

The Problem - It has been said: **"It's easier to build a boy than repair a man."** and **"It's easier to build a girl than to repair a woman."** These are profound statements. The Bible gives us instructions on how to get this thing called "parenting" right.

In our men's Sunday School class, Michael and Larry have been taking us through a book called "Wild at Heart." It is a great book that has as its premise that God made men with a certain wildness in them that He desires to use for His glory. It is at the core of our maleness. Masculine men are villainized by modern western society. I believe this attack is satanic. If men can be neutralized of their masculinity, and if men can be feminized, the family structure implodes and is destroyed. When the family disintegrates, society disintegrates. If you've been asleep or you haven't noticed, the family is under attack in America. We are in deep trouble. Yet, we as believers do not have to walk in step with society. The masculinity that God put within men can be expressed in being a godly dad.

The entertainment industry in general (and movies in particular), make fathers out to be

The Father Absence Crisis in America

Research shows² when a child is raised in a father-absent home, they are affected in the following ways...

18.4 Million Children, 1 in 4, Without a Biological, Step, or Adoptive Father at Home¹

- ⊖ 4x Greater Risk of Poverty
- ⊖ More Likely to Have Behavioral Problems
- ⊖ 2x Greater Risk of Infant Mortality
- ⊖ More Likely to Go to Prison
- ⊖ More Likely to Commit Crime
- ⊖ 7x More Likely to Become Pregnant as a Teen
- ⊖ More Likely to Face Abuse and Neglect
- ⊖ More Likely to Abuse Drugs and Alcohol
- ⊖ 2x More Likely to Suffer Obesity
- ⊖ 2x more Likely to Drop Out of School

National Fatherhood Initiative
www.fatherhood.org

¹U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Living arrangements of children under 18 years old: 1960 to present. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.
²National Fatherhood Initiative® 2019. Father Facts: Eighth Edition. Germantown, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative®.

buffoons. They are portrayed like ignorant dodo heads that look and sound like Homer Simpson. The message being put out is that fathers don't know best, and that they have nothing worth listening to. The sad thing is that many fathers don't have anything worth listening to because they've forgotten what God expects of us. I realize that many reading this or listening today either weren't the best fathers you could have been, or you never had a father that knew how to do fathering the right way. That's okay. God is ultimately the only father who is totally steadfast and true. He is a loving Father upon whom we can thoroughly depend.

One of the biggest crises coming out of all of this societal chaos is father-absent families. The consequences of father-absent families are personal despair and misery beyond

imagination. The data shows that 25% of America's kids have no father. Thirty-three percent of all children in America are born out of wedlock. And here is the most incriminating statistic of all: **85% of all young men who are incarcerated in the United States grew up without fathers.**¹ WOW! Could anything be more indicative that this is not the way that God meant for things to be? So how did God intend for fatherhood to be?

¹ <https://lifeisbeautiful.org/statistics-on-fatherless-homes/>

Strangely, there are not many good examples of fathers in the Bible. We see Adam who stood silently by as his wife came under satanic attack. The first murderer in the world was raised in Adam's household. Every time Abraham found himself in a tight spot, he would try to lie his way out of it. Jacob was a schemer who always tried to take the short cut and David was a horrible father. What did they miss? Open your bibles this morning to Deuteronomy chapter six. This passage reveals to us three directives that God prioritizes to being a good father. I have color coded the directives and the corresponding text from whence they come.

The Solution

Three directives to being a good dad:

- 1) Love Your God with all of your being.
- 2) Learn the Truths of His Word and know His commandments personally.
- 3) Lead your kids diligently, teaching them the Word of God and how it applies to their lives.

I want to admit right now that I didn't do this as best as I could have. However, we can do better now in understanding the influence we might have on younger folks around us.

Deuteronomy Chapter 6 – God's Instructions on Fatherhood

"Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, NKJV).

Let us pray.

