

STRONGER DADS



STRONGER FAMILIES

STUDENT WORKBOOK





Championship Dads

Student Workbook

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Arkansas
Division of
Workforce
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ARKANSAS
BETTER DADS
Stronger Dads, Stronger Families



TEMPORARY
ASSISTANCE
FOR NEEDY
FAMILIES



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**

The course objective is 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 you can become a better Dad.

This course is split into four lessons, with each representing a session you will work through with your group. Each lesson has four 'Better Dads Tips', with content supporting each Tip. In addition, you will have discussion questions to engage with the other Dads in conversation. These discussions provide great opportunities for you and your classmates to learn from one another.

Finally, a very important part of each Tip is a section called 'Get In the Game', where you are challenged to come up with specific actions and strategies that you can take to be a better Dad. These are important to taking what you are learning and applying it in your own life as a Dad.

CHAMPIONSHIP DADS GROUND RULES

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



Lesson 1
Provide Spiritual Leadership



Lesson 1

Provide Spiritual Leadership

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.



Better Dads Tip #1: 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. We find the character of God 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 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, relationship with God is broken. God sent Jesus to the world so that the 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)

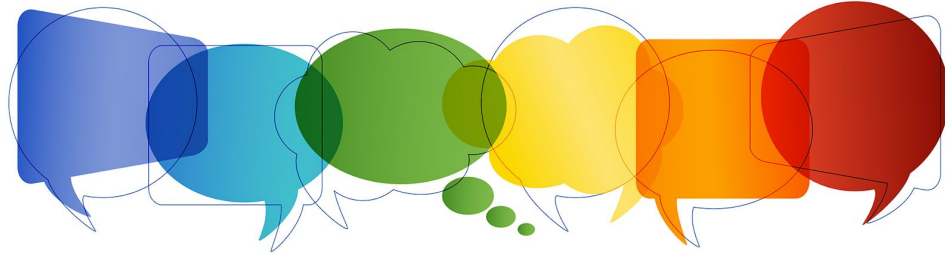
A Dad who repents of his sin, believes in Jesus as his Lord and Savior, and decides to follow after Jesus (become His disciple) is dramatically changed. He is a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) and all things have become new. He is now spiritually "alive." Dads who are "spiritually alive" are best suited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

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."

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."



Time Out for Discussion

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

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):

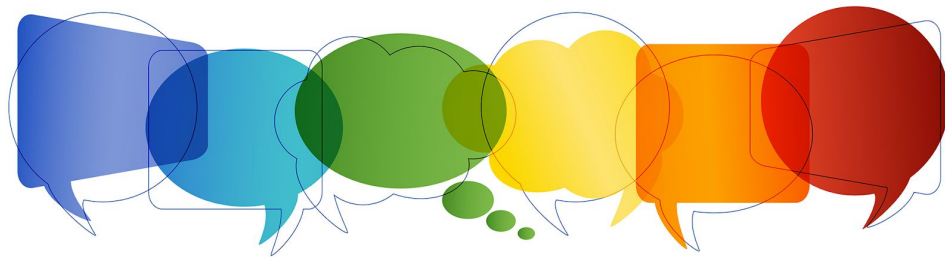


Better Dads Tip #2:
Live With Integrity

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.

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:



Where in your life do you need to work on your integrity? Where in your life do you need to make some course corrections:



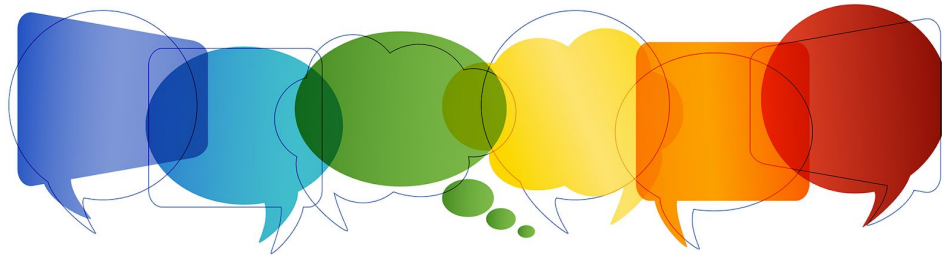
Better Dads Tip #3:

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.

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.

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.



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?



