

Dad - Don't Suck! 2.0

10 Things YOU Can Do To Be A Better Dad Today!

Faith based look at how 10 things you
do today can impact your children &
you for a lifetime.

D.MoSon



Inkwell Mavericks

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First Edition

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Dedication

I would image any book written to support Christian based fatherhood, would have a few little influences to guide their decision in writing their book. I am no different, in the fact that Briana, Jace, Logan, Coen, and Charli have changed my life in so many positive ways, that I can not write in just this short dedication. I pray daily that I can strive to be the man, the father, and Christian that can guide them to being the best version of themselves. As I watch each of you grow, my heart swells with pride, love, and knowledge that I am blessed more than I ever fathomed! Everlasting thanks to God for blessing me with an amazing family, church, and support in my life.

I love you all, so much!



As always, I thank my wife Stephanie in all that I do, as she has always been my guiding light and deepest joy!

D. MoSon

Introduction

Dad - Don't Suck!

Several years ago, for “Father’s Day” I received a family photo of my children at the time, and it read “DAD: Any man can be a FATHER, but it takes someone really special to be called Daddy”. This cute frame truly held a more profound meaning for me and honestly the purpose of writing this book. Being a father is a biological “donation” that the majority of men can do, but that doesn’t make them a good father, just a sperm donor (Coming from my personal experience growing up). Financially providing for your children is a responsible action, and probably very much appreciated, yet does not solely make them a good father and definitely doesn’t make them a Dad.

Dads hold a special role in a child’s life, as it’s just not about walking through the motions on a day-to-day basis but truly being present. Every elderly dad will tell you to “Enjoy the moments as they go by so fast”, and even though we listen, many of us do not take action. Think about it...at 12 they start hanging out more with their friends, by 15 that’s all they want to do, at 18 they are off to college (maybe!) and then, if they can find time, you have college breaks and ultimately just the holidays together. For 95% of us, that’s the path we are on, and

it is downright terrifying. Children truly want us to be present and be there during this short period of time we have with them in their lives. Being focused on work, the television, or whatever distraction you might have just takes you away from them. I guarantee you will not remember the evening you wasted catching up on work, but you & your children will remember the memories you made when you make the effort to not Suck!

This book is born out of moments like these, where inspiration meets parental madness & chaos. It's for every dad who's ever wondered if he's doing this whole parenting thing right. "Dad - Don't Suck" aims to provide you with practical, faith-based steps to improve your relationship with your kids. It's not about being the perfect dad; it's about being a better one today than you were yesterday. "Don't Suck" isn't meant to be derogatory or even necessarily negative, more so to understand we can always do better. It's a call to action, a statement to recognize we aren't perfect, we all have flaws, and we can improve **WHEN** we decide to. Nobody wants to "Suck", so **Don't!**

Now, let's talk about these 10 things. This isn't some mystical list I pulled out of thin air. Honestly, there isn't something that will be groundbreaking "OMG" information you have never heard some version of before. These are real actions you can take, backed by stories from children who have experienced the blessings of having a dad who listens, spends time, and leads by example. Each chapter will focus on one of these key actions, providing you with concrete ways to make a difference in your child's life.

Christian beliefs are woven throughout this book like a sturdy safety net. We'll reference the Bible because it's the greatest parenting manual ever written. Whether it's about setting boundaries or practicing forgiveness, there's a biblical perspective to guide you. This doesn't mean you have to be a Christian or a man of faith to find value

in this book, as the subject is applicable to all (I do know A guy if you have questions though). I just pray that the biblical reference will help add validity to the suggestions.

This book builds on a shorter version I wrote earlier. That one was more like a quick pep talk. This expanded edition dives deeper, exploring stories from children of various ages. You'll get a richer perspective because, let's face it, kids have a unique way of seeing things. The structure is straightforward. Each chapter focuses on one of the 10 key actions you can take to be a better dad. We'll draw on biblical examples and provide practical applications. You'll find stories, insights, and maybe a few laughs along the way.

It's for the guy who wants to quit being just mediocre and step up his game to be the dad his kids need. It's for anyone who believes that fatherhood is both a challenge and a blessing and is willing to put in the work to make it great. I truly hope you enjoy this book and make some incredible memories. So, dads get out there and Don't Suck!

Chapter 1

The Power of Listening

Dad - Don't Suck!

You ever have one of those days where you swear your kids are speaking an entirely different language (Mine actually might, due to Duolingo)? I remember sitting at the dinner table, my youngest son Coen chattering away about his day at school. I was nodding along, throwing in the occasional "Hmm" and "Really?" like I knew what was happening. Then he asked me a question, and I realized I had no idea what he'd been talking about for the last ten minutes. It hit me right there— I wasn't really listening. My ears were open, but my brain was on vacation. This chapter is all about fixing that little problem because, let's be honest, if my ADHD brain can learn to actively listen, anyone can.

Listening isn't just about hearing words; it's an art, better yet, a skillset. It's about diving into the conversation like a kid into a ball pit (we all just got an immediate mental image), ready to explore every corner and make snow angels. And it turns out, active listening is the

key to better relationships—not just with your kids, but with everyone. We're talking about really engaging, making eye contact, nodding at the right moments, and maybe even putting down the smartphone for a second (don't worry, it will still be there). Let's break down what it means to truly listen and why it's worth the effort. Spoiler alert: it's not just to avoid the dreaded "You never listen to me!" from your teenager.

Hearing Beyond Words: Active Listening Techniques

Active listening is like the MacGyver Tool of communication tools. It's versatile, handy, and can get you out of a tight spot when you're caught zoning out at the wrong moment. This shouldn't be anything new to you, as we have heard about "active listening" for years now through many avenues, but actually doing it is where we have a challenge. I've heard about healthy eating and still grab an Oreo if I see one. It starts with the basics: eye contact and nodding. Sounds simple, right? But think about it—when was the last time you really locked eyes with your kid and nodded along, not just as a reflex, but as a genuine part of the conversation? Keeping eye contact shows your child that they have your full attention, which in turn makes them feel valued. It's like telling them, "Hey, what you're saying matters to me," without uttering a word. When you first do this, most kids don't even know how to react and probably won't be looking at you either, so we have work to do!

Then there's reflective listening, which is a fancy way of saying you're repeating back what you heard in your own words. I initially heard this referred to as "parroting skills" and is used a lot in hospitality customer service. Not only does this show you're paying attention, but it also gives you a chance to make sure you're on the same page. If your child tells you about a problem with a friend, you might say, "So what I'm hearing is you're upset because your friend didn't share their

toy, right?” This invites them to correct you (and they will) if needed and shows that you’re engaged in their narrative.

Next is clarifying questions. These are immediately swapped out (no sleight of hand needed) against the dreaded dad nod—you know that absent-minded agreement we sometimes fall into. Asking questions that dig deeper into what your child is saying shows you’re not just a passive participant. Instead, you’re invested in understanding the details. “What happened next?” or “How did that make you feel?” are easy nuggets of conversational acknowledgements. They signal to your child that you’re interested in their story, not just the headline version.

I don’t live in a fantasy world (unless having to play dolls with my 3 y/o) and understand there are a TON of barriers stopping us from listening. Chief among them? Technology. Our ever-present phones and TVs are like sirens, luring us away from meaningful conversations. This is even worse for me on a Sunday during Fantasy Football hours. It’s easy to miss out on the little things your child is sharing when you’re glancing down at your phone every few seconds refreshing your app. Another barrier is our preconceived judgments. We might think we already know what our kids are going to say based on past conversations, leading us to tune out prematurely. Breaking these habits is tough, but vital if we want to be truly present.

The benefits of active listening truly pay dividends. When you listen attentively, you build trust and openness with your kids. Knowing you’ll truly hear them, they’re more likely to come to you with their problems and celebrations. Plus, active listening can be a fantastic tool for conflict resolution. When your child feels heard, they’re less likely to escalate minor disagreements into Armageddon. Note I did say less likely!

Checklist: Active Listening Techniques

- **Eye Contact:** Engage with your child by making direct eye contact.
- **Reflective Listening:** Paraphrase what your child says to confirm understanding.
- **Clarifying Questions:** Ask questions to explore the conversation further.
- **Eliminate Distractions:** Set aside phones and turn off the TV during conversations or just go to another room.
- **Be Mindful:** Stay present and focused on what your child is sharing.
- **Provide Feedback:** Use non-verbal cues like nodding to show engagement.

Active listening might take some practice, but the rewards are immense. You'll find your relationships with your kids growing stronger, more engaging, and you might just learn a thing or two about what's really going on in their world.

Biblical Insights: Jesus as the Listener

Let's take a moment to talk about Jesus—See if you remember this story: Jesus, weary from travel, finds himself at a well in Samaria. The man just wanted to get a drink and relax, yet didn't have a bucket. Along comes a woman with a bucket and rather than dismissing her or rushing past, Jesus engages her in conversation, asking her for a drink, and stated he would give her living water that would never make her thirsty again. He reveals that he knows of her story, her struggles with multiple husbands and her questions. Despite the cultural norms of the time, which dictated that men and women, especially from different backgrounds (did I mention she was Samaritan talking to a

Jew?), shouldn't converse publicly, Jesus pauses to truly hear her. They both listened not just with their ears but with their hearts, and in doing so, he changed her life. She rushed back to her town, telling others about Jesus resulting in many Samaritans believing in him. This story isn't just some ancient tale; it's a powerful reminder of how listening can break down barriers and build bridges, even today.

Listening is deeply rooted in Christian teachings. James 1:19 instructs us to be "quick to listen, slow to speak." It's a simple directive, yet its application can be profound. I almost feel it should be in a fortune cookie somewhere! In a world where everyone's eager to have the last word, the Bible reminds us that listening is a virtue. It's a cornerstone of discipleship and spiritual growth. By truly listening, we open ourselves up to understanding others, to learning from them, and ultimately to growing in our faith. Listening isn't just about being polite; it's about creating space for others to express themselves and to feel understood and valued. Mrs. Guthrie, my 3rd-grade teacher, used to always tell me I should wait 2-3 seconds before I started talking. Little did I know it was for more than to hush a very talkative kid up, but to listen to others before I spoke.

Now, let's bring this back to our role as fathers. How can we embody the listening skills of Jesus in our everyday lives? One word: patience. Jesus didn't rush through conversations; he took his time, just like Mrs. Guthrie told me to. This patience is something we can all strive to emulate. It means being willing to sit with our children, no matter how long their stories may be, and giving them the time to express themselves fully (I know this sometimes takes forever in our eyes). It's about setting aside our own agendas and being present in the moment.

Another aspect of Jesus's listening was his embrace of silence. Sometimes, silence can be more powerful than words. It gives our

children space to think, to process, and to share more openly. We don't always need to fill the gaps in conversation with advice or solutions. Sometimes, just being there, in silence, is enough to show our support and love.

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to overlook the importance of listening. But if we take a page from Jesus's book, we'll find that listening is one of the most powerful tools we have as fathers. It's about connection, compassion, and understanding. It's about showing our children that they matter, that their voices are heard, and that they are loved unconditionally.

