

# ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" ---- Volume VI Number 6

## "Being a Father Like the Heavenly Father"

I John 3:1- 3

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**Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 66th email sermon in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message is a Fathers Day message from a text not usually connected to Fathers Day. It was an earlier edition but many have joined our list since it was first sent. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it!**

**May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director**

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## "Being a Father Like the Heavenly Father"

I John 3:1- 3

Fathers Day holds a record... know what it is? More collect calls on Father's Day than any other day of the year!

But first we must establish just WHO the Dads are. So everyone needs to take this test. It's not hard.

The Dad Test... AGREE OR DISAGREE?

I must hold the television remote control in my hand while I watch TV. If the thing has been misplaced, I'll miss a whole show looking for it, though one time I was able to survive by holding a calculator.

...when I lock my keys in the car, I will fiddle with a wire clothes hanger and ignore anyone's suggestions that we call road service until long after hypothermia has set in.

....when the car isn't running very well, I will pop the hood and stare at the engine as if I know what I'm looking at. If another guy shows up, one of us will say to the other, "I used to be able to fix these things, but now with all these computers and everything, I wouldn't know where to start."

...when I catch a cold I need someone to bring me soup and take care of me while I lie in bed and moan. You never get as sick as I do, so for you this isn't an issue.

...I can be relied upon to purchase basic groceries at the store, like milk, or bread. I cannot be expected to find exotic items like "Cumin" or "Tofu." For all I know these are the same thing.

...when one of our appliances stops working, I will insist on taking it apart, despite evidence that this will just cost me twice as much once the repair person gets here and has to put it back together.

...I don't think we're all that lost, and no, I don't think we should stop and ask someone. Why would you listen to a complete stranger--how could HE know where we're going?

...I think what you're wearing is fine. I thought what you were wearing five minutes ago was fine, too. Either pair of shoes is fine. With the belt or without it looks fine. Your hair is fine. You look fine. Can we just go now?

Now that we know who the Dads are, let's see what God's Word says about what a Dad is for! There are many texts we could go to for the answer to the question: WHAT IS A DAD TO DO? I want to go to I John 3 and see how the Heavenly Father shows us what a Dad is for:

***1 Jn 3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.***

***2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.***

***3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.***

When you just stop and think about these beautiful verses you see 3 things a Dad is to supply: LOVE, HOPE, and PURITY. Let's look at each one: First:

## **1. AS GOD LOVES HIS CHILDREN, SO SHOULD A FATHER LOVE HIS CHILDREN**

***See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us!***

Don't get me wrong. I'm not taking anything away from a mother's love. It is unique. It is special. It is undeniable. But Moms DON'T HAVE A MONOPOLY ON LOVE!

Dad's may not show it as Mom does. Dad may not express it as Mom does. But as the Heavenly Father bestows love upon His children, so also must a Dad love his kids! AND SADLY, YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT FOR GRANTED ANYMORE!

CLERMONT, FLORIDA -- Investigators in Central Florida say six- year-old Kayla McKean was beaten to death after her father became enraged when she soiled her pants. Autopsy reports show Kayla suffered fractured ribs, a broken leg and other injuries and the blows that took her life were not the first inflicted upon her. Social workers were called at least five times in the past

20 months to investigate bruises and fractures on Kayla's body. But time and time again, she was returned to her parents and officials are trying to figure out why the system failed to protect the girl. Her mother... Elizabeth McKean... says words cannot describe the anger and rage she feels for her ex-husband. Rick Adams is being held without bail on charges of murder and aggravated child abuse.

ST. CHARLES, Mo. (Reuters) - A man accused of injecting his 11-month-old son with blood tainted with the AIDS virus told the boy's mother shortly before he allegedly administered the shot that the child was damaged and no longer worth keeping, the child's mother told a court Wednesday.

The mother also said the father, her ex-boyfriend Brian Stewart, told her six months later that there was no need for him to pay child support because "I just know he's not going to live to see the age of five." The boy, now seven, was not diagnosed with AIDS until four years later. Now in the final stages of full blown AIDS, he requires around-the-clock care and is being kept alive only by a combination of powerful drugs administered constantly, Ross Buehler, a St Charles county assistant prosecutor, told the court.

But Dad, just because you aren't remotely that cruel doesn't mean you necessarily love your kids as God would have you love them. You must be involved and spending time with your kids, teaching them about God and His Word and the great issues of life!

## **2. AS GOD GIVES HIS CHILDREN HOPE, SO SHOULD A FATHER GIVE HOPE!**

*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.*

The heavenly Father holds out before us the expectation of a better day, a better life, a better realm. THAT GIVES US HOPE! There is a future. You will be like Him. The hurts and pain and tears of this fallen world will one day be history! "THERE'S A BETTER DAY A COMIN, FAIR THEE WELL, FAIR THEE WELL!" That's from an old spiritual song .. "In that great gettin' up mornin'...." It is a song about hope.

God gives us hope! The way to crush the spirit of a person is to dash their hopes. The way to motivate them to improvement, accomplishment, and greater things than they've ever done is to give them hope by painting a picture of their potential thru Christ!

When Paul stood before Agrippa, he characterized Christianity with one four letter word: HOPE!

