

Good, Good Father

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On Sunday we'll celebrate some of our most unheralded heroes in society. Of course, I'm talking about all our faithful fathers.

I suspect those of us who have been blessed with a Christian father understand the remarkable impact of such a man. Personally, I can't imagine life without the influence of a man who walks with Christ and has provided an example of biblical manhood for me to follow. Mississippi is full of fathers just like the one I celebrate, and I'm deeply thankful for each one of them!

I'm also keenly aware that we have an understated crisis in our country related to fatherhood. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 19.7 million children are living without a father in the home. In other words, one out of every four children right here in the United States is missing the presence of a father. Even more, experts recognize that fatherlessness is a factor in almost every social issue we face.

According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, children who grow up without a father are four times more likely to experience poverty, seven times more likely to become pregnant as a teen, and two times more likely to drop out of high school. As these kids mature (or fail to mature, more accurately), they are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, commit a crime, and go to prison. I could share more statistics, but this will suffice to remind us of the

importance of fatherhood.

Unfortunately, we are living in an era when men are being stripped of their manhood by the so-called sexual revolution. Everything from gender identity to the prevalence of pornography is being leveraged by the enemy to diminish manhood and, consequently, undermine the role of fatherhood.

Maybe it's time those of us who follow the teaching of Scripture related to family life renew our commitment to God's simple family design. He planned marriage so that a man and a woman are joined as husband and wife in order to multiply and fill the earth. This design provides the surest way of raising children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and of insuring a healthy society.

The social breakdown we currently see can be largely attributed to the meltdown of the family, and the meltdown of the family is in large part due to the fact that we have forgotten God in our culture. As we've said many times, the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. People need to be reconciled to God and enjoy ongoing fellowship with Him. This spiritual reality is the only stable foundation for a peaceful and secure society.

The simple truth is that God has designed families for our good, and He intends fathers to be part of the design. Thankfully, He has also provided an example of fatherhood in His own character. He is our ultimate Father who loves and guides and corrects and then loves some more. What a good, good Father He is!

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