Advice from Jace 12 y/o son

Hello, my name is Jace, and I'm twelve. I want to tell you something truly special about my dad that makes him an incredible father—at least for me—his ability to listen. It's as though he possesses the attentiveness of a linebacker zoning in for the sack. Each day, when I get home from school, my dad takes a moment to sit with me and genuinely asks, "How was your day, Big Guy?" (a nickname he's used for me forever). He isn't just being polite; he's interested in hearing about my day. If I try to pass him off with an "It was ok, or all good," he doesn't have it and pushes a little harder to see what happened in my day, asking specific questions based on prior conversations. He gives me his full attention as I share stories about school, my friends, or the funny stuff that happened at recess. He isn't distracted by his phone or lost in his thoughts. Instead, he looks right at me and listens as if I'm the world's greatest storyteller. His attention makes me feel really good, like I'm the most important thing to him. Even when I'm rambling on forever, he never glances at his phone or gets distracted by the TV, and sometimes he'll add stories of when he was young or

make funny faces about my story. It truly seems like I'm talking to my friends, versus a grown-up just telling me what to do. From my point of view, dads who listen possess a superpower better than any X-men (maybe not as cool as Deadpool). Just listen to your kids, and if you're anything like my dad, we'll want to talk to you more!

Don't Suck Task for Dads: Spend a minimum of 5 minutes every weekday talking with your child (or children separately) about their day, actively listening to them without judgment or distractions. Weekends are a freebie. As trust and the bond builds, add more time.

Chapter 2

Time for Adventure

*D*ad - Don't Suck!

It's Saturday morning, the sun is shining, and the smell of pancakes & bacon (God, I love bacon) wafts through the house. Your toddler waddles over, syrup already smeared on their cheek somehow, and your teenager's got earbuds in, half-tuned to the rest of the world. You've got a choice—flip on the TV and let the day drift away or seize the moment to make memories that'll stick with your kids longer than any episode of their favorite cartoon (Any Bluey Fans?). This chapter is about grabbing that second option with both hands and not letting go. We're diving into the art of prioritizing family time in a world that seems determined to fill every minute with something other than what really matters.

Let's be honest with ourselves, between work, chores, and the occasional need to sleep, finding time for the family can feel like trying to squeeze a watermelon into a lunchbox. But the truth is prioritizing family time isn't just about squeezing it in; it's about making it the

main course. Have you ever grilled Watermelon? Delicious! Imagine setting up a weekly family calendar. Yes, it sounds a bit like planning a military operation, but trust me, it's a lifesaver. Plan your week and see where you can carve out those prime hours. Whether it's a family game night or a Sunday afternoon hike, having those slots marked as non-negotiable does wonders. Just assume that time has the yellow caution tape around it, and NOBODY is allowed to cross your tape. "Family Time - Do Not Disturb."

Along with schedules, let's talk about family routines. Kids thrive on consistency, and let's face it, a solid routine can keep us adults from losing our marbles too. Think about it: regular family activities give kids something to look forward to, something they can count on, as well as hold everyone accountable. Whether it's the Friday night movie marathons where everyone fights over the popcorn bowl (and probably what you will watch) or the daily pick-up from school that opens a window into your child's world, these routines build a sense of security and belonging. It's the little things, like knowing that Tuesday night is always Taco Tuesday night, that makes memories together, while starting meaningful traditions, which if you miss it; you will know about it for sure!

Now, I'm not saying you need to become a scheduling wizard overnight (I actually still suck), nor does it need to be overly strict, but a little organization can go a long way. I will admit that my wife has done much of the heavy lifting and a little teamwork helps a lot. Digital tools are your friends here. Apps like Google Calendar or Cozi can help keep everyone on the same page. Our family actually has a "Skylight Calendar" that you can find on Amazon that syncs everyone and also can act as a digital photo frame. You can share schedules, set reminders, set chores, and even plan family events without leaving your couch. And let's not forget the importance of time-blocking. By

setting specific chunks of time for family activities, you're less likely to let work or other obligations encroach on those precious moments. Remember that yellow caution tape!

Life, however, has a nasty habit of throwing curveballs. Whether it's a last-minute work crisis or a sudden bout of the flu that lasts 3 weeks as it rotates through every member of the family, things don't always go as planned. That's where flexibility and adaptability come in. Remember, the goal isn't to stick rigidly to the plan, but to make the most of the time you have. If a planned picnic gets rained out, maybe it turns into a living room campout with sheet tents instead. Or if a work meeting runs late, perhaps bedtime stories become a group effort. Including your kids in planning can also be a great exercise in flexibility. Let them choose activities or decide the menu for family dinners. This involvement empowers them, adds a little creativity and ensures that family time is something everyone looks forward to.

Reflection Section: Creating Your Family Calendar

- **Step 1:** Gather your family and discuss everyone's weekly commitments. Include work schedules, school, extracurricular activities, and any other obligations. You will discover the family is probably doing more than you thought
- **Step 2:** Identify at least two slots each week dedicated solely to family time. These slots should be realistic and achievable.
- **Step 3:** Decide on activities for these slots. Consider a mix of fun and relaxing activities, like a family game night, a trip to the park, or a home-cooked meal together (sometimes these are a BIG Deal!).
- **Step 4:** Use a digital calendar app to schedule these times. Share the calendar with your family so everyone is on the same page.
- **Step 5:** Be flexible. Life happens and sometimes plans need to change. Have backup activities ready if things don't go as planned.

Incorporating family time into your week isn't about adding another chore to your to-do list. (Chores are a great addition to the calendars though, wink.wink) It's about reclaiming those moments that matter most, the ones that build the foundation of your family's story. So, grab that calendar and start penciling in those memories. They might just be the best investment you ever make.

Let's shift gears a little and chat about the magic that happens when we ditch the screens and get our hands a little dirty (possibly a lot). Engaging in creative activities with your kids isn't just about passing the time; it's about crafting an experience that stick around long after the glue dries. Imagine the joy in your child's eyes when you sit down at the kitchen table, surrounded by construction paper, markers, and a mountain of glitter (and I hate glitter) that will inevitably end up everywhere. Arts and crafts projects aren't just for preschoolers; they're an invitation to explore imagination and creativity at any age (parents included). Whether you're building a model of the solar system or fashioning a superhero costume from old T-shirts, these projects foster cooperation and communication. And let's not forget the photo ops—nothing says "family bonding" like a picture of you wearing a paper crown and beaded necklace made by your six-year-old.

Cooking or baking together can be another wonderful way to connect. Not only do you get to teach your kids some life skills, but you also get to enjoy the fruits of your labor (or the cookies of your labor). I recommend making something that none of you have made before. I also recommend you teach some cooking basics on how to use a knife properly without cutting yourself. We have all been here: you and your child measuring flour, cracking eggs, and sneaking a taste of cookie dough when no one's looking. It's a sensory experience—textures, smells, and tastes that weave a collage of reflections. To this day, I think

this is why freshly made chocolate chip cookies are still my favorite due to my Mom always making these for my birthday. Plus, there's something about the kitchen that encourages conversation. Maybe it's the warmth of the oven or the rhythmic chopping of vegetables, but kids often open up about their day over a bowl of batter. It's an opportunity to talk, to listen, and to laugh together.

Play is also a powerful tool for building relationships. It opens the door to a world where communication flows more naturally, where laughter becomes the language of connection. Think about the last time you built a sheet fort in the living room with your kids. It's more than just blankets draped over furniture; it's a castle, a spaceship, a hideaway where imaginations run wild. Playful interactions like these break down barriers, creating closeness and understanding. Most the time this is mandated due to you having to crawl through to each room like you're some Army Ranger! But whether you're tossing a ball in the backyard or playing a board game on a rainy afternoon, these moments create a bridge between worlds—yours and theirs.

Educational activities don't have to be boring and great to throw in to the rotation. In fact, they can be some of the most fun you'll have with your kids. Science experiments at home can turn an ordinary day into an adventure. Try making a volcano with baking soda and vinegar, or we have all seen the Mentos in the Coke 2 Liter explosions! These activities spark curiosity and encourage learning in a hands-on way. They also provide a perfect platform for questions and discussions, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving, one might be "How do you explode the Coke without making a HUGE mess?". And for those days when you need to get out of the house, visiting local historical sites or museums can be both entertaining and enlightening. I personally love the nature parks around our house as they tend to have different classes with animals on the weekends. These types of

things together, allow you to share stories, learn new facts, and inspire a sense of wonder.

Shared hobbies are also the gift that keeps on giving. They provide you more time together and create a common bond that runs through your family life. This can be football (Go Bucks) or even gardening during the summer. Gardening can be a fantastic way to make some memories. Planting seeds, watching them grow, and eating food you actually grew from your labor together can be incredibly rewarding, and tastes a heck of a lot better. It's a lesson in patience and perseverance, and it's a lot of fun to get a little muddy. Similarly, DIY projects can be an incredible opportunity for learning and creativity. That "Honey Do List" can be just the right thing to teach practical skills but also provides a sense of accomplishment.

Try This: Create a Family Activity Jar

- **Step 1:** Gather your family and brainstorm a list of activities you'd like to try together. Include a mix of creative, playful, educational, and outdoor options.
- **Step 2:** Write each activity on a separate slip of paper and place them in a jar or container (I may use a Crown Royal Bag).
- **Step 3:** Choose one day each week (or even monthly) to draw an activity from the jar (Drum rolls are optional). Make it an exciting event, perhaps after dinner or before bedtime.
- **Step 4:** Commit to doing the chosen activity together as a family, adjusting for weather or other factors as needed. Remember that "Family Time" calendar? Make sure we save time for this activity!
- **Step 5:** Reflect on the experience afterward. Discuss what you enjoyed and what you'd like to do differently next time.

This isn't about "Mandated Fun" and filling precious time just to say you did something. this is about sometimes embracing spontaneity

and just having some joy that is outside of your normal routine and simply being together. These activities are opportunities to laugh, to learn, and to love. I still remember getting in the back of the truck and driving 2 hours to an amusement park, only for my stepdad to find out he can't ride rollercoasters! I'm proud of my parents for trying, even though it called the day short due to health concerns, the excitement of not knowing what we were doing and then getting to be there even for a short period was huge for my little child brain. As you move ahead, keep in mind that these relationships play a vital role in creating a strong and supportive family. They bring purpose to your daily life and help inspire long-term commitments.

Biblical Foundations of Family Time

Imagine Noah, sitting on that massive ark with his family, surrounded by a zoo of animals, all while rain pours down like a never-ending waterfall. My son asked me who was responsible for all the animal poo, lol....Pastor Jackson do you have this answer for me? It's hard to picture a more intense scenario for family bonding. Yet, amidst the chaos of the ark, Noah and his family found togetherness. They were literally in the same boat, relying on one another for strength and support. This wasn't just about surviving a flood; it was about building a foundation on faith and unity. Their story teaches us that even in the stormiest of times, family togetherness can be a source of comfort and resilience. Noah's family didn't just survive the flood; they thrived as a unit, bound by shared experiences and divine purpose.