On a scale of **1** to **10**, 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

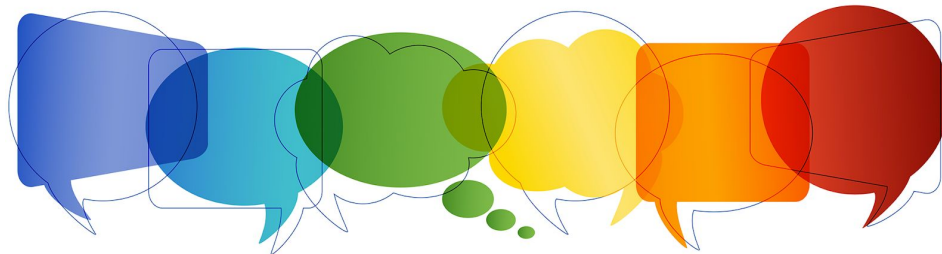
How can you improve?



Better Dads Tip #4: **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 key characteristic of a servant leader is humility. Championship Dads understand this important principle. Jesus' humility is the pattern for Dads to follow. A servant-leader Dad will focus on how best to serve his families. 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?

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)

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 this "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"**

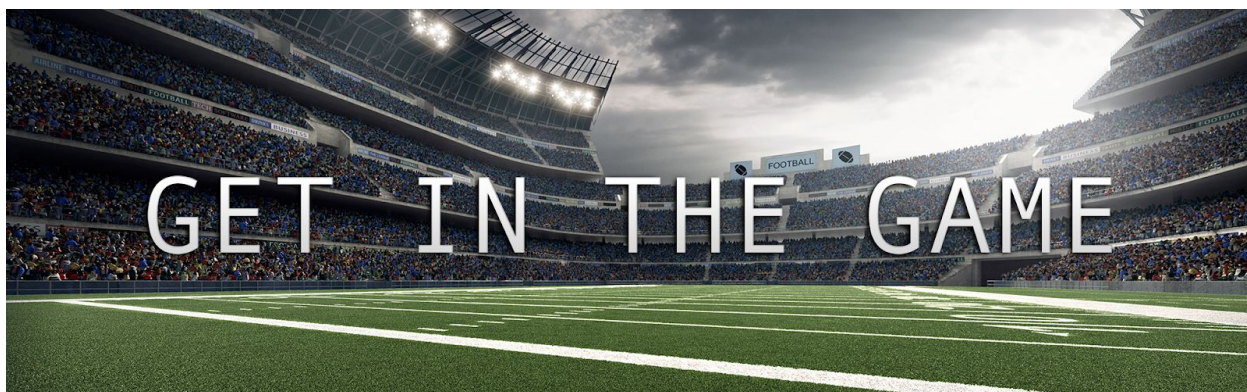
**Are Transparent
And Open**

**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



Lesson 2

Be a Loving Dad

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.



Better Dads Tip #5:

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 we 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

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

C. God Is Accessible To His Children

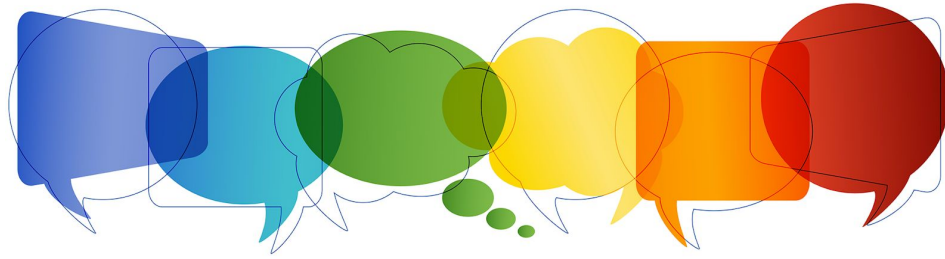
"Draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

