

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DADS

We all need encouragement. I do not think this statement is controversial. The effort that life requires needs to be counterbalanced at times with encouragement, the support that inspires renewed confidence and a will to continue. While we all need it, the focus of this editorial is encouragement for fathers.

Probably the biggest question is how to find encouragement when we need it. Where do we go for it? *And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God (1Sa 30:6).* The setting of this verse is the account of David and his warriors' efforts to escape the clutches of King Saul while remaining at the same time in an uneasy alliance with the Philistines. While David and his men were away fighting, the Amalekites took David's city, Ziklag, and burned it with fire. When David and his men returned, they found their wives and children taken captive by the Amalekites. This was a terrible situation indeed.

But David went to the right source for encouragement. He went to the Lord his God. This is the best source of encouragement because in the Lord, a father will find companionship with the one that sticketh closer than a brother (Pro 18:24, also see John 15:15). A father who has his Father (Jehovah God) as his friend will find encouragement and strength during the most difficult times imaginable.

A father is a man with children, and if he is a real man, he is taking responsibility for raising them. Someone said it this way: "A father is a man who has snapshots in his wallet where his money used to be." A Christian father has an even higher goal: he is responsible for raising children that will serve the Lord and raise the next generation for Him. Is that not a real encouragement of itself?

Job is an example of a godly, faithful father. Job 1:1-5 gives us a picture of the life of Job before his great calamity befell him. Verse 4 mentions feasting in their houses every one his day. This is probably a reference to celebrating their respective birthdays. Although it does not explicitly say this, the implication is that Job joined his family in their birthday celebrations. He was a very busy man, but not too busy to join his children in their happiness. He was also a spiritual man with a heart of concern for the spiritual welfare of his children. This is shown by his regular sacrifices for

his sons – Thus did Job continually. His spiritual connection with God held strong throughout his trial of faith, even though at times he questioned and challenged God because his finite mind could not conceive the reason for his suffering.

As a father places himself under the lordship of his Father, he will find that encouragement will come from other godly people in his life. Love extended to others from a true heart of compassion will return and encourage the giver. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him* (Psa 126:6).

Why do fathers need encouragement? Because fathers carry a heavy responsibility. Both the marriage and the function of the home are directly related to the leadership and vision of fathers. At times, because of the busyness of life and the loads that God calls them to carry, a father can easily allow himself to become distant from his children. But fathers need to be present and give emotional support when needed. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him* (Psa 103:13).

We Fathers cannot expect others to fill the places we do not wish or feel adequate to fill. We must do our best, recognizing that God chooses to use inadequate humans to build His Kingdom. Although we should also remember that God uses the brotherhood to supply what we lack, we cannot become careless and begin to assume on this. Each father needs to view fatherhood as a God-given responsibility. Keep persevering even when times get tough. Do not ever give up!

### **A Successful Dad**

I may never be as clever,  
As my neighbor down the street;  
I may never be as wealthy,  
As some other men I meet;  
I may never have the glory,  
That some other men have had;  
But I've got to be successful,  
As a little fellow's Dad.

There are certain dreams I cherish,  
That I'd like to see come true;  
There are things I would accomplish,  
Ere my working day is through;  
But the task my heart is set on,  
Is to guide a little lad;

And to make myself successful,  
As that little fellow's Dad.

I may never come to glory;  
I may never gather gold;  
Men may count me as a failure,  
When my business life is told;  
But if he who follows after,  
Shall be manly, I'll be glad;  
For I'll know I've been successful,  
As that little fellow's Dad.

*Let us encourage one another. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day (Heb 3:13). A father who finds encouragement can then give encouragement and with the help of his Father God leave a legacy of faithfulness for future generations.*

~Dave Sweigart