Fast forward to the New Testament, and we find the early Christians in the Book of Acts gathering together, celebrating their faith in community. These gatherings weren't just social events; they were opportunities for believers to connect, share, and grow spiritually. The

book describes how they broke bread together and supported one another, creating a sense of unity and belonging. These early Christians understood the importance of coming together in faith, building bonds that transcended individual differences. They embraced the notion that family isn't just about blood relations but about shared beliefs and values. Their gatherings were an expression of their commitment to one another and to their faith.

The Bible is full of stories that emphasize the importance of family unity. One of the most profound teachings can be found in Proverbs 22:6, which advises parents to "train up a child in the way he should go." This verse isn't just about teaching kids right from wrong; it's about shaping their character and guiding them on a path of righteousness. It serves as a reminder that the values we instill in our children today will guide them for a lifetime. By spending quality time together, we have the opportunity to model these values and reinforce the principles we hold dear. Our actions, as much as our words, teach our children what it means to live a life rooted in faith and integrity.

Connecting these biblical teachings to our modern lives can feel like trying to navigate with an ancient map in a digital world (especially if you are reading the King James version). But the principles remain as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. Family prayer and devotionals are a wonderful way to incorporate biblical wisdom into your daily routine. These practices provide a moment of pause in the hustle and bustle of life, allowing families to reflect on their blessings and seek guidance from God. Whether it's a quick prayer before meals or a more structured devotional time, these moments of spiritual reflection create a shared sense of purpose and strengthen the family bond.

Celebrating faith-based holidays as a family is another opportunity to connect ancient wisdom with contemporary life. Holidays

like Easter and CHRISTmas offer a chance to pause and reflect on the deeper meanings behind the festivities. They provide teachable moments to discuss the stories and lessons from the Bible, instilling a sense of reverence and gratitude in our children. By involving the whole family in these celebrations, we create traditions that reinforce our faith and bring us closer together.

Through shared faith experiences, families build a foundation of love and trust. They learn to communicate openly, support each other's spiritual growth, and celebrate their successes and challenges together. It serves as a reminder that no matter what challenges we face, we are never alone—God walks with us, and our family stands beside us.

Advise from Lexi 9 y/o daughter

Hi!!! My name is Lexi, and I'm nine years old! And guess what? My dad is the KING of ADVENTURES! Like, for real! He can make a totally normal day turn into the best, most exciting, super-cool day EVER—like, outta nowhere! Wanna hear one of my favorites? Okay, here we go!!

So, one day during this past summer, my dad woke me up super early (which is kinda weird, but fun too), and he said, "Princess, wake up, today's a Scavenger Hunt Day!". Still tired, my eyes still go really BIG as he knows I LOVE scavenger hunts.... they are awesome!

Dad packed a big backpack with snacks, water bottles, and a map (not like the one on his phone). He said, "Grab your hat and sunscreen, as we're going exploring!" Not the whole world or anything, but our town, which feels huge when you're only eight. We hopped on our bikes, and dad had a list of things to find, like a red leaf bigger than my hand, a shiny rock weighing over a pound, and a bird feather (that

one was hard for some reason). We rode all over town, laughing and singing to a playlist he had created. Dad was just singing super silly, and super loud....I couldn't stop giggling and almost fell off my bike!

While we looked for stuff, dad told me funny stories about when he was a kid. Like one time, his brother got stuck holding a tree branch on the side of a cliff, and another time, he discovered a hidden treasure in the woods (come to find out it was a really old coin from Europe). OH, and there was another time that he got chased by a skunk, and it sprayed his dog instead.

We stopped at the park for snacks, and dad gave me some "adventure fuel" - better known as chocolate chip cookies, he had stashed in the backpack. We checked our list to see what we still needed and only had a shiny rock over a pound left, so we went over to the swings to play. I'm pretty sure my dad pushed me so high I touched a few clouds, and it scared me a little. I know he had hidden it there, but beside the swings was also a huge shiny rock that opened up to have a *Rock Candy Ring* inside! We did a "Happy Dance" for finishing the scavenger hunt (my dad's dancing is terrible, but I love it).

So why I told this story when asked is that this was the most fun, I had all summer and it didn't cost us like Mr. Beast money or anything. Just grab some snacks (maybe chocolate chip cookies) and go explore. Don't Forget: Adventure = Best Dad Ever!

Don't Suck Task for Dads: Plan a surprise adventure day with your kids. It could be a nature hike, scavenger hunt, or a visit to a new park you haven't been to before. Be sure to bring snacks, share stories, and create some memories together.

Chapter 3

Boundary Banter

*D*ad - Don't Suck!

New scenario, you're a sheriff in the Wild West, and your home is your little town. Without clear boundaries, it's chaotic—dogs chasing cats, kids sliding down the stairs on cardboard, and you're wondering if you'll ever find peace to drink your morning coffee. As a dad, setting boundaries can feel like you're aiming to bring order to your own frontier. The truth is, instead of going solo, you're rallying the whole posse—your kids—to help lay down the law. Now, before you start imagining a family meeting as a showdown (did you just imagine the whistling tune?), think of it more as King Arthur's roundtable discussion where everyone gets a say.

Involving your children in boundary setting might sound like asking them to choose their bedtime, but it's more about providing respect and cooperation. When kids have a hand in creating the rules, they're more likely to follow them. It's like letting them pick out their own vegetables at the grocery store—they're more inclined to eat them if they feel like they had a choice (possible why we probably eat a lot of corn & carrots as well). Hosting a family meeting to discuss rules can be an eye-opener. You might find out that your teenager

has some solid ideas about screen time limits, or that your youngest thinks bedtime should be when the stars come out, regardless of what time that is. This collaborative approach leads to a family contract—an agreement that’s more handshake than ironclad contract but holds everyone accountable

Communication is the oil that keeps this boundary-setting engine running smoothly. Using “I” statements is key here. Instead of “You never listen to me,” try “I feel unheard when we’re talking.” It shifts the focus from blame to expression, making it easier for your child to understand your perspective without feeling attacked and automatically becoming defensive. Active listening plays a starring role in these discussions, too. Remember our buddy from Chapter 1? This is where those skills really help. When your child feels heard, they’re more inclined to engage in the conversation, offering insights and ideas that might surprise you. Honestly, my children seemed to have harsher rules than I initially planned, and when I made them more lenient, I seemed like the cool dad.

Negotiating boundaries is all about finding that sweet spot between maintaining authority and giving your kids a voice. Take curfew times, for example. You could lay down the law with a strict 9 p.m. deadline, but where’s the fun in that? Instead, open the floor for discussion. Maybe your teen suggests 11 p.m. on weekends, and you counter with 10:00 p.m. It becomes a dance, a back-and-forth that teaches compromise. It’s the same with household chores. Give your kids some say in what tasks they take on. You might find they’re more willing to tackle the laundry if they feel like they chose it over, say, cleaning the bathroom (nobody wants the bathroom). When children feel involved in decision-making, they’re more likely to cooperate. They understand the “why” behind the rules, making them more inclined to follow them without the need for constant reminders (but that goes

back to that family calendar as well). It's like when you explain to your toddler why they shouldn't stick beans up their nose—once they get it, they're less likely to do it again - hopefully. This collaborative process also supports teaching problem-solving skills. Your kids learn to weigh options, consider consequences, and think critically about their choices.

Reflection Section: Creating a Family Contract

- **Step 1:** Call a family meeting and discuss the importance of setting boundaries. Explain that everyone's input is valuable and that the goal is to create a harmonious home environment (or as harmonious as possible).

- **Step 2:** Identify key areas where boundaries are needed, such as screen time, chores, and bedtime. Encourage each family member to share their thoughts and ideas.

- **Step 3:** Collaboratively draft a family contract that outlines agreed-upon boundaries and expectations. Be specific and clear about each rule and its purpose. We even used a *Canva* template to make it look more official and add a little fun.

- **Step 4:** Decide on consequences for boundary violations together. Ensure everyone understands and agrees to these consequences to promote accountability. Honestly other sibling will take care of that accountability so make sure its discussed to support vs finger pointing.

- **Step 5:** Review and adjust the contract as needed. Schedule regular check-ins to discuss what's working and what might need tweaking.

This chapter isn't about drawing a line in the sand and daring your kids to cross it, because we know darn well they will, and we'd be setting them up to fail. It's about creating a family dynamic where everyone feels valued and heard at the roundtable, and where boundaries serve as guideposts rather than roadblocks. Now go grab your

metaphorical seat at King Arthur's table gather your knights and start setting those boundaries together.

Kids love to test limits(shocker) - it's like they're tiny scientists experimenting to see how far they can push your buttons. This is where consistency becomes crucial. It's not about being rigid but about providing a stable framework where children can learn that actions have consequences. Clear rules and consistent follow-through help kids understand expectations and accountability, teaching lessons that go far beyond "Don't touch the hot stove," As parents, you HAVE TO stick to the boundaries you set, even if they pout and are super cute! This is where the contract with the consequences makes your life so easy, and you don't need to be the bad guy, but more of the referee. " Little Johnny, I'm sure you're sorry for throwing the trash all over the kitchen floor because you wanted to use the trash can as a basketball hoop, but you didn't clean it up. Because you didn't clean up your mess, I apologize, cause now you must clean it up and get an additional chore today based on our rules we all agreed to. So do me a favor and sweep & mop the floor as well after you clean this mess up. I'll get the mop for you".

Consistency does more than keep the peace, it prepares kids for the real world. You obviously can't "fire" your children, but them understanding the effect of their actions is important (and you get your floor mopped). By reinforcing rules with love and firmness, you create that learning environment they need to succeed. I promise your kids will thrive when they understand the limits and feel secure knowing what to expect.

Biblical Examples of Boundaries and Respect

Let's face it, when it comes to the concept of boundaries, the Bible doesn't shy away from giving us some solid lessons. Take the Garden of Eden, for instance. Adam and Eve had it all laid out for them: a paradise of endless bounty, with just one rule—don't eat the Darn apple from the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil. This was the ultimate example of a boundary set by God. It was a divine line drawn in the sand, meant to protect and guide them. Of course, we all know how that turned out as we all are not walking around naked. But the story serves as a reminder that boundaries are there for a reason, providing structure and, ideally, helping us avoid a world of hurt. The consequences Adam and Eve faced underscore the importance of respecting limits, a lesson that rings true even today.

Let's fast-forward again to Moses and the Ten Commandments. Now, here's a guy who knew a thing or two about setting boundaries. Moses didn't just come down from the mountain with a couple of suggestions. He brought commandments—rules carved in stone (Talking about setting a high expectation). These were divine boundaries meant to guide the Israelites in their relationship with God and each other. The commandments provided a moral framework, emphasizing respect, honesty, and integrity. They were like the original family rules, only with a bit more divine authority behind them. Imagine a family meeting where Moses lays down the law—literally because I'm guessing those stones got heavy. His example shows us that boundaries are not just about restrictions but about creating a community where respect and order prevail.

Boundaries in biblical teachings aren't just about keeping people in line; they're about developing respect and order. Proverbs talk about the idea of "fences," not in the literal sense, but as a metaphor for setting limits. These biblical "fences" are about safeguarding what matters most, whether it's your faith, your family, or your peace of

mind. They remind us that boundaries are not just physical barriers, but moral and spiritual guides that help us navigate life's complexities.