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

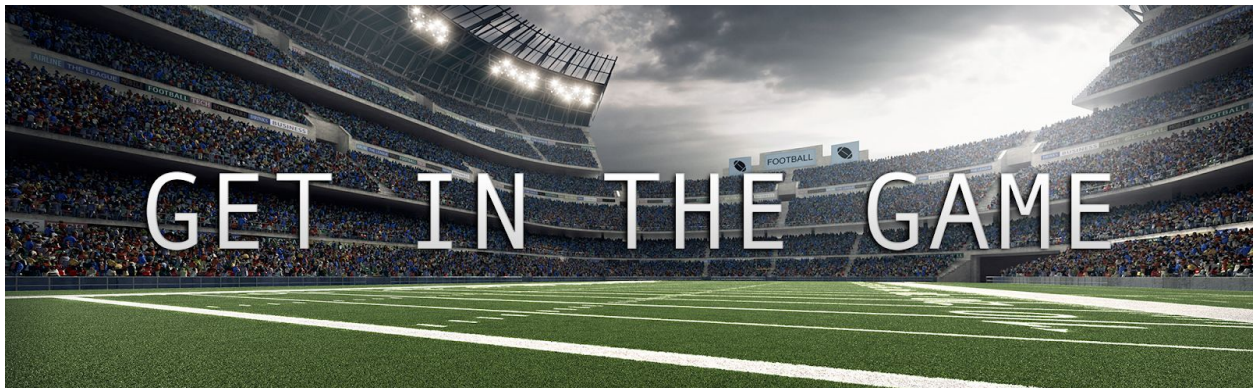
E. God's Love For His Children Never Changes

"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)



Time Out for Discussion

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



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



Better Dads Tip #6:

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 to...

A. Have a Healthy View of Themselves

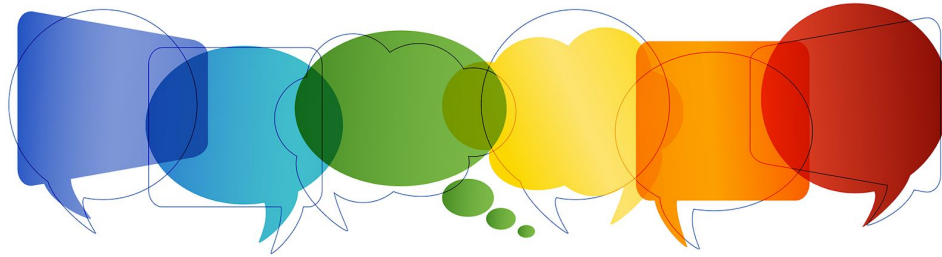
When a child hears "I love you" from their Dad and it is said often, even when they have been acting badly, this lets the child know that they are loved not because of what they do, but because of who they are.

B. 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.

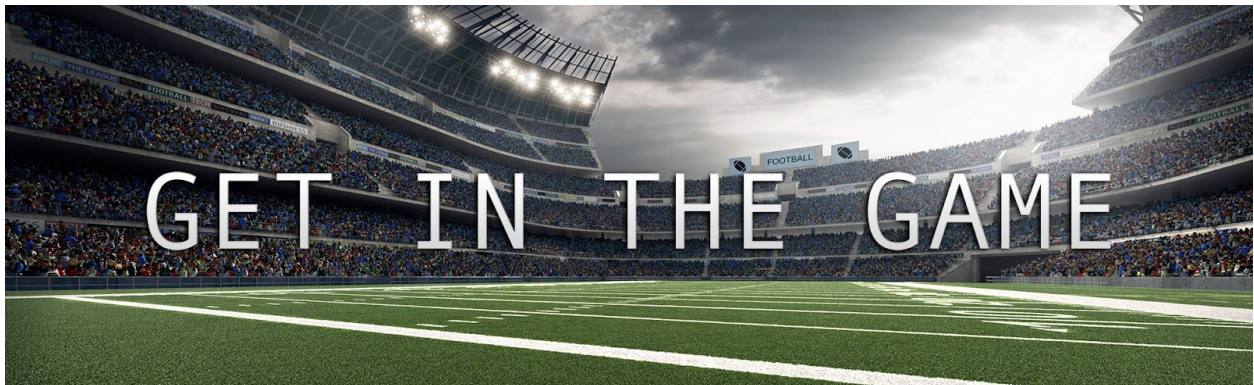
C. Have a Better Understanding of Emotions

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.



Time Out for Discussion

Why do dads sometimes have problems with saying “I love you” to their children?



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



Better Dads Tip #7: **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."

The Bible says...

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

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

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.
2. It Creates Healthy Views of Relationships.
3. It improves the Quality of Relationship with Child.



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 #8: **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.

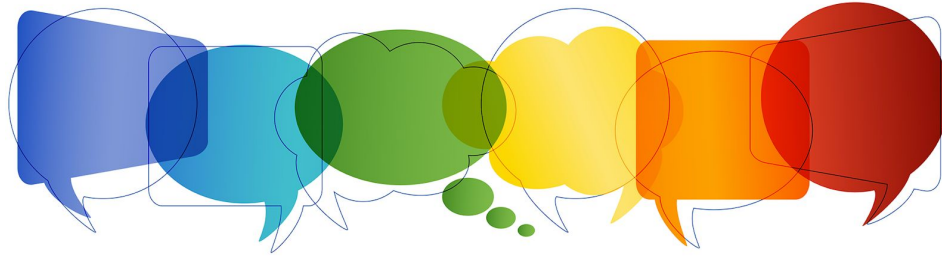
The time a Dad spends with his child can be very beneficial. Time spent together:



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, involved, 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.



