

The Right Man for the Job

You have an amazing place in your child's life—your kids need you! You're the one your kids look to for—

- **Guidance:** “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it” (Jeremiah 6:16). Kids face some important life decisions ahead and need the benefits of your experiences and wisdom. That's right: Dads are the “ancient paths” of wisdom for our children.
- **Encouragement:** “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29). Dads have tremendous potential to make or break a child's self-image. Through verbally affirming and investing time and energy in your children, you show them that you love them and put them in a good position to face the world with confidence.
- **Comfort:** God “comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves

have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:4). As fathers, God wants us to reach out in love and gentleness and touch the hearts of our kids.

- **Vision:** “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18 KJV). Your kids need you to convey a positive outlook on their future. They need you to help them figure out what they're good at and express hope for future opportunities.
- **Protection:** “Stay here with me, and I will protect you with my own life” (1 Samuel 22:23 NLT). The world is full of physical, emotional, moral, and spiritual dangers—but dads can protect their kids by being a safe, involved, available presence in their lives.

As you endeavor to meet your children's needs, your day will be filled with challenges, opportunities, and adventures—and joy.

Success isn't accumulating possessions, wealth, or power. Success is obeying God. It means having those closest to you love and respect you the most.

JOHN C. MAXWELL



*The words that a father speaks
to his children in the privacy
of home are not heard by the world,
but, as in whispering galleries,
they are clearly heard
at the end and by posterity.*

JEAN PAUL RICHTER



Family Resemblance

JAY COOKINGHAM

I had just arrived home late from work and was feeling sick and bone weary. My spirit was past spent and I wanted to plop down somewhere and ignore everything and everyone. But my day wasn't through—I needed to make my “rounds,” checking in with my kids and asking how their day had gone.

Sarah, my oldest daughter, had her feelings hurt at dance class earlier that afternoon,

so she was first on my list. Walking into her room, I put my arms around her as she began to cry. In between sobs, she shared about how she didn't get the part in the recital that she wanted, and then another girl said something really mean...

My head was throbbing and my eyes were nearly shut by the pain, but I managed to listen closely to all the details. I can barely remember what advice I gave on how to handle disappointment, but as we prayed together, I felt some solace in knowing that she had been able to release her worries and sadness to God.

After some prayer and “daddy” time, Sarah felt better, and I

moved on to catch up with the rest of the crew. Dinnertime, story time, and then the kids' bedtime came in rapid succession.

Afterwards, I went downstairs to the family room to channel surf myself numb.

For weeks I had been feeling unworthy of the adoration I saw in my children's eyes. Sitting alone now, doubts about my fathering skills kept pecking at me—the same doubts about the impact I was having on their young lives that had been keeping me awake lately. I worried that I wasn't quite the hero my daughter had pictured in her mind, that I wasn't the man my sons believed me to be.

As I tried to lose myself in cable land, those uncertainties kept fighting for my attention—what makes you think you're a good father? The lies kept coming, and my aching spirit felt worse than my throbbing head.

After a short while, my wife came in, hugged me from behind, and told me something that would lift my spirits and encourage my heart. As she was saying goodnight to my daughter, Sarah had told her, "Mom, Daddy is the one person that shows me Jesus the best."

How I needed to hear those words! They were the tonic I needed to ease the despair that was killing me. As my tears

flowed, I realized that my daughter noticed that Daddy wasn't feeling well, yet took the time to listen to her heart. She saw a picture of Christ's character fleshed out in me when I was willing to put her needs above my own. The family resemblance displayed before her young eyes was that of the Heavenly Father, who enabled me to "look like Jesus" to my daughter. ♦

*Follow God's example in everything you do,
because you are his dear children.*

EPHESIANS 5:1 NLT