As fathers, we can draw parallels between these biblical lessons and modern parenting. Teaching children the importance of rules and consequences is crucial. It's not about laying down the law with an iron fist but about helping them understand why boundaries exist. When a child understands the purpose behind a rule, they're more likely to respect it. It's like explaining why they can't have ice cream for breakfast—not just because you said so, but because there are healthier choices to start the day. Encouraging respect for others' boundaries is another key lesson. Just as the commandments emphasized treating others with respect, we can teach our kids to honor the boundaries of those around them, whether it's respecting a friend's privacy or understanding a sibling's need for space.

Setting boundaries also carries a spiritual significance. It's a form of discipline, a way to cultivate self-control and moral decision-making. When we establish boundaries, we're not just creating rules; we're guiding our children in the path of spiritual growth. It's about teaching them to make choices that align with their values and beliefs. Developing self-control is a vital skill, one that helps them resist temptations and make decisions that reflect their faith. It's the spiritual equivalent of learning to say no to that second helping of dessert (still working on this)—not because it's forbidden, but because they're learning to prioritize their health and well-being.

Advice from Aubrey 17 y/o daughter

Hey, I'm Aubrey, and I'm seventeen. You might think teens hate rules (some we might), but my dad - Mr. Boundary Pro-somehow made the rules cool and important in my life. He's not strict or even screaming at

me like you might see some dads - he's just great at setting boundaries with love & respect. The key? He always explains *Why*, even if I don't like it, which often I don't. Like with my curfew, when I wanted to stay out till 11pm; he told me "Aubrey, it's because I love you and want you to be safe. I promise you that you will not miss much after 10pm that is worthwhile, and that he wanted to make sure I got home safe while he or my mom was still awake" It wasn't about control; it was about care. We talked about what I could still do, and why he had those expectations. That made me see rules differently.

My dad is awesome at making rules fun. When I was little, cleaning my room became a race or a silly bet, like "If you win, I'll do the dishes!" He also listens to my input and lets me help tweak some rules when I have a good reason. It makes me feel respected and trusted. Dad is sure to take notes (sometimes too many) on any time I break said rules, and we talk about it, but it's great as he treats me as a person and respects me -vs- making me still feel like a little kid. I, in return, understand if I get into any trouble for jumping over the boundary line.

Don't Suck Task for Dads: Sit down with your child and have an open conversation about one of the rules or boundaries you've set. I guarantee you probably already have one in mind. Explain the reasons behind it and ask for their input on how to make the rules most "fair". Make a collaborative effort and see how it strengthens your bond and improves their actions.

Chapter 4

Positive Reinforcement & Encouragement

Dad - Don't Suck!

You know that moment when you're standing in a store, watching your kid navigate the candy aisle like it's a minefield. You are just waiting for those expected words "Dad, can I have..." and then they choose an apple? You feel like you've just one-handed caught the winning touchdown in the Superbowl. What we say next to our apple eating glorious child is what is most important. The right words, my friend, are more important in this moment than any PowerPoint or soapbox speech you'll ever make. The power of what we say to our kids can shape them in ways we don't even realize. Do they continue to repeat those smart choices, or ask for the family sized bag of sour patch kids next time? What you say, and how you say it, can light up their world or dim their spirits. This chapter is about giving that High

5 to celebrate the wins, by building them up rather than breaking them down.

Let's investigate the impact of words on child development. It's a bit like planting seeds in a garden. What you choose to plant and when will determine what grows best. Your words are those seeds. When you shower your child with affirmations and encouragement, you're nurturing their self-image and motivation. It's about highlighting effort, not just the final outcome. Look at how many positive affirmation books are out there! Think about it: if your kid comes home with a drawing that looks like Picasso and your toddler had a collaboration, don't just praise the masterpiece. Celebrate the time and creativity they poured into it. "Wow, you really spent a lot of time on this! I love how you used all those colors!" By focusing on the effort, you teach them that what matters is the process, not just the end result that you most likely are going to have to put on a fridge or in your office.

And let's not forget those empowering phrases like "I believe in you." These four little words pack a punch when it comes to building confidence. Imagine your child standing on a stage, about to deliver a speech in front of their class. They're nervous, but they know you believe in them. That belief is a safety net, catching them when they falter and propelling them forward when they succeed. This example I gave came from me sending a text, just reinsuring my daughter in the morning she was going to do awesome, and that I believed she was going to crush it. She told me she read it twice before she jumped up on stage.

Now, how do we make sure our words hit the mark? It's all about personalization. You know your child better than anyone, so tailor your compliments to their unique strengths. If your kid is great at solving puzzles, let them know. "You have such a knack for figuring things out!" This kind of specific praise tells your child you see them

for who they are, not just what they do. Constructive feedback is another powerful tool. It's about encouraging improvement without tearing down what's already there. If your child brings home a math test with a few mistakes, instead of focusing on what went wrong, highlight what they did right and how they can improve. "I see you nailed the multiplication part; let's work on those fractions together."

The timing and tone of your words also play a crucial role. Think of it like seasoning your steak before you throw it on the grill—too little and it's bland, too much and it's overwhelming (insert garlic here). Offer words of comfort during stressful moments, like when your child is struggling with a difficult homework assignment. A gentle reminder that it's okay to make mistakes and to just take their time, can turn frustration into determination. Celebrate achievements immediately, whether it's acing a test or finally learning to ride a bike. Your timely encouragement reinforces positive behavior, making your child more eager to tackle new challenges. Even in the hospitality field, a popular saying has been to "Praise in front of the masses and to counsel behind closed doors", meaning to find what your child does right and get excited about it immediately in front of everyone. Yes, it might embarrass them, but recognizing they did good is more important. In retrospect, if they do something wrong, pull them aside just as quick, and 1:1 talk to them about what behavior you disapprove of and what you expect in the future. it's always about the behavior, not the person in both scenarios.

Positive language creates a culture of encouragement that helps your child develop resilience and confidence. I am not blinded by the reality that you can't positive language yourself out of a horrible situation, as sometimes life is bad, and sometimes we fail. I could probably list 20 quotes from inspiring people in history and all of them have placed a positive spin on failure, just as we should with our

children. Eistein - "I have not failed, I have just found 10,000 ways it hasn't worked", and Zig Ziglar "Remember failure is an event, not a person" are probably two of my favorites. But a child who grows up bathed in encouragement isn't afraid to take on challenges. They learn that failure isn't the end, it's just not the solution or reaching their goal...yet.

Biblical Lessons on Encouragement and Growth

Imagine being known as the "son of encouragement." Acts 4:36 That's Barnabas for you, a guy that practiced what he preached, leaving a lasting legacy of support and inspiration. Barnabas was that friend who always had your back, the one who'd give you a pat on the shoulder when you were down. His life was a testament to the power of encouragement, showing us how far a little faith and a few kind words can go. When Paul, formerly Saul the persecutor, had his conversion and joined the early Christians, it was Barnabas who vouched for him. He took Paul under his wing, encouraging him to spread the Gospel. Barnabas saw potential in Paul when others were still wary. This act of encouragement not only transformed Paul's life but also changed the course of Christianity. It's a reminder that sometimes, it only takes a spark to get a fire going (Pass it On - One of my favorite church songs as a kid).

Paul himself carried the torch of encouragement forward in his letters to the early churches. He wasn't just writing to fill time; he was reaching out with purpose, lifting spirits and strengthening resolve. His letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians, and Thessalonians were filled with words of encouragement, urging believers to stay strong in their faith and support one another. Paul understood that encouragement was a catalyst for growth, both spiritually and personally.

He knew that in the face of challenges and adversity, the right words could fortify one's resolve and inspire action. Through his letters, Paul emphasized the importance of building each other up, reinforcing the idea that encouragement is a powerful force for unity and progress.

The Bible doesn't just mention encouragement in passing; it treats it as a vital component of a strong, faith-filled life. "Encourage one another and build each other up," Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:11. It's as if the Bible is nudging us, saying, "Hey, this isn't just a nice-to-have; it's crucial." Encouragement is presented as a tool for growth, a way to nurture not only our spiritual lives but also our relationships and personal development. It's about creating a culture of support and upliftment, where each person feels valued and inspired to give their best.

So, how does all this ancient wisdom translate into our modern-day parenting gig? It's simpler than you might think. Start by using scripture to reinforce positive messages with your kids. Share stories of biblical figures who overcame adversity and grew through encouragement. These stories are like spiritual fuel, lighting a fire of inspiration in young hearts. When your child is facing a tough situation, remind them of David and Goliath, or Daniel in the lion's den. These narratives serve as powerful reminders that with faith and encouragement, anything is possible. They teach children that they are not alone in their struggles, that they can draw strength from their faith and the support of those around them.

Prayer is another avenue to tap into divine guidance on how best to support your children. In moments of uncertainty, take a moment to pray for insight and patience. Ask for the right words to encourage your child, for the strength to lift them up when they falter. Prayer not only centers you, but also invites God's guidance into your parenting, helping you navigate the challenges and triumphs of raising children

with grace and love. It's a reminder that there's a higher power ready to lend a hand and guide your steps.

As fathers, we could channel these biblical lessons into our daily interactions with our children. By encouraging them with faith-filled words and actions, we're not just teaching them to believe in themselves; we're helping them discover their potential and purpose.

Advice from Coen, 14y/o son

Yo, I'm Coen, and I gotta tell you about my dad—this dude is basically the king of hyping me up. Like, no joke, he makes me feel like I can *literally* take on the world. He's got this crazy skill where he notices every little good thing I do—even stuff I don't think is a big deal. People say moms have eyes in the back of their heads, but my dad? He's got, like, a built-in radar for my wins, and he's always ready with a high-five, fist bump, or some legendary dad wisdom.

One time, I was *stressing* over this math test, and when I totally crushed it, I showed my dad, and he lit up like I just won an Olympic gold medal. He was like, "*Dude, you killed it! I'm so proud of you! Ice cream is happening.*" And just like that, my rough day turned into an awesome one.

But here's the thing—he doesn't just hype me up for big stuff. Even when I do something small, like clean my room without being asked (rare, I know), he'll say, "*Look at you being all responsible! Love to see it.*" And somehow, that makes me wanna do more good stuff—not because I must, but because I know it makes him proud.

And when I mess up? He's still got my back. One time in lacrosse, I totally choked on a huge play—we're talking *wide-open goal, easy catch, and I just... nope*. We lost the game because of it, and I was beating myself up hard. But my dad? He hit me with, "*It's all good, Coen.*"

Everyone screws up sometimes. What matters is you learn from it. One game doesn't define you. And he gave me a few examples that he failed but rallied back after" And guess what? Next game, I scored twice.

But the best part? My dad believes in me even when I don't. When I tried out for the lacrosse team, I was nervous. But he told me, "*You're a beast, Coen. Just go out there and give it your best. No matter what, we'll keep grinding and having fun.*" That gave me the push I needed, and yeah—I made the team.

So, dads, listen up. You can totally try to be like my dad. It's not about throwing out fake praise for every little thing—we don't need a trophy for just showing up; I hate that. It's about letting your kids know you see their effort and believe in them. So next time your kid does something awesome, big or small, let them know. And when they mess up, remind them that failure isn't the end—it's just part of the game.