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



Lesson 3

Teach Healthy Behavior

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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.



Better Dads Tip #9:

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 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.
2. Help your child develop healthy self-esteem.

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.

Respect For Others

How To Make Friends

**Conflict
Resolution**

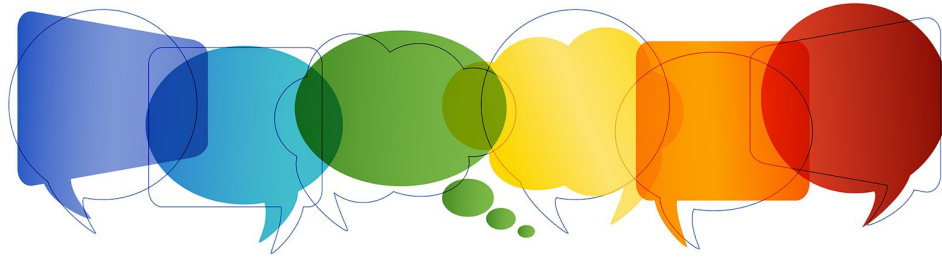
Teach them...

**Empathy
For Others**

Respect For Rules & Authority Figures

C. Encourage Intellectual Growth 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.

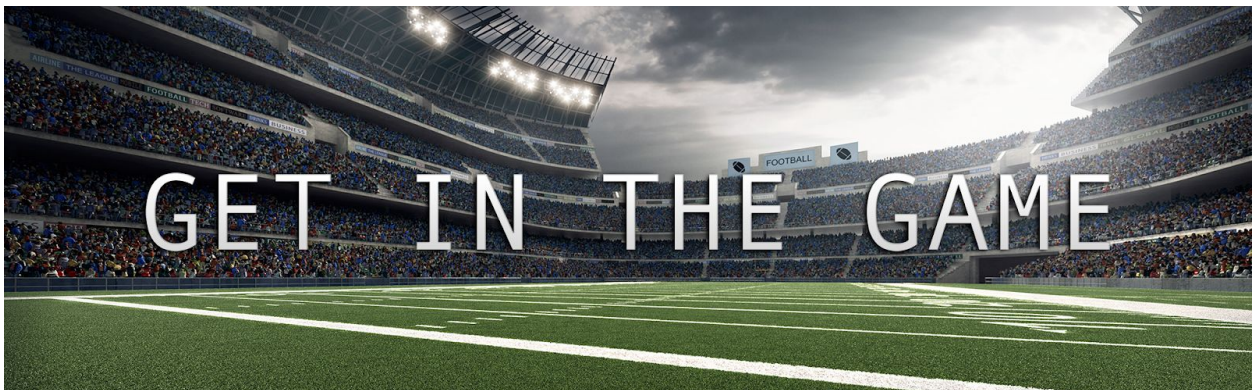




Time Out for Discussion

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

How much is “too much”?



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?



Better Dads Tip #10:

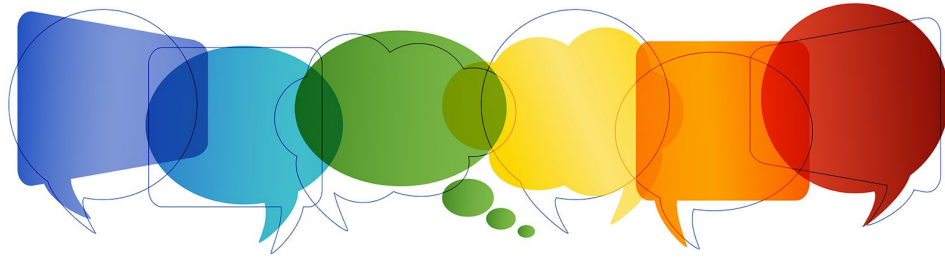
Know Why Your Child Misbehaves

When bad behavior occurs, Dads should try to determine what might have caused the bad behavior. Many times, bad behavior is just the 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.