The text begins with God telling Moses the importance of His people understanding and obeying His commandments as they go into the Promised Land. The Torah is often translated as "The Law," but it is not the law. It means God's "instruction." The codified laws of the Book of Leviticus are just part of the whole. The story of Adam and Eve is instruction. The stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all part of God's instruction. We learn from these stories about what is pleasing to God and what is not pleasing to God. It is a big mistake to think of "the law" as the Ten Commandments or the other 613 Levitical laws that came out of those "Ten Things"

(as God calls them). These stories and the lessons that are drawn from them are part of what a godly father is to pass on to his children and his grandchildren.

Verse 2 lays out the whole concept of generational teaching. *“That you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.*



(Deuteronomy 6, NKJV). Then curiously, what follows (seems it would be first) is the most sacred statement of faith in Judaism. It is called the *Shema*. It is called that because the word means “Hear” or “Listen.” It is God telling Moses what is to be **THE MOST CENTRAL TRUTH** in the worship of the One and True God. He says:

Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.⁴ *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4, NKJV).* The rabbis instruct that this should be recited twice a day by all observant Jews (when you rise up, and when you lie down).² The statement is then followed by what Jesus tells the lawyer are the first and second greatest commandments of all. ⁵ ***You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5, NKJV).*** Jesus quoted this and added a passage from Leviticus 19:17-18 which states: ***“And love your neighbor as yourself”***.

1) DIRECTIVE NUMBER 1 - Love Your God with all of your being.

The secrets of good fatherhood are all right here. As a first priority, a man must love God with all of his being. This love for God is what pours over from the father into his children and then his grandchildren. The text is talking about an intense kind of love. The command is that you are to love God with ALL OF YOUR HEART, ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH. So what does that really mean?

Your heart – In Hebrew the word is **לב** *Lev* (curiously it sounds a bit like love). In Hebrew that means loving Him with your intellect and your mind. That is your heart. They are one and the same in Hebrew.

Your soul – **נַפְשׁ** *nefesh* – This is the emotional inner part of yourself. This is with all of your emotions, personality, and all that makes you who you are.

Your strength - **מַעֲד** *me'od* - It is a word that is rarely used as noun. It is an adverb. *Me'od tov* = very good. It's like saying to love God with all your VERY. So, what is your VERY?

It is ALL THAT YOU ARE - WRAPPED UP TOGETHER ... IT IS YOUR POSSESSIONS/STRENGTH/ABILITIES/TALENTS/ YOUR ALL.

This is saying **YOU ARE TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR INTELLECT, WITH ALL OF YOUR EMOTIONS, AND TO DO SO IN A VERY, VERY BIG WAY (WITH YOUR ALL).**

² https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/705353/jewish/The-Shema.htm

TO LOVE GOD WHOLLY WITH ALL THAT YOU ARE.

So being a good father (or parent) contains the requisite of you loving God with all that you are. The second truth to being a good father is to learn God's truths personally.

2) DIRECTIVE NUMBER 2 - LEARN THE TRUTH PERSONALLY – You can't pass on what you do not know.

The second directive is to learn the truth personally. That is in verse 6. **⁶“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.”** (Deuteronomy 6, NKJV). These words are what God has commanded. He is commanding that they be “in your heart” and “in your mind.” You know God through His character, as it is revealed in His Word. In this scripture, this refers to the Torah. The Torah means God's “Instruction” and that is EXACTLY what we're to pass on to our children. We are to pass on God's instructions of how we are to live.

GOD is saying that we must *first* be in a relationship with Him by loving Him, and *then* His truths must be in our own hearts. You must know the truth before you can share the truth. Your relationship with God is directly proportional to your knowing His word. We learn of His promises and His character in His Word.

We must know the truth, and we learn that truth in knowing God's Word. Scripture tells us, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17). If you truly love the Lord your God with all of your heart, you're going to have a love and a desire to understand and know what He has to say to you.

¹⁰*With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!*

¹¹**Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.** (Psalm 119:10-11, NKJV).