Don't Suck Task for Dads: Intentionally take a moment to sit down with your child and share with them one thing you're really proud of them for. It could be an achievement, an act of kindness, or even just their effort in something they've been working on. Watch their faces light up with your positive reinforcement and encouragement and see how it strengthens your connection.

Chapter 5

Discipline &
Open
Communication:
Yes, it's Possible

Chapter 6

Beg & Plead

"**W**hen you teach a man to father, you benefit his children for a lifetime." - Adapted from the old saying "Give a Man a Fish"

Helping out can make you feel good inside, like when you share your lawnmower with your neighbor or help a friend. Imagine feeling that happy just by writing a few words to help other dads learn how to be great fathers. The entire goal of this book is to help motivate Dads to make improvements, and honestly like we discuss in the book on Chapter 12 (spoiler alert) – this mission takes support and help!

My book, "Dad- Don't Suck 2.0", is here to help every dad be the hero his kids think he is. But we can only reach more dads if people know about my book. And that's where you come in!

Most people pick a book based on what others say about it. So, I have a big favor to ask for all those dads out there. (I also except, moms, neighbors, and talking dogs with internet access):

Would you please write a review for this book? Just a few things you have liked about the book, and a picture of your favorite chapter.... any reference helps the readers and me get attention amongst all the other books out there.

It won't cost you a penny, and it'll take less than a minute, but your words could really help me. Sadly, I am not part of a HUGE Publishing house, endorsed by a Hollywood Actor (Ryan – Call me!) or have millions to put into marketing to be immediately on the best sellers list, but I do care about helping other Dads out there and I pray that's enough.

All you have to do to spread a little kindness is leave a review by scanning the QR code below if available or :

Check out this link on Amazon

[<https://www.amazon.com/review/review-your-purchases/?asin=BOOKASIN>]

If you even took 1 thing out of this book positively, then I'm grateful and would love to hear from you. You can always email me at mosonpublishing@gmail.com if you ever have any questions, or better yet have some great stories as a father, as I love to include them in my books. When you email me, I can include you in my early releases as well as let you know about other authors you might be interested in.

I'm excited to help you master fatherhood more easily and quickly than you thought possible. I'm excited for the next 5 tips I've packed into this book.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Now, let's get back to learning how to not Suck!

- Your Father-in Arms,

D. MoSon

Chapter 7

Follow the Leader: Monkey See Monkey Do

Dad - Don't Suck!

Fathers, you are the coaches of your own team. Whether you have 1 or 5 children, you are the leader driving the way to success. Your children watch and learn—not from what you say, but from what you do. With Integrity, Honesty, and Trust being just a few values, we can put our foundation on, we can constantly improve ourselves while also lead by example. *“Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” (Ephesians 5:1-2)* This passage guides in how we may lead more by example than just words. Our values, and what we do daily, should show our children the types of adults they hopefully will strive to be. *Integrity* is not taught through lectures, but through daily actions. It's not about any one GRAND gesture, but about all the small things we do consistently that truly add up. Holding a door

open, speaking kindly to everyone, or admitting mistakes—these small choices teach values more effectively than any speech. *"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out."* (Proverbs 10:9)

Honesty, even when difficult, is a cornerstone of leadership and leading by example. If you break a promise or fail to uphold a rule, your child learns that words mean little. Maybe it's admitting you took the last cookie from the jar (I still blame your mother) or coming clean about a work mistake. These moments teach your kids that honesty is worth more than saving face. *"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'—anything beyond this comes from the evil one."* (Matthew 5:37) This is a pretty darn strong statement. The stakes are high, and the crowd is watching. So, when we make that mistake, be humble enough to admit it and quick to make amends. *Trust* is built through repeated actions, not occasional gestures. Are you catching this consistency trend? When it's 4th down and seconds left in the game, do you throw the ball to the showboat who caught 1 great one-handed pass and celebrated; or the receiver that caught almost every pass firmly and was humble about it, rushing back to the huddle (You'll always throw it to Jerry Rice or Keenan Allen - ignore Terrell Owens & Stefan Diggs)? Trust is the hardest thing to acquire, and the easiest thing to lose. When you promise to play after dinner but choose TV instead, you erode that trust, so get that video game controller ready.

Living by your values isn't about perfection; it's about persistence. It's about showing up every day, ready to tackle whatever life throws your way with honesty, integrity, and a smile. The hardest thing sometimes for a Dad, and sometimes the best thing you can ever do is just Show UP. But not every day will be easy, and that is why an "Accountability Partner" is another great resource to support you along this journey. So, who is this Accountability Partner? It can be your spouse,

your mentor, or another father who faces the same struggles you have. Find a trusted friend or fellow dad who shares your commitment to living authentically. Meet regularly, whether it's over coffee or a round of golf, to discuss your challenges and triumphs. These partnerships act like guardrails, keeping you on track and providing the support you need to navigate life's twists and turns. Quite honestly, we all need some time away to de-escalate, vent a little, and refocus while still being held accountable. I will discuss this strategy even more in the last chapter.

I guess this lead by example thing is easy then, right? All we must do is Show Up, Stand Firm, and Live the Values you want your children to embrace. Too easy, right? *"Do not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."* (Galatians 6:9) Your children will follow your lead. The question is: where are you leading them?

Biblical Comparison – Jesus, the Ultimate Role Model

We ALL want to be the "Perfect Dad", but the truth is there was only one perfect man, and sadly, none of us reading this book is close.

"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can reach excellence." - Vince Lombardi

But here's the thing: we've got the ultimate role model of perfection in Jesus. His life is a masterclass in character and behavior, offering a blueprint for us dads on how to live with compassion and empathy. Jesus wasn't just about grand gestures; he was about the small, everyday acts of kindness that left a lasting impact. How many times did he take compassion to a whole new level by healing the sick and comforting the broken-hearted? Those stories aren't just ancient tales; they're lessons in love and empathy that we can apply to our lives today.

It's about reaching out to those around us, offering a helping hand when someone's struggling—whether it's a neighbor going through a tough time or your kid dealing with school drama.

Humility is never any man's strong suit, but then we have Jesus's humility. Now, this guy knew how to keep it real. Even though he had every reason to boast, he chose to serve others. One of the most powerful examples of this is when he washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17). I'd love to see any government or country leader of today do any such thing in today's world! It's a lesson in humility that speaks volumes. As fathers, we might not be washing feet, but we can practice this same humility by serving our families without expecting anything in return. There is no merit system when being a servant leader for your family. Maybe it's preparing breakfast on a hectic morning or helping with homework after a long day—these small acts of service reflect Jesus's humility and show our kids that true strength lies in serving others.

Another moment that stands out is the feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:13-21). Here's Jesus, with a crowd of hungry people, and all he's got are five loaves and two fish. It's like trying to feed my son's football team with a single pizza (not going to happen). But Jesus didn't panic; he gave thanks and shared what he had. This miracle isn't just about multiplying food; it's about the power of generosity and faith. As fathers, we can apply this lesson by sharing our time, resources, and love freely. It's about giving without counting the cost, trusting that when we do, our efforts will multiply in ways we can't even imagine.

So, how do we incorporate these Christ-like qualities into our daily lives? It starts with prioritizing time for personal reflection and prayer. Jesus often withdrew to quiet places to pray, to reconnect with his Father. In our busy lives, taking a few minutes each day for reflection can make all the difference. Through prayer, we invite guidance and strength to embody the qualities Jesus demonstrated. It's a chance to seek wisdom and patience, especially when faced with the everyday challenges of fatherhood.

Leading family devotions with love and understanding is another way to emulate Jesus's teachings. It's not about preaching or enforcing rules; it's about creating a space where everyone feels valued and heard. Maybe it's reading a Bible story together or sharing what you're thankful for at dinner. These moments even though sometimes feel pressured as we all have to think every Thanksgiving when someone asks, "what are you thankful for?"; actually, encourage us to appreciate what we have, and not necessarily what we want. They also help reinforce the values we hold dear. They're opportunities to guide our children in faith, helping them discover their own relationship with God.

As fathers, embracing Christ-like qualities is about more than following a set of rules. It's about embodying the spirit of love, kindness, and humility that Jesus demonstrated. It's about choosing to lead with heart and integrity, to be the kind of role model our kids can look up to. And while we may stumble along the way (or a lot), the key is to keep striving, to seek guidance from the ultimate role model, and to let our actions speak louder than words.

Advice from Serenity, 10 y/o Daughter

OMG I have to tell you about my dad! He is seriously the coolest EVER. Like, if there was a prize for Best Dad In The World, he would win it a million times.

First of all, he's not just all talk, although he talks A LOT. He does all the nice stuff he says is important. Everywhere we go, he's smiling and is being nice to people — even strangers (and sometimes it's SO EMBARRASSING I could just disappear). He says “please” and “thank you” like it's his favorite thing to say. And he always opens doors for people like he's some fancy butler or something.

And the crazy part is, even when I can tell he's having a bad day (like when he's grumpy at home), he STILL is nice to people! How does he even do that? It's like he can flip a switch and is powered by kindness or something.

To be honest, it kinda rubs off on me too. Like now when I smile at people or say “please” and “thank you” it feels good inside. (Not even lying.) It's like Dad told me a secret that is just mine.

Also — my dad is literally the best at friend stuff. He always listens when I talk about my friends (even when I talk A LOT) and he even helps me with the small stuff like making birthday cards. (He's not a huge fan of glitter though... but too bad because glitter is life!)

OH, and also — MY DAD IS HILARIOUS. He tells the dumbest jokes (but they are so funny) and he does crazy dances that make me laugh until my stomach hurts. He's seriously like a professional comedian.

My advice to other dads reading this? **Be my dad, wait not be my dad, but like my dad (he's mine)!** Be nice, be silly, be awesome!

Teach your kids by doing the stuff you say is important. And make them laugh a lot. It's the best thing ever.

Don't Suck Task for Dads: Spend some quality time with your kid. Teach them something you're passionate about, whether it's a hobby, a skill, or something you believe in. Let them know why you are so passionate about it. Be their mentor/ personal trainer and show them how amazing it is. It's like passing on a small part of yourself. Note: Your passion may not be theirs, so understand this is to share a part of you and not be you!

Chapter 8

Can You Read Minds? – Empathy, Understanding, and EI

*D*ad - Don't Suck!

It's Saturday Prime Time Football season and you're watching the Buckeyes in a nail-biter game against Alabama, and the ref makes a call so bad you're ready to launch the remote into the TV. Now, think about your child feeling that same frustration — but instead of a bad call, it's because their Lego masterpiece just collapsed, or a sibling snagged the last cookie they had already set aside for them. Their world feels just as rocked as yours, even if it's glitter-covered and

cookie-crumbed. Welcome to the world of empathy — stepping into someone else's size 2 sneakers with genuine understanding.

Empathy isn't just a soft skill or a trendy parenting term (although it's used A LOT). It's not sympathy, which just pats someone on the back. Empathy sits beside them in the struggle and says, "I get it." It's what Paul meant when he said, *"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."* (Romans 12:15). True empathy moves beyond words into shared experiences and honest connection.

