

Day 16

## ***Good Dad, Top Dad***

A father is a precious creation. God set him apart from all other earthly beings. He was handed the great task to rule over many things. Moreover, love and care are imbedded in his heart, allowing him to exercise the affection of his Great Creator.

Some say fathers are either there for you or there not at all. And the only dad that deserves the Fatherhood Award<sup>1</sup> is the one between an absentee dad and a fulltime house bum. This is not true. Many fathers are able to balance working hard and reading the kids bedtime stories. This rakes in the most trophy points for exemplary fatherhood.

There are dads who express love by touching. This approach is the most desired. But even if yours does it by

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<sup>1</sup> Fatherhood Award is given by the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) in the USA during the NFI gala night for outstanding fathers.

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By Utanes

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buying you gifts, or quietly making his presence felt yet without words, or simply sending you emails to make up for his absence on your birthdays, learn to appreciate him and say, “I love you, Dad.” He may not answer back but it’s absolutely certain you will touch his heart this way.

On the extreme side of things, I believe stern disciplinarians are fathers who had dads who were stern disciplinarians. I also believe loosely tolerant dads have been reared by mothers who spoiled their brats till Dennis the Menace found his match. But good things are in the favor of men who are fair and wise.

Will a father give a son a snake or poison if the latter asks for bread and milk? Only creatures of the devil will do such hideous deeds, we know. But wait, the fowler’s snares surround this world and his cohorts are like lions and serpents waiting to devour. So, if you are a father, be on guard and master your defenses. The best of course is to daily wear God’s armor adorned with faith, truth, and love.

It is interesting to note those people who blame others for their own mistakes. Sorry to say they fault their parents for exasperating them when they were young. So,

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while still early, go talk to your lad about good and noble things. Touch, kiss, and embrace Little Johnny as you tuck him to bed and bless Baby Susie with kind words direct from your heart. If this is hard to do, or your pride is too big to swallow, take it one step at a time. Then, you'll see what wonders love can do.

For men who choose to be godless, or who make themselves as their own gods, there is no condemnation here. Deep concern for offspring is instinctual to living beings. Papa Bear and Mother Hen protect their little ones without discernment. Just be sensitive to what those little cubs require of you. Spend time both in quality and quantity. And if time is still a problem, work on those precious moments with your kids. You'll never know what a few good memories could do to them when they grow up.

When fathers search for what real success means, there is this simple recommendation. Put family first above all else. Well, next to God, that is. This seems like an old fashioned, run-of-the-mill adage. But learn from parents of many great men who did well in the eyes of God and their fellow human beings.

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One hears of the story of Butch O'Hare and Easy Eddie. Easy Eddie was the lawyer of Al Capone. Because of his love for his young son, whom he wished to give a good name, he later testified against Big Al, leading to his conviction for crimes against humanity. This led to Eddie's liquidation by the same mob he betrayed. Years later, Edward Henry Butch O'Hare made a similar commendable act. He was a pilot during the Second World War. With his exploits, he became a war hero. Some people wondered how Butch became so. Most likely because of his father, Easy Eddie, who couldn't think of any other way to give Butch a respectable name, except by turning against the mob that later took his life.<sup>2</sup>

Maybe you've been seeing the Hoyts in the morning papers and on the Internet lately. They are the father and son tandem that registered miles and miles of road distance in marathons. What leaves one awestruck

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<sup>2</sup> Based on one of Max's Lucado's books, author of the New York Times Bestseller "Traveling Light".

is that Rick is paralyzed from neck down. His father, Dick, pushes his son in a wheelchair while he runs. When they join races, they never finish first, but they are always a winning team. Why? Tell me what you make of Rick's profound appreciation of his father when he says, "Dad, when we run the race, I feel no longer a cripple."

Fathering is never an easy role to play. No one alive or dead ever was faultless in the practice of this ancient trade. We fathers screw up a million times. This is not a reason to stop trying, however. Joyce Kilmer said "Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree." I say: We, dads, aren't made perfect, you see; still, God loves us so verily.

## **STUDY GUIDE**

### **Good Dad, Top Dad**

1. Do you believe that a father is a precious creation? Why? Or why not?
2. If you are a father and could identify with any one in the essay, what would you need to change in your life for the better?

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3. If you are a son or daughter and have a father who commits mistakes like those in the essay, what can you do to understand your family situation? And how could you help alleviate that situation?
4. Mention some of your personal experiences with your father or grandfather which you are happy about. It is OK if you are not able to think of any. Skip this activity if you need to.
5. What lessons did you learn from the story of the O'Hare's?
6. How do you feel about the story of the Hoyts? Spend time to reflect or discuss.
7. Explain: "We dads aren't made perfect, you see; still, God loves us so verily."