The word of God is like a software download into our souls. Reading God's Word daily is how you do system updates.

¹²*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV).

3) DIRECTIVE NUMBER 3 - TEACH YOUR CHILDREN DILIGENTLY

⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 6:7, NKJV).

This is the last part to being a good father. The text tells us specifically “you SHALL teach them diligently to your children.” It requires diligence. Diligence means with intention and commitment. This duty cannot be relinquished to a Sunday School teacher or the youth pastor. It's not something that summer camp “shall teach them.” YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY

TO YOUR CHILDREN. **This requires loving the Lord. This requires knowing His word. And this requires being committed to passing instruction on to your “sons and your grandsons.”** We seem to have a problem in teaching our children. Do you know why? Sometimes it’s because we feel we’re not qualified. If that’s you, then start learning God’s Word and make it your own. More often, we’re just selfish. We want to be doing what we want to be doing and not be interrupted.

When Faber IV started school, he had a bit of a learning disability. Sandy and I had to read him everything he learned. He couldn’t read it for himself and have it sink into his head. In frustration, I went to see his teacher, Mrs. Walters. She had been my 3rd grade teacher as well. I said, “Mrs. Walters, I’m having to spend three hours a night just to keep him up with his school work.” She stared into my eyes sternly, and asked me, “Well, what do you think you’re supposed to be doing?” Well, I think Mrs. Walters was communicating my duties to me as a father. I appreciate her doing that. We kept on reading to him until he overcame that struggle. He went on to complete a Bachelor’s Degree in Chemistry and a Master’s Degree in Software Engineering. Diligence is what it takes to be a godly dad.

The word “parents” in Hebrew is the word **הורים** *horim*. It is built from the Hebrew root word that is the root word of **מורה** *moreh*, meaning “teacher.” God is telling us that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children, and fathers are given the master role in supervising that learning.

In the Babylonian Talmud the responsibilities of the father are laid out.

“A father is obligated with regard to his son to circumcise him, and to redeem him if he is a firstborn son, and to teach him Torah, and to marry him to a woman, and to teach him a trade. And some say: A father is also obligated to teach his son to swim.”³

A father’s job is to prepare his children spiritually, physically, and practically to succeed in life. The child learns from the father what a life that is centered in and around God looks like. He teaches the child how to “make it.”

Verses 8-9 - ⁸ *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* ⁹ *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* (Deuteronomy 6:8-9, NKJV).

³ <https://www.matan.org.il/en/the-parental-relationship-in-the-talmud/>



This is telling dads to have God's law all around them. Let it be known that His Word is within you and surrounds you. Let it be known both in and out of your house that you know the Lord and love His word. This business of binding them as a sign on your hand means that it is God's Word that rules your actions. And having them bound to your forehead is a reminder that it is God's Word that rules your thoughts. As a reminder of this, some religious Jews tie phylacteries on their arms and on

their foreheads. You can see them if you ever go to Israel. We may not have God's instruction physically tied to our bodies, but it should be right there spiritually governing our thought life and conduct not only before our children but in front of the world.

Right now, you might be feeling a little down. I know as I teach this lesson, I am thinking of all the ways that I have failed as a father. You might not have even had a father or you might have been abandoned by your father. That's okay. God steps in where we fail. God is a father to the fatherless. He is even a father to the father that didn't get it all right. I can at this point pray that the Lord will fill the gaps I might have created in the upbringing of my own children. Listen to these comforting words of how God is the greatest father of all.

[Psalm 68:5](#) Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation (ESV)

[Psalm 27:10](#) For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. (ESV)

[Isaiah 9:6](#) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (ESV)

[James 1:17 NKJV](#) ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

That last one means that God is constant and He always gets it right!

We must remember:

It's easier to build a boy than repair a man.

It's easier to build a girl than to repair a woman.

God gives us great instructions on how to build healthy godly men and women. Let's do this diligently! Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.