As dads, practicing empathy is a skill we pass down to our kids. It helps them develop emotional resilience, navigate friendships, and face life's ups and downs with a little more grace. Children who experience empathy at home grow into adults who can form real, meaningful relationships — and let's face it, the world needs a whole lot more of that.

Building empathy starts small — like truly listening. Not the "uh-huh, that's nice" half-listening while scrolling your phone, but stopping, locking eyes, and treating their words like breaking news (See Chapter 1 if you already forgot). Reflective responses are key: when the block tower crashes and tears follow, you can say, "Wow, I can tell you're frustrated. You worked really hard on that." Connecting on their emotional level builds a bridge stronger than anything made of Legos.

"Perspective-taking" is another fundamental to grasp. Try to view life through their lens. That missing cookie or toppled tower might seem minor to you, but it's monumental to them. It reminds me of Jesus' heart for children: *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."* (Mark 10:14). He didn't brush off their emotions or tell them to toughen up (that would have been amazing to see their reaction though) — He welcomed them. So should we.

Empathy isn't just feel-good philosophy; it creates practical, lasting benefits. Kids who feel heard are more likely to come to you willingly — no detective work needed. Trust grows, conflicts shrink (usually — this isn't a magic wand), and the home becomes a safer, warmer place.

Incorporating empathy doesn't mean orchestrating grand, Instagram-worthy moments. It's found in the small things: validating feelings, asking open-ended questions like, "How do you feel about that?" or "Tell me more about that." It's a million tiny investments that compound into deep emotional wealth.

And speaking of emotional wealth — that's where emotional intelligence steps onto the field. Let's pretend it's a typical Monday morning chaos, your toddlers in a sock-matching meltdown, the teen's panicking about a history test they "forgot," and you're just trying to find your travel mug before the caffeine wears off. Emotional intelligence — the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions — is what helps you captain that sinking ship without yelling yourself hoarse.

Modeling emotional intelligence shows your kids that emotions are normal — but how we respond is what defines us. We have all heard someone say, "It's not what you said, but how you said it!" Help them name their feelings beyond "mad" or "sad." Maybe it's "disappointed because plans changed" or "worried about the unknown." Language unlocks emotional control. You're giving them a bigger emotional vocabulary — and trust me, they'll use it.

Practical steps matter too. Walk them through problem-solving when emotions flare up. Help them brainstorm solutions when a friend flakes or a project flops. Journaling can help kids process emotions privately, almost like a mirror for the heart (A school counselor gave me this line). And role-playing is gold: acting out different situa-

tions, letting them imagine how others feel, and building compassion muscle memory.

Empathy and emotional intelligence in action transform your household. They turn chaos into connection and mistakes into mentorship moments. Imagine your child anxious about starting a new school — you listen, share your own nerves about past changes, and walk beside them. You're not just solving their problem. You're showing them how to weather life's storms with faith, strength, and heart.

Ultimately, empathy is not a box to check; it's a lifelong journey we will fail at and hit home-runs. It's building a family culture where feelings are safe, struggles are shared, and love is unconditional. In your home, empathy can become as natural as breathing — not because you're perfect (only one gets to claim that), but because you show up, listen up, and love without conditions.

Biblical Insights on Compassion and Understanding

In the world of parenting, there's a fountain of insight that comes straight from the Good Book. Take, for instance, the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's a tale most of us know well, tucked away in the pages of Luke 10:25-37. If you remember: a man is left beaten on the side of a lonely road. A priest and a Levite, both of whom you'd expect to help, pass by without a glance. Then along comes a Samaritan—someone considered an outsider—who stops and tends to the wounded man, ensuring he's cared for. It's a powerful illustration of stepping outside your comfort zone to show compassion, regardless of societal lines. This story is a gentle nudge for us dads, reminding us that true empathy involves action, not just good intentions.

Galatians 6:2 encourages us to "bear one another's burdens," a call to action for anyone who claims to care. As fathers, we can take this

to heart. Bearing burdens isn't just about shouldering physical weight but sharing emotional and spiritual loads, too. It's about being there for your kids and teaching them to be there for one another. Encouraging acts of kindness within the family can take many forms. Perhaps it's as simple as suggesting your child help their sibling with homework or asking them to lend a hand with a neighbor's yard work. These small gestures teach them to look beyond their own needs and consider how they can make a difference in the lives of those around them.

We see empathy in action throughout the Bible, with many figures who exemplify what it means to live with compassion. Take Joseph, for example. Talk about a guy who had every reason to hold a grudge. His brothers sold him into slavery, and yet, when he rose to power in Egypt, he chose forgiveness over vengeance. Joseph's story is a testament to the power of understanding and empathy. He saw his brothers' fear and desperation and chose to offer them grace instead of retribution. It's a lesson in letting go of past hurts to build a better future, a lesson that can be invaluable in our own lives as fathers, especially when it comes to teaching our kids about the power of forgiveness and not holding a grudge.

Applying these biblical teachings to modern parenting challenges might seem daunting, but they hold timeless wisdom. Take sibling rivalry, for instance. It's as old as time itself as my brothers are sure to tell stories, and navigating it requires a hefty dose of empathy. When your kids are at each other's throats over who gets control of the remote and what's on the TV, it's an opportunity to teach them about understanding and compromise. Encourage them to see things from their sibling's perspective. Maybe one is upset because they had a rough day and just want a little humor. By explaining this kind of empathy, you help them develop tools to resolve conflicts on their own.

Peer pressure is another challenge that young one's face, and it's a tough nut to crack. Kids want to fit in, and sometimes that means making choices that don't align with their values. There are thousands of books just on this topic and I hope I can add a little value. This is where empathy can make all the difference in the world. Encourage your child to imagine how their actions might impact others. Help them consider whether they're following the crowd or standing up for what they believe in. It's not about telling them what to do but guiding them to make decisions based on empathy and understanding. This approach not only helps them navigate peer pressure but also builds a moral compass that will serve them well into adulthood.

Biblical empathy isn't just a relic from the past. It's a living, breathing guide for how we can parent with compassion and understanding. It's about teaching our kids to see beyond themselves and to act with kindness and grace. Whether it's through the lessons of the Good Samaritan or the forgiveness of Joseph, there's a wealth of guidance to draw from. As fathers, we can model these teachings in our own lives, showing our children the power of empathy in action.

Advice from Asher, 13 y/o son

Hey, I'm Asher, and I'm 13. I wanna talk to you dads about something that's really important — empathy and understanding.

Now, my dad is basically Yoda when it comes to this stuff. Like, for real. He's not just listening to the stuff I say — it's like he's picking up what I *don't* say too. Almost like he's got Jedi mind powers or something. It's kinda freaky, but also super awesome.

Sometimes, when I'm having a rough day or just feeling off, I don't even have to say anything. My dad will just roll up and be like, "Hey Ash, you good? Wanna talk?" And boom — it's like he

just *knows*. Makes me feel like I'm not just some random kid, but like... he *gets me*.

And it's not just the big, dramatic stuff either. Like one time I had a terrible day at school (like, epic failure level bad), and I didn't wanna talk about it. My dad didn't bug me or give me some cheesy lecture. He just made my favorite dinner — Mac & Cheese with hot dogs chopped in (don't judge, it's elite) — and said, "Whenever you wanna talk, I'm here." No pressure. No weird vibe. Just... there.

Honestly, one of the coolest things he does is tell me stories about when he was my age. Like how he messed up or had bad days too. It's not all "When I was your age, I walked to school in a blizzard, uphill both ways" junk. It's real stuff. Makes me feel like, okay, I'm not just a weirdo — my dad *gets it* because he's been there too.

So, if you're a dad reading this, here's the deal: Pay attention even when your kid's not really saying anything, ask them how they're doing, but don't be annoying about it, be there even for the small stuff — not just when things go nuclear and share your own screw-ups sometimes. Understand us, and know that sometimes we just need you, we don't need fixed! It helps. (No offense.)

Don't Suck Task for Dads: You should be catching a trend on how important communication is by this point. Spend some quality time with your child and ask them about their day or how they're feeling. Pay attention to their emotions, even the ones they might not express directly. Share a personal story from your past that relates to their feelings or experiences. It'll show them that you understand and help strengthen your connection. This is an opportunity assignment different from Chapter 1. Find the moment when your child is "inside their head" and jump inside to help.

Chapter 9

Quality Education - Teaching What Matters

*D*ad - Don't Suck!

You're sitting at the kitchen table. Your youngest is drawing something that might be a cat, a spaghetti monster, or a portrait of you. Your teenager is explaining why algebra should be banned as they will never use it, and your middle child is chasing the cat trying to put a hat on it for her "play". In the middle of the chaos, you start to wonder — what are the schools teaching these kids and what does real education even look like?

The truth is that education isn't just about grades and textbooks. Yes, academics are essential to our children's development, but it's also about forming character, growing in faith, and helping our kids

understand how to live with integrity and purpose. Proverbs 22:6 says, *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* Our job is to guide them on a path that doesn’t just make them “smart” but makes them wise and good.

As mentioned, academics do matter, but they’re only part of the picture. Building a strong education also means teaching our children about honesty, compassion, perseverance, humility, and probably another dozen soft skills I could list. These soft skills aren’t taught by accident. They grow from daily conversations, small choices, and the example we set as those little eyes are always watching. When we talk openly about integrity, when we encourage them to care for others, when we admit our own mistakes and show what it looks like to seek forgiveness, we are shaping them for life far beyond the classroom.

Biblical values give our children something firm to stand on. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 7:24-25 that building a life on His teachings is like building on rock — it withstands the storms. In the same way, giving our kids a faith-centered view of the world gives them resilience **when** life gets hard. It’s not about forcing religion into every moment but allowing our faith to be the natural lens through which we see learning, challenges, and relationships. Whether discussing history (whole other soap box conversation for me), making a tough decision, or handling conflict, pointing back to Scripture helps anchor everything we teach.

One practical way to keep the bigger picture in front of your family is to create a family mission statement. You see businesses do these all the time to stay focused, so why not your family? Something simple that defines who you are and what you stand for. Joshua 24:15 says, *“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”* A mission statement doesn’t have to be complicated. It might be, “Our family seeks to love God, serve others, and do the right thing.” It becomes

a reference point when making decisions, setting goals, or handling tough situations.

Teaching values doesn't require big speeches or perfect timing. It happens in everyday moments. It's in the car after a rough game. It's when your child talks about a classmate who cheated on a test. It's when you help them work through the choice to stand up for someone being bullied. Every conversation where you encourage them to think about right and wrong is another brick in their foundation.

Real education is about showing them that what they believe matters, and how they live matters even more. It's about helping them see their lives not just as a series of achievements but as a mission. When we connect their passions, struggles, and successes back to God's greater story, we give them a sense of direction that no award or diploma can replace.

Families who live their values out loud show how powerful this can be. Whether it's volunteering regularly, standing up for justice (you don't need a super-hero cape), or simply treating others with kindness every day, these actions shape children far more than lectures ever could. Kids learn best when they see faith, compassion, and integrity consistently modeled at home.

As fathers, we have the privilege and responsibility to lead. We are called to build more than academic achievers — we are building future leaders, difference-makers, and faithful servants. When we commit to teaching what matters most, we prepare our children not just to survive the world but to change it for the better.