Time Out for Discussion

Why is it important for a Dad to know what is 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?



Better Dads Tip #11:

Help Your Child 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. 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.

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.



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

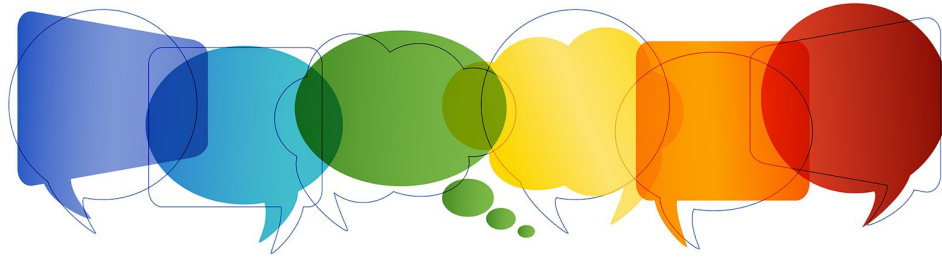


Time-Out and/or Isolation Periods



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.



Time Out for Discussion

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



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

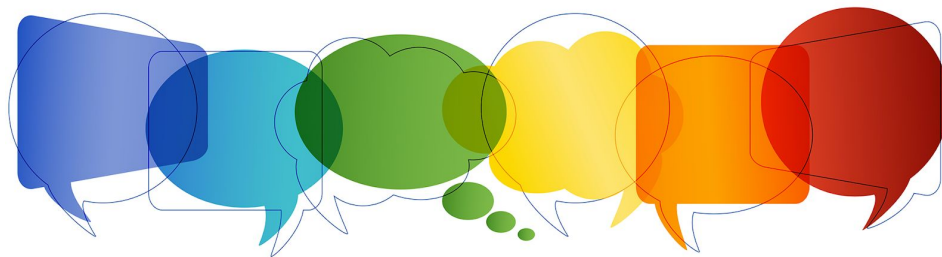


Better Dads Tip #12: **Balance Discipline with Grace**

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.

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.



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.

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

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



**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



Lesson 4

Inspire Your Child's 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.



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 to 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:

1. **Expose your children to big dreamers.**
2. **Do something new with your child.**
3. **Encourage curiosity and creativity.**
4. **Be there for support when a dream seems to fall apart.**
5. **Help your child set goals that are part of *their* dream.**

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

A. Our abilities come from God

"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."

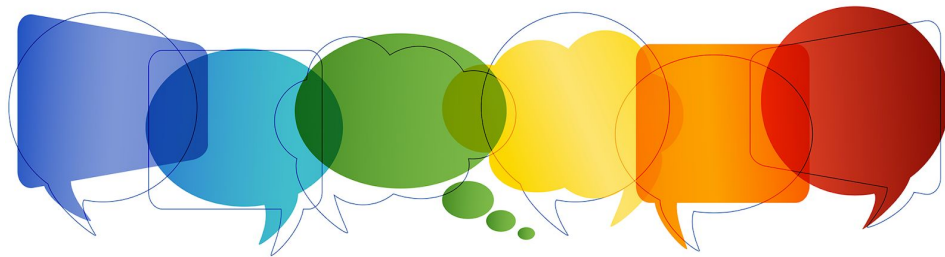
James 1:17

B. God is working with us when we love Him

"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." Romans 8:28

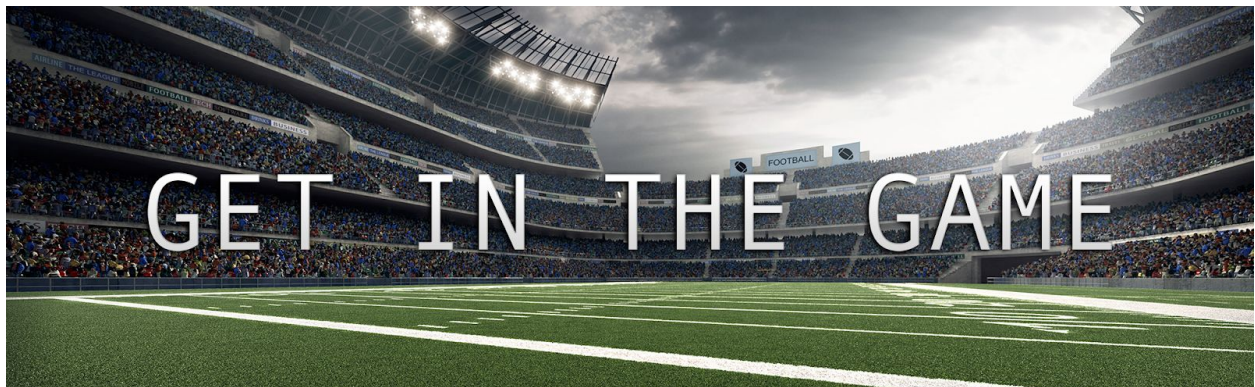
C. Our Dreams Must Bring Glory to God

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



Time Out for Discussion

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



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



Better Dads Tip #14:

