

Who's Your Daddy?

Matthew 9: 35 – 10:8
(Father's Day)

Comedian Johnny Carson said his son gave him a note that read, **"To the man who has inspired me with his fatherly wisdom"**.

Carson said, **"Son I didn't know you felt that way about me"**.

His son said, **"I don't, can you fax this to Bill Cosby?"**

Fathers have a hard times nowadays getting respect. Maybe there's a reason for that! Many Dads in our society disappear. And, sad to say, others stay around who perhaps should disappear.

A number of slang phrases entered our vocabulary in the 1990s. Phrases like, **"Don't go there!"** **"Duh!!"** **"Get Over It"**, **"Whassup,"** and **"Whatever!"** One of those popular slang phrases was, **"Who's your daddy?"** The origin of this phrase is unclear, but "Who's your daddy?" appears to have originated on urban basketball courts. It is meant as a putdown. It's a way of saying, **"I'm better than you"**.

"Who's your daddy?" has always been an important question in human history. That's why the Gospel of Matthew begins with Jesus' genealogy. It was critical to show that Jesus was a descendent of King David. To the ancient Hebrew, the question, **"Who's your Daddy?"** was very crucial. If your veins held even a trace of foreign blood, you'd lose your right to call yourself a Jew. Notice in the listing of the disciples, in our gospel lesson today that the writer thought it was important to let us know about the disciples' daddies.

The more famous instance concerns the father, James and John. Somebody tell me who their father was? They were the sons of Zebedee. Lesser known is the disciple James who was the son of Alphaeus.

"Who's your daddy?" is still an important question today. Some people have been helped along immensely by having the right kind of father. The same thing can be said about having the right kind of mother, of course. I have to be very careful about making generalizations but, in general, many dads still see their primary role in the family as "breadwinner" rather than as "nurturer" and role

model, even though mom may work full-time at a job as well. So, it's important that once a year we deal with the role of Dad in the family. What are the characteristics of a good dad (or a good granddad)?

A boy was asked by his father what he wanted as a present for his sixth birthday. The boy was usually very specific about the gifts he liked his father to buy him, often giving his father great details about the names of certain toys and their color, size, and location in the toy store. The boy's response surprised the father. He simply said, **"I'd like a ball."**

"Great," the dad said, **"what kind of ball?"**

"A football or a soccer ball", the boy answered.

"Which do you want more?" Dad asked.

"Well," the boy said after a few minutes of thought, **"if you have time to play catch with me, then I'd like a football so we could throw it back and forth in the yard. But if you're too busy, then I'd like a soccer ball because I can play soccer with the kids in the neighborhood."**

The father quickly realized that what the boy really wanted was more time with Dad. The ball was just a means to an end.

- 1) A good father gives his children his time.
- 2) A Good Father Gives His Children Emotional Support.

This is much more difficult for most Dads than simply giving time. Studies show that by their very nature males have more difficulty sensing emotional cues than their female counterparts. It requires a commitment be aware of your children's emotional needs.

Jim Howard was living the fast-paced life of a rising executive when he got the call that would change his life. Jim's three-year-old grandniece, Kelli, had fallen down a flight of steps and suffered a minor head injury. Kelli's mother and grandmother had not been watching her because they had been busy partying. Both women were drug addicts. A social worker was calling Jim to see if he would take over immediate custody of Kelli. If not, she would be placed in the foster system.

Without a moment's hesitation, Jim said yes. After Kelli was released from the hospital, Jim Howard brought her home with him. He took two weeks off from work so that he could spend time with Kelli and establish a routine. Routine and consistency are very important to children in every circumstance, especially from homes affected by drugs or alcohol.

The only men Kelli had ever known in her young life were the drug dealers and abusive boyfriends that her mother had brought home. She was chronically angry and threw horrible tantrums. Jim responded to Kelli's outbursts with reassurance and love. He sold his bachelor-pad beach house and bought a home in the suburbs. He called it quits on his business traveling. Over the next year, Kelli blossomed under the care of her great-uncle. She began to laugh and play again.