Ask your kids about their dreams. Help them set goals that reflect your family's values. Invite conversations about real-life challenges and how faith speaks into them. Let them see that wisdom, courage, and humility aren't just good ideas — they are how we live every single day.

Because in the end, the world needs more than smart people (more smart people won't hurt though). It needs people with hearts rooted in truth, spirits strengthened by faith, and lives committed to something greater than themselves. And it all starts right around that kitchen table.

Biblical Wisdom on Teaching and Learning

A father and son sit on a porch, the sun setting just over the horizon, as they dive into one of life's big questions. The father reaches for his well-worn Bible, flipping to Proverbs 22:6 (I know I used it prior, but it's the best verse), and says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This isn't just an ancient proverb; it's a timeless piece of wisdom that's as relevant today as it was when first written. It's a gentle reminder that our role as fathers is to guide our children along a righteous path, not just by telling them what to do, but by showing them how to live. Proverbs offer a ton of wisdom on raising children, emphasizing the pursuit of knowledge and the importance of instilling values that will last a lifetime.

I can also support this chapter's message with this guy you may have heard of called Moses. This guy didn't just part the Red Sea; he was also an exemplary teacher and leader. Imagine leading a group of people through a desert, with temperatures soaring and tempers flaring, all while trying to impart the commandments of God (I sadly hate a 4-hour road trip in a car with all my family-suck it up Dad!). Moses set the bar high for educators everywhere. He wasn't just throwing out rules like a substitute teacher with a stack of pop quizzes. He was mentoring, guiding, and nurturing a community. Moses understood that teaching wasn't about handing down edicts from on high; it was

about engaging with people, understanding their needs, and helping them grow into their potential. His life is a lesson in patience, perseverance, and the power of a well-placed staff- lol.

Let's jump over to the New Testament, where we find Paul, another great teacher and mentor. His relationship with Timothy is a masterclass in mentorship. Paul didn't just preach sermons from a pulpit; he took Timothy under his wing, teaching him the ropes and encouraging him to become a leader in his own right. Paul wrote letters with advice and encouragement, shaping Timothy's ministry and life. This mentorship wasn't just about passing on knowledge; it was about investing in someone else's future, much like a father does with his child. Paul understood that teaching is about more than imparting information; It nurtures development, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

So, how do we take these ancient teachings and apply them to our modern educational practices? It's simple, really. Just as Jesus used parables to convey complex truths, we can encourage critical thinking in our children by sharing stories that make them ponder and question. These stories aren't just about teaching morals; they're about encouraging kids to think deeply and come to their own conclusions. It's about asking the right questions and guiding them to find the answers. When faced with a moral dilemma, encourage your child to think about what Jesus might do (remember those popular WWJD bracelets?). This approach not only teaches them to make wise decisions but also strengthens their understanding of their faith.

Scripture can be a powerful tool in guiding moral decision-making. When faced with a challenging situation, turn to the Bible for wisdom. There are bible apps out there now or even the wonderful world of Google or Chat GPT, that you can just put in a challenge, and it will direct you where to start reading. Scripture offers guidance and clarity, whether it's a dispute with a friend or a decision about right

and wrong. It helps kids see beyond the immediate and consider the broader implications of their actions. Using scripture as a compass, we teach our children to navigate the world with integrity and grace. This approach doesn't just help them make better decisions; it instills a sense of responsibility and accountability.

Integrating biblical principles in education isn't just about memorizing verses or attending Sunday school. It's about creating an environment where faith is woven into every aspect of learning. Biblical teachings can enhance learning by fostering resilience through faith-based lessons. When children understand that they're part of a larger story, one that includes struggles and triumphs, they learn to persevere in the face of adversity. They see that their challenges are not insurmountable, but growth opportunities.

Incorporating a sense of community and service is another benefit of integrating biblical principles into education. By teaching our kids to look beyond themselves and consider the needs of others, we foster a sense of empathy and compassion. This isn't just about participating in the occasional service project; it's about cultivating a lifestyle of service and generosity. It's about teaching our kids that they're part of a larger community, one that thrives when everyone contributes. This sense of community is a cornerstone of biblical education, encouraging our children to participate actively in the world around them.

As fathers, we have the privilege and responsibility to guide our children's academic and spiritual education. By weaving biblical wisdom into their learning experiences, we help them build a foundation that will support them throughout their lives. We teach them to think critically, act compassionately, and live with purpose. It's about more than academics; it's about shaping character and nurturing a faith that will guide them for years to come.

Advice from Noah, 16-year-old daughter

Heyyy, it's Noah. I'm 16, and yes, I still live in a house where my dad thinks he's cooler than he actually is—but lowkey, he *is* kinda awesome when it comes to school stuff. Let's talk about something my dad's taught me that's clutch—my quality education. My dad is all about it, and here's why it's so amazing.

Okay, I get it—school can be the *actual worst* sometimes. Like, who *wakes* up excited for pop quizzes and three hours of math homework? (Spoiler: no one.) But somehow, my dad manages to make it suck way less. First of all, when I'm two seconds away from throwing my geometry book across the room, he swoops in like some kind of *math wizard*. And sure, he complains that “math was different back in his day” (okay old man), but then he still ends up explaining it better than my actual teacher. It's giving *free tutor energy*. Like, where do I Venmo your tip, sir?

And he doesn't just sit there all serious with a whiteboard or something. No—he throws in the most ridiculous jokes and weird memory tricks to help stuff stick. Like for geography, he once said, “Kansas is the pancake and Nebraska's the waffle.” What? But now I literally *cannot* unsee it. (And you're picturing it now too, aren't you? You're welcome.)

But my dad's not just all about grades and test scores—he's about that real life learning. We'll watch documentaries together (yes, I voluntarily watch documentaries—don't judge me), hit up museums, or even do chaotic science experiments in the kitchen like it's “Myth-Busters: Dad Edition.” It's never boring. One time, we may or may not have made a volcano explode in the microwave. RIP to that bowl.

What's even cooler? He *listens* to what I'm into. Like, if I wanna learn to code, paint, cook, or I randomly decide I'm gonna be a ma-

rine biologist for two weeks—he's just like, "Do it! I got you." He is my own personal cheerleader & hype man. Even when I change my mind like, 47 times, he's still there cheering me on like, "Let's find the *thing* you love." No pressure. Just as long as I commit, and put in an effort, he is behind me trying anything.

Alright dads, don't over think this. In order to be more like my dad don't just help with homework like a robot. Make it fun. Be weird. Be present. Show them that learning is basically just discovering cool stuff—and it doesn't have to come with a test.

Don't-Suck Task for Dads: Put down the remote, grab your kid, and go do something fun *and* educational together. Seriously – Go Now! Watch a wild documentary (dinosaurs, space, true crime—you pick), blow something up in the name of science (safely pls), or go nerd out at a museum. Learning doesn't have to live in a classroom.

Chapter 10

"It's A Family Tradition"

Dad - Don't Suck!

First off, as soon as I read this title and even as I originally wrote it, I immediately think of the Hank Williams song - Your welcome for that being stuck in your head too now. If you don't know Hank William's song "Family Tradition" – it is available on Spotify, Amazon Music, or wherever you stream music, now let's continue. That being said, imagine it's a Sunday afternoon, and you're lounging on the couch with a plate of nachos and a game on TV. Suddenly, your youngest runs in with a cape made from a bedsheet, declaring that it's time for the annual super-hero's family obstacle course. You look around, hoping for a superhero of your own to appear and save you from the chaos, and she is already running upstairs (Thanks). But here's the thing—this "I want to hide" moment is actually a beautiful tradition in the making. It's this type of chaos that could actually be the birth of legendary memories.

Family traditions are the heartbeat of your home—comforting, steady, and surprisingly sticky (cookie making during CHRISTmas!). They give rhythm to your days, letting you look forward to events to come while reminding your crew what you're all about. I pray we ALL have a tradition from when we were a child you immediately think of. Think of them less like rigid rituals and more like spiritual scaffolding—supportive, flexible, and designed to help your family grow up and out, not just old. A tradition is meaningful when it aligns with your family's core values. It's not just about doing something because it's fun; it should reflect what your family stands for. Maybe it's kindness, like volunteering together, or gratitude, like sharing what you're thankful for at dinner. Whatever it is, make sure your traditions are rooted in these shared values.

To make traditions stick, inclusivity is key. You want everyone to feel like they're part of the action, even if it means letting your teenager DJ family game night. Participation from all family members ensures that everyone has a chance to add their own flavor, the tradition becomes theirs, not just another adult-imposed "mandatory fun night".

Now, how exactly do you create new traditions? Start by involving your kids in the planning process. Ask them what they'd like to do as a family, and you might be surprised by their creativity. Maybe they suggest a monthly "Pancake Saturday" where everyone takes turns flipping flapjacks. Or perhaps they want to start a family book club, complete with themed snacks for each meeting. Whatever the idea, make sure it's something everyone can enjoy.

These experiences truly are the traditions and memories your children will remember. Think about those annual camping trips where you huddle around the campfire, roasting marshmallows (someone always burn them) and telling ghost stories. These moments are the times your kids will say "when I was a kid...".

Take the Inglesia family, for example. Every holiday season, they come together to cook a special Italian styled meal, with each member contributing their favorite dish. It's a culinary adventure (some meals definitely more creative than others), one that brings them closer as they share laughter and recipes passed down through generations. Or consider the McClory, who dedicate a day each month to volunteering in their community. Whether it's cleaning up a local park or helping at a food bank, these volunteer days have become a cherished tradition that instills a sense of purpose and service in every family member. These examples highlight how traditions, when rooted in shared values and consistent practice, can endure and enrich family life.

Celebrating faith through traditions is also so very important. In a house near you, bustling with the anticipation of Lent & Easter approaching. A season that often conjures images of sacrifice and reflection but also offers a rich opportunity for growth and connection. *Crazy idea:* Instead of everyone disappearing into their own routines, you gather the family around the table to brainstorm activities that align with the spirit of Lent. It could be as simple as setting aside time each week to volunteer together or reading passages from the Bible that resonate with the themes of the season or even give up the same thing as a family during Lent. It's a chance for everyone to step back from the hustle and truly contemplate the values they hold dear, while also finding new ways to express them. Baptism anniversaries can be another beautiful tradition that threads faith through the fabric of family life. Celebrating the day not just as a date on the calendar, but as a vibrant reminder of faith's enduring presence. Similar to an annual birthday each year, you might gather around, perhaps with a homemade cake or a special meal, and share stories of faith, both personal and familial. These anecdotes, whether about your own baptism or the spiritual milestones of your children,

serve as powerful reminders of the journey each of you is on. It's a time to reflect on the growth and changes since that pivotal moment, to encourage and inspire one another with tales of perseverance and grace.

Modern Life, Meets Ancient Practice: Life is busier than ever. Traditions that adapt are the ones that endure. Got family scattered across states or even different countries? Host virtual talent shows or Zoom dinners. No time for a full-blown holiday feast? Do a "mini tradition"—hot cocoa and a movie night. It's about preserving connection, not perfection.

Let the kids bring ideas. Their creativity might surprise you—traditions like "Wacky Sock Sunday" or rotating "Culture Nights" (featuring sushi, tamales, or grandma's famous casserole) can blend legacy with new life. Think of it as remixing the classic—just enough modern flair to keep it real. Traditions truly aren't about control and a specific date on the calendar. They're about connection. Thanksgiving by yourself, is not a tradition (it's kinda sad). They aren't about perfection, either - they're about being present. They can bridge gaps between generations (cards with my grandma); creates stories for a lifetime, and moments that will mean more than anything on YouTube or and Video Game ever will.

Biblical Roots of Family Traditions

Long before Elf on the Shelf and matching Christmas jammies, family traditions were deeply woven into the fabric of life—and God was all about them. In ancient times, traditions weren't just for fun; they helped families remember who they were and who God is. One of the most powerful examples is Passover. Every year, families gathered to retell the story of the Exodus, not just to relive history but to recognize

God's hand in their deliverance. They ate symbolic foods and passed the story from one generation to the next, as commanded in *Exodus 12:26–27 (NIV)*, reinforcing that God had rescued His people and remained faithful.

Another foundational tradition was the Sabbath. It wasn't merely a day off—it was a sacred purpose. Families set aside work, stress, and distractions to rest, reflect, and reconnect with God and one another. This wasn't optional; it was modeled by God Himself when He blessed the seventh day and made it holy (*Genesis 2:3, NIV*). The Sabbath grounded families in faith, creating a regular space for spiritual and emotional renewal.

Feasts and festivals filled the Old Testament; each loaded with meaning and purpose. Events like the Feast of Tabernacles weren't just social gatherings—they were spiritual milestones, reminding people of God's provision and protection. Families would dwell in temporary shelters and celebrate the harvest, embracing gratitude while remembering their history. These traditions helped anchor communities and cultivate joy through shared faith.

Jesus himself participated in Jewish traditions, setting an example for us to follow. He attended feasts and observed customs, using these moments to teach and connect with others. Through His actions, Jesus showed that traditions aren't just about rituals but about relationships. They're opportunities to come together, to share stories, and to grow in faith and understanding. Jesus demonstrated that traditions are a powerful way to reinforce community bonds and deepen our relationship with God.

Today, we can breathe life into our own family traditions by weaving in spiritual practices that echo these biblical patterns. Taking time before meals to offer a simple prayer of gratitude is a small but powerful way to acknowledge God's presence in the everyday. During sea-

sons like CHRISTmas, reading scripture together like the "Christmas Story with Mary & Joseph" in the evening invites everyone to slow down and focus on what really matters, preparing hearts not just for a holiday & gifts under the tree but for Christ Himself.

Traditions have the power to anchor your family's faith, providing a stable foundation in a world that's constantly changing. They're the threads that weave your family's story, connecting past, present, and future. Through traditions, you can teach your children about God's love and faithfulness, to instill values that will guide them throughout their lives. They're the echoes of biblical teachings, resonating through the ages, reminding us of who we are and not just an amazing apple pie recipe!

Advice from Logan, 10 y/o daughter

Hey, I'm Logan, I'm 10, and I gotta say—my dad's got traditions on Clutch. Like seriously, he's got this whole "make everything better-Let's elevate it!" plan, and it totally works.

First up, Friday nights? Locked in. It's movie night! We grab popcorn (with Sour Patch Kids, duh), crash on the couch, and pick something fun to watch. But here's the thing—my dad can't just watch the movie like a normal person. Nope. He's gotta make jokes the whole time like he's running his own comedy show. He even talks *during* the dramatic parts. It drives my mom bananas, but we're usually cracking up too hard to care, this is probably why we watch at home.

Then there's holiday stuff. My dad's got a game or activity for every single holiday—Halloween, Christmas, 4th of July, you name it. Each year we get one new decoration, and now our house is starting to look like the holiday section of Target exploded on our house! On Halloween, we even do this costume contest, and my dad goes all in. Like

full giant pumpkin costume, or the Stay Puff Marshmallow dude. It's next-level funny. Now CHRISTmas (yeah that's on purpose), my dad does the lights and inflatables in his "elevated way", but when it comes to the season, he is sure for us to understand that the presents are nice, but it's a celebration of Jesus's birth. We read through Mathew & Luke Chapter 1 & 2, making sure we know the true meaning of the holiday. He even wraps 1 gift for Jesus, that "magically" disappears on Christmas Eve.

But the best thing ever? School lunches. He's been putting jokes in my lunchbox since kindergarten. At first, the teachers had to read them to me because I couldn't yet. Now? It's like a whole thing. Everyone in the cafeteria wants to know the "Dad Joke of the Day." Teachers even ask to see it. And if he ever forgets? Total Madness. People act like the world's ending. My dad's basically famous now—for dad jokes!

Oh, and we've got this secret family handshake. We only do it with each other, and it's kind of like saying, "Yep, you're my girl."

So, here's my advice to all the dads out there: Be like mine. Start something small, keep it going, and make it fun. Movie night, holiday games, lunchbox jokes—whatever. Just make it *you*. Your kids will think it's awesome, and you'll be making the kind of memories we want to remember.

Don't-Suck Task for Dads: Create a new family tradition with the family. Get everyone together to throw out ideas. Make sure everyone can be included, and everyone agrees (or agrees they will participate) on what you will start doing. Make sure you are consistent, revise if needed, and stick with it. Make some memories

Chapter 11

Forgiveness & Growth

*D*ad - Don't Suck!

You're relaxing with your coffee, walking gracefully to your chair in an effort not to burn yourself and you're probably feeling like you've finally got a moment to breathe, when your toddler comes barreling in like a baby linebacker and—bam—coffee's in your lap. Scalding chaos. You jump up, probably let out a few words under your breath, but in the end—you forgive. Not because they asked. Not because they earned it. But because they're your kid, and you love them.

That moment raises an important question: if it's that natural to forgive your child, why is it so difficult to forgive others? Grudges are like emotional cargo pants (stay with me)—way too heavy, outdated, and totally unnecessary. Holding on to resentment is draining. The Harvard Study of Adult Development—yep, *that* one that's been going for over 80 years—backs this up. It found that close, healthy relationships are the number one factor in lifelong happiness. Not

success, not wealth—relationships. And holding onto resentment can actually harm your health, fostering negative thoughts and suppressed anger. It's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to suffer. Forgiveness, on the other hand, takes that monkey off your back and makes you lighter, freer, way more comfortable.

Science agrees—resentment wrecks your health. Harvard researchers found that non-forgiveness leads to stress, increased anxiety, and basically turns your body into a stress burrito (nuke for 3 minutes). Forgiveness can lower your blood pressure and clear your head. And the Bible? It's way ahead of Harvard. In Colossians 3:13 (NIV), Paul says, "*Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*" That's not just advice—it's a blueprint. Jesus modeled radical forgiveness, even from the cross (Luke 23:34), so we've got a high bar.

Whether you're dealing with marriage, parenting, or friendships, people are going to mess up (some more than others). You will too. Forgiveness is what allows relationships to continue through those failures. When you choose to talk through problems, own your mistakes, and extend grace, you give the relationship a chance to grow.

Forgiveness doesn't always happen quickly. Sometimes it takes time and effort. But one of the best ways to start is to remember the times when you've been forgiven (probably more than you can remember). That feeling—of being given a second chance—should guide how you treat others. Try to understand their side. Think about what they might have been going through. That empathy can open the door to reconciliation.

I knew a guy—let's call him Tom—who didn't speak to his brother for years over something dumb. Pride, silence, repeat. One day, Tom picked up the phone, laid down his ego, and asked for forgiveness. Turns out his brother had been waiting to do the same. Boom. Reconnection.

I've seen relationships healed when someone simply made the first move to ask for forgiveness. Years of silence can be broken by one honest conversation. It doesn't undo the past, but it opens the possibility of a better future.

There are also times when families have faced major hurt, stuff I personally can't fathom in my personal life, yet they've chosen to forgive. It didn't happen overnight, and it has been many years, arguments, and finally counseling, but over time, they worked through it and rebuilt trust. It was a decision—followed by consistent effort.

Mistakes happen. Whether it's in parenting, work, or relationships, you're going to mess up. We've all tried to build IKEA furniture without reading the directions (as if they help) and ended up with a lopsided bookcase and an extra shelf. But those mistakes can become valuable lessons. Proverbs 24:16 (NIV) says, "*Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.*" That's the standard. Not perfection—resilience.

So, when your kid forgets their lunch for the third time or you say something you immediately regret, don't shove it under the rug. Talk about it. Laugh about it. Learn from it. Make your family dinner table the kind of place where it's okay to mess up, admit it, and try again. When kids see their parents' owning mistakes and bouncing back with humility, they learn it's okay to be human—and that trying again is just part of the deal.

So yeah—mistakes stink, resentment can get heavy, and life is messy. But forgiveness? That's where healing starts. It's where growth lives. And it's where relationships thrive. So, keep forgiving, keep trying, and keep showing up—even if your coffee ends up on your pants.

Biblical Teachings on Forgiveness

You ever sit in church and hear the word “forgiveness” and immediately think, “*Yep... easier said than done*”? You’re not alone. But Scripture doesn’t give us a lot of wiggle room on this one. Forgiveness isn’t optional—it’s core to who we’re called to be.

Start with Colossians 3:13: “*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*” That’s a straight-up command. God forgave us, full stop. We pass that same grace along, even when it’s uncomfortable.

Jesus doubled down in Matthew 6:14-15: “*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your father will not forgive your sins.*” That’s not subtle. Forgiveness isn’t just something nice Christians do—it’s a condition of walking in God’s grace.

And let’s not forget Peter trying to be impressive in Matthew 18:21, asking Jesus if forgiving someone seven times was good enough. Jesus responds, “*I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*” Then He tells the parable of the unmerciful servant to drive the point home: don’t accept God’s mercy with one hand and withhold it from others with the other.

The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15? It’s not just about the rebellious kid coming home—it’s about the father who forgave *before* the apology was even finished. That’s the heart of God (and a father missing his son). And in John 8, Jesus refuses to condemn the woman caught in adultery, saying, “*Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone.*” We all mess up. Forgiveness levels the playing field.

Then there's Jesus on the cross in Luke 23:34: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*" That's next level. In the middle of pain, betrayal, and injustice, He still chose forgiveness. Not because they earned it—but because that's who He is. Even writing this, I doubt my ability to ever come close to that type of forgiveness. That's what love looks like.

Now let's talk parenting. Forgiveness isn't just a Bible topic—it's something our kids need to see in action. When we tell them stories like the prodigal son or the unforgiving servant, we're not just reading bedtime Bible tales. We're teaching them how to live with humility, grace, and emotional maturity. Forgiveness isn't weakness; it's wisdom.

We also model it. When our kids fight (because they will- A LOT), we can use it as a training ground. Instead of "go say sorry," make space for real conversations. "*What happened? How can we fix this? What does Jesus teach us about forgiveness?*" This helps forgiveness become a habit, not a forced ritual.

Ephesians 4:31-32 says, "*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*" This makes it a "simple" explanation of having a peaceful home. We can raise our kids in that kind of culture—one where it's okay to mess up, but it's also expected to own it, make it right, and forgive.

Forgiveness doesn