Be Your Child's Biggest Cheerleader

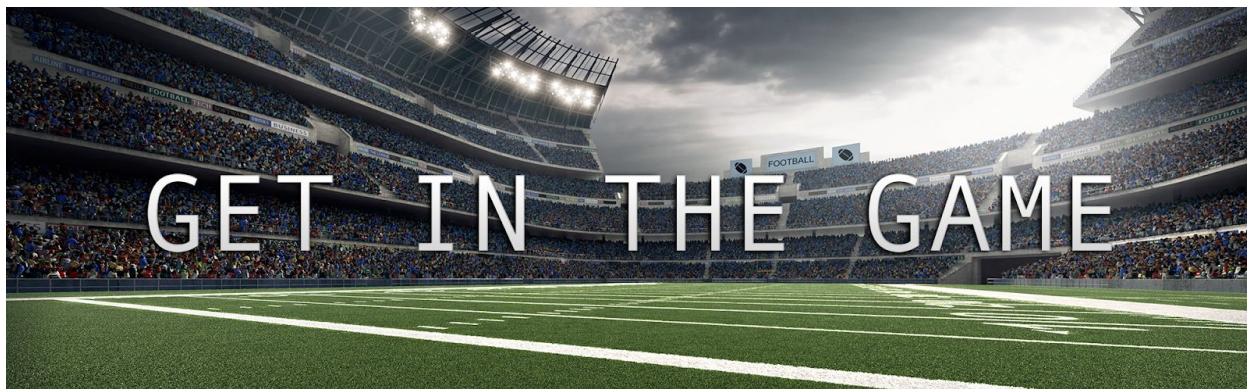
We have discussed how Dads coach their children, but there is another role that a Dad needs to play in their child's life: Dad needs to be their biggest cheerleader. Cheerleaders do many things, but the most important thing they do is 'cheer.' The word 'cheer' means to shout for joy, to encourage, and 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;
- Encourage them to always do your best;
- Praise them for their efforts.

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?



Better Dads Tip #15:

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 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.



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?



Better Dads Tip #16:

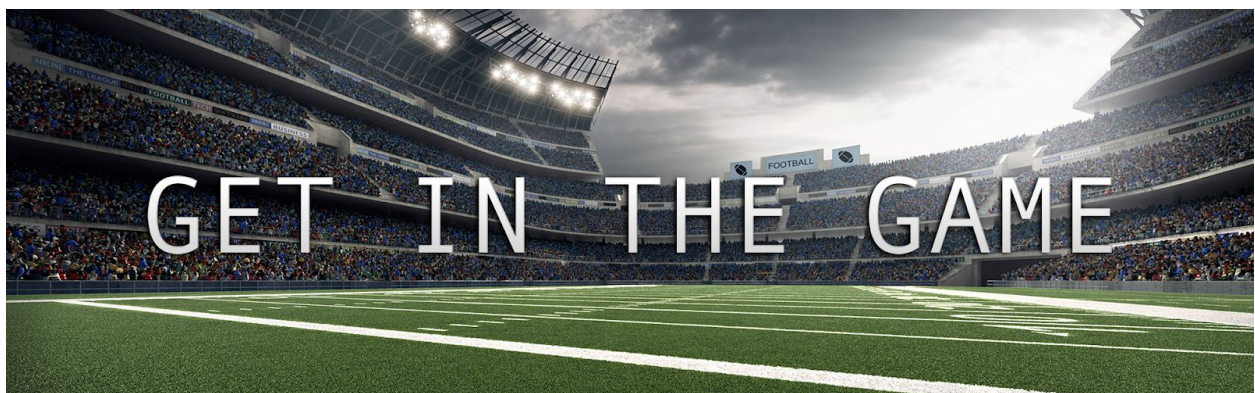
Make a Lifetime Commitment to Your Child

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.