

## 9. Fathering Skills



So what did you think when you read the first question asked in this lesson – “Do you have the skills to be a good dad?” Did that scare you a bit? It wouldn’t surprise me if that was your reaction. After all, wanting to be a good dad is not enough, you also have to learn the basic skills involved with good parenting. To illustrate, let me use the example of changing the oil in your car. I’m sure you would want to do that job well, but if no one ever explained to you how to change the oil you would probably mess it up. So how do you learn the skills needed to be a good dad? Ideally that would be something you could learn from your own father, but in today’s world a large number of young men are growing up in homes without a good father figure in their lives. And as wonderful as your mom may be, she can’t be a dad. So how do we solve this problem?

Once again, what God teaches us through the Bible can help us as we try to learn how to be a good dad. Another man in the Bible that you have probably already heard about is King Solomon who was one of the wisest men in the Bible. And how did he get to be so wise? In the third chapter of the book of 1 Kings in the Bible we read that God spoke to Solomon in a dream and told Solomon that he could ask God for anything at all, and God would give it to him. If you were given that opportunity what would you ask for? Riches? Great strength? Or maybe for something bad to happen to your enemies? As Solomon thought about it he realized that he was facing a big challenge as the king of the nation of Israel, so instead of asking for selfish things like that Solomon instead responded by saying: “Please make me wise and teach me the difference between right and wrong. Then I will know how to rule your people. If you don’t, there is no way I could rule this great nation of yours.” God was very pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom instead of wealth, so that is what God gave him!

Wow. As we face our responsibilities as men and as dads we can turn to God and make the same request, and He will answer and help us to be great dads. Sometimes being a good dad is hard work, and you will need God’s help to do the right thing (which isn’t always the easy thing)! And God teaches us how to do that through reading His Bible. For instance, there’s another book in the Bible called Proverbs. Most of the book of Proverbs is words of wisdom that God taught to Solomon, who then wrote them down in that book. One example is in chapter 22, verse 6, which says: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” This teaches us that what we teach and show a child, especially when he or she is young, will greatly influence the type of adult they will become. And, as Solomon knew, this is more important than riches!

The Bible is filled with similar insights, wisdom, and instruction to help us to be good men and good dads.

Whether you had a good father or not, you can still look to your heavenly Father for wisdom and guidance in your role as a father. Think about it for a moment, the most famous prayer in the Bible instructs us to call God “Our Father”, and he sees us as his much loved children. You can find that prayer in the book of Matthew, chapter 6, verses 9-13. He wants us to turn to him for that help. Maybe you didn’t have a loving father when you were growing up so maybe that is a difficult idea for you to grasp, but God is the ultimate loving Father.

So let’s keep in mind the source of wisdom and help that we have to become better dads:

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

*Deuteronomy 6:5-7*

Questions for thought and discussion:

- a. Whether we realize it or not, our lives as men are largely shaped by the male role models in our lives. Were the men in your life, starting with your own father, good or bad role models?
- b. Can you think of a man in your life that you can say is a good father, from whom you can learn how to be a great dad?
- c. Since God wants you to be great dad, how can you learn from Him what a great dad looks like?
- d. Since you are the most important male role model in your children's lives, how can you become a great role model for them?