Today, after extensive drug rehabilitation, Kelli's mom once again has custody of Kelli. The two have bonded again. But Jim isn't out of the picture. He bought the house next door to his for them, so that Kelli and her mom can always live nearby and he can remain a positive influence in their lives.

Jim isn't even Kelli's dad, but he committed himself to caring for her emotional needs as well as her physical ones. In today's worlds of divided families, many men are in the position of being "Dad" or "Granddad" to children that are not biologically their own. We are grateful to all men who understand that their commitment to Christ means a commitment to those closest to them. The good dad gives his time and he gives his emotional support.

3) He Also Gives Unabashed Affection.

I doubt that it is possible for a man to show his family too much physical affection. Hugging, kissing, rocking--children have a great need for holding and being held. This is helpful to them in feeling a sense of grace in their lives--that they are loved simply for being themselves. Many of us, myself included, come from families where there was little tradition of showing physical affection, and that is sad. It also makes it very difficult for us to show affection openly to those we cherish now.

A man was waiting to pick up a friend at the airport in Portland, Oregon when he noticed a man coming toward him carrying two light bags. The man who was approaching stopped nearby to greet his family.

First this man motioned to his youngest son (maybe six years old) as he laid down his bags. They gave each other a long, loving hug. As they separated enough to look in each other's face, the father said, **"It's so good to see you, son. I missed you so much!"**

His son smiled somewhat shyly, averted his eyes and replied softly, **"Me, too, Dad!"**

Then the man stood up, gazed in the eyes of his oldest son (maybe nine or ten) and while cupping his son's face in his hands said, **"You're already quite the young man. I love you very much, Zach!"** They too hugged a most loving, tender hug.

While this was happening, a baby girl (perhaps one or one-and-a-half) was squirming excitedly in her mother's arms, never once taking her little eyes off the wonderful sight of her returning father. The man said, **"Hi, baby girl!"** as he gently took the child from her mother. He quickly kissed her face all over and then held her close to his chest while rocking her from side to side. The little girl instantly relaxed and simply laid her head on his shoulder, motionless in pure contentment.

After several moments, he handed his daughter to his oldest son and declared, **"I've saved the best for last!"** and proceeded to give his wife a long and passionate kiss. He gazed into her eyes for several seconds and then silently mouthed. **"I love you so much!"** They stared at each other's eyes, beaming big smiles at one another, while holding both hands.

For an instant they looked like newlyweds, but by the age of their kids it was evident that they couldn't possibly be. The man standing nearby asked, **"Wow! How long have you two been married?"**

"Been together fourteen years total, married twelve of those." the man replied, without breaking his gaze from his lovely wife's face.

"Well then, how long have you been away?" the stranger asked.

The man finally turned, still beaming his joyous smile. **"Two whole days!"**

Two days? The first man was stunned. By the intensity of the greeting, he had assumed this stranger had been gone for at least several weeks, if not months.

The first man said, **"I hope my marriage is still that passionate after twelve years!"**

The man surrounded by his family suddenly stopped smiling. He looked the other man straight in the eye, and with forcefulness said, "**Don't hope, friend . . . decide!**"

That's the ultimate secret of being a good dad or granddad: "**Decide**".

Decide to reorder your priorities.

Decide to give your family your time, your emotional support, your unabashed affection.

It's very much like the relationship that God offers to you through Jesus Christ.

He gives you His Time – He is always there.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28:20 NIV)

He gives you emotional support – all you have to do is accept it.

"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me." (Rev. 3:20 NIV)

He gave and continues to give you His unabashed love –

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV)

This is our model of parenting – this is the person Jesus invited us to "Daddy"

It's a decision about what really matters in your life and the life of your children and grandchildren.

You have to DECIDE to be a Dad,

You have to DECIDE to be a Granddad

Before it is too late.

Pastor Larry Smith

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