Acts 26:6 "And now I am standing trial for the **hope** of the promise made by God to our fathers; 7 the promise to which our twelve tribes **hope** to attain, as they earnestly serve God

night and day. And for this **hope**, O King, I am being accused by Jews.

So important is the Hope that the Heavenly Father gives that Paul uses it five times in these two verses from Romans 8:

Rom 8:24 For in **hope** we have been saved, but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**; for why does one also **hope** for what he sees? 25 But if we **hope** for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (NAS)

Paul knew that Hope was a driving force produced by the application of love! That's why he commands Fathers to give hope to their kids... and he does so by using the negative in Colossians 3:21 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart." To exasperate is to steal hope. To cause to "lose heart" is to take away hope!

Now how is a Dad to build hope in his child? WELL, I DARE YOU TO DO IT WITHOUT TEACHING THEM ABOUT CHRIST AND SALVATION AND THE WONDERFUL WORLD TO COME! That's the only effective way I know to give those kids HOPE!

And when they get hope thru Christ, they get that third key item that Dad is to supply: MOTIVATION TO PURITY.

### **3. AS GOD GIVES HIS CHILDREN MOTIVATION TO PURITY, SO SHOULD A FATHER GIVE MOTIVATION TO PURITY.**

*3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Accountability comes in here. When you know WHAT YOU CAN BECOME THRU GOD'S GRACE, THERE IS HOPE. AND WHEN YOU REALIZE A PART OF THE DREAM RELIES UPON YOUR COMPLIANCE, THERE IS MOTIVATION TOWARD PURITY!

We aren't talking about legalism. We aren't earning anything, but we are told clearly that love builds hope and hope leads to motivation to BE LIKE THE FATHER!

As Jesus said, "Be ye holy even as the Father is holy." That is in Matthew 5:48. And Peter says it this way 1 Pet 1:14 "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."" (NAS)

Now God makes us holy thru the death of Christ and our obedience to the Gospel. BUT WE ARE CHALLENGED TO BE ACCOUNTABLE AND COMPLIANT. And our motivation for that comes from our hope to be with Him in that next world!

*3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

**Dads, you want your kids to be good and Godly? Love them, give them hope for a life eternal with the Creator by teaching them Christ and seeing to it they obey the Gospel. And that obedience will give them a hope that will be their motivation to purity.**

## The Father's Eyes

This teenager lived alone with his father, and the two of them had a very special relationship. Even though the son was always on the bench, his father was always in the stands cheering. He never missed a game. This young man was still the smallest of the class when he entered high school. But his father continued to encourage him but also made it very clear that he did not have to play football if he didn't want to. But the young man loved football and decided to hang in there. He was determined to try his best at every practice, and perhaps he'd get to play when he became a senior. All through high school he never miss a practice nor a game, but remained a bench warmer all four years. His faithful father was always in the stands, always with words of encouragement for him.

When the young man went to college, he decided to try out for the football team as a "walk-on." Everyone was sure he could nevermake the cut, but he did. The coach admitted that he kept him on the roster because he always puts his heart and soul to every practice and at the same time, provided the other members with the spirit and hustle they badly needed. The news that he had survived the cut thrilled him so much that he rushed to the nearest phone and called his father. His father shared his excitement and was sent season tickets for all the college games. This persistent young athlete never missed practice during his four years at college, but he never got to play in the game. It was the end of his senior football season, and as he trotted onto the practice field shortly before the big play off game, the coach met him with a telegram. The young man read the telegram and he became deathly silent... Swallowing hard, he mumbled to the coach, "My father died this morning. Is it all right if I miss practice today?" The coach put his arm gently around his shoulder and said, "Take the rest of the week off, son. And don't even plan to come back to the game on Saturday.

Saturday arrived, and the game was not going well. In the third quarter, when the team was ten points behind, a silent young man quietly slipped into the empty locker room and put on his football gear. As he ran onto the sidelines, the coach and his players were astounded to see their faithful teammate back so soon. "Coach, please let me play. I've just got to play today," said the young man. The coach pretended not to hear him. There was no

way he wanted his worst player in this close playoff game. But the young man persisted, and finally feeling sorry for the kid, the coach gave in. "All right," he said. "You can go in."

Before long, the coach, the players and everyone in the stands could not believe their eyes. This little unknown, who had never played before was doing everything right. The opposing team could not stop him. He ran, he passed, blocked and tackled like a star. His team began to triumph. The score was soon tied. In the closing seconds of the game, this kid intercepted a pass and ran all the way for the winning touchdown. The fans broke loose. His teammates hoisted him onto their shoulders. Such cheering you've never heard!

Finally, after the stands had emptied and the team had showered and left the locker room, the coach noticed that the young man was sitting quietly in the corner all alone. The coach came to him and said, "Kid, I can't believe it. You were fantastic! Tell me what got into you? How did you do it?"

He looked at the coach, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Well, you knew my dad died, but did you know that my dad was blind?" The young man swallowed hard and forced a smile, "Dad came to all my games, **but today was the first time he could see me play!**"

Your Heavenly Father is watching you moment by moment. Are you playing the game of life to please Him? Are you doing your best for the One who Loves you Most?

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