad, your child should see you as being the one who is always there to:



**Shout with joy over
their accomplishments**



**Praise them for
their efforts**

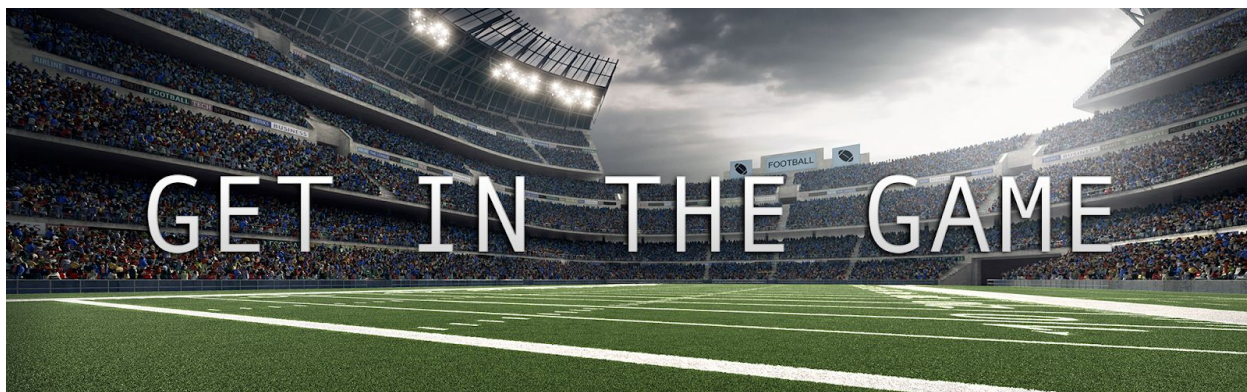


**Encourage them to
always do your best**

Notice that there is no mention of winning or losing. That means that as a Championship Dad, we 'cheer' for our kids regardless of the outcome. We cheer when our child wins and we cheer when they lose. We praise effort as much as we praise a win. Dads send a powerful message of love to their children when they are there supporting them regardless of the outcome of some game or activity. Just seeing you there cheering them on speaks volumes of how you feel about them.

One of the primary concerns of cheerleaders is the team's spirit. Spirit is very important, as it reflects the team's willingness to work together as a team and to succeed as a team. Championship Dads understand that their child needs to be encouraged and inspired. The game of life is not always easy; it can be very discouraging and even overwhelming at times for a child. Dads can play a huge role in determining the 'spirit' of their child. Those encouraging words when things are not going well will always be remembered and treasured by your child.

Another important thing that cheerleaders do is to console their team when they lose. A Championship Dad is going to be there for his child when they don't succeed. Cheerleaders don't take off from next week's game just because their team lost. They are right back out there the following week cheering them on. This is what a good Dad does. He helps his child come back from defeat and continue pressing on.



Do you have a child who needs to be cheered on right now? How can you be a better cheerleader for them?

Help Your Child See Beyond Themselves

One of the most important things a Dad can do for his children is to teach them to look beyond themselves and consider the feelings, interests, and well-being of others. When we consider that much of our interaction with others is outside of the family circle, the importance of having healthy social skills cannot be overemphasized. We encounter friends, co-workers, neighbors, and strangers on a daily basis. Dads can have a great impact on the future relationships of their children by teaching and modeling healthy relationships with others.

The Bible gives great advice on personal relationships. How we relate to others is something God is very concerned with. In Genesis 4, we have the story of Cain and Abel. God is very upset after Cain kills his brother Abel. In response to God's question about Abel, Cain says *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* From the way God punishes Cain, we know that God did hold Cain accountable for his brother Abel. We can also see how we should treat others in The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). Six of the Ten Commandments govern our relationships with our fellowmen. In the New Testament (Matt. 22:37-40), Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was and he replied:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV)

Jesus also said this concerning our interaction with others:

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12 (ESV)

This is known as the Golden Rule. It is usually said something like this: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We could look at many other

scriptures concerning our relationships with one another. They can all be summed up with these three words:

“Love One Another”

Dads are being watched by their children. One of the most valuable lessons you can teach your child is how to get along with others. Not only does the home need to be a place of peace, but we must strive to live peacefully with others around us. If a Dad is continually having altercations and disputes with people outside of the family, a child will think that not getting along with others is OK. As a Dad, do you really want your child to grow up always fighting with others?

There will be times when someone hurts us. When this happens, you have an opportunity to model the power of forgiveness. Someone who cannot learn to ‘let things go’ and who refuses to forgive will live a very unhappy and bitter life.



How can you help your child become more aware of the needs of others?

What could you and your child do to show love for someone else?

Make a Lifetime Commitment to Your Child

Most people remember the good coaches that they had in their life. Out of respect and appreciation, we may still call those coaches 'coach', even though they haven't been our coach for years. For Dads, the coaching never stops. You know you have been a good coach when your child still values your 'coaching' even when they are out on their own. You never get too old to be a Dad.

Dads should always be aware of the lifetime responsibilities of being a Dad. It is very important that your child knows that you will be there for them, not just today, but also in the future. Dads should often speak of the future and remind their children that they will always be there for them.

When a Dad is there for life, his child feels great security. This security is so important, both to young children and as they grow older. Your child's need for you being their 'rock,' the one that they can always depend on, doesn't change just because they become adults. You can still be that 'rock' in their life, no matter their age.

Make a lifetime commitment to your child. Let them know that you will always be there for them and that you will never stop loving them. No matter how old your children become, they can always benefit from your experience, wisdom, and knowledge.



Plan some specific times to communicate to your child that you will always be there for them.



You will
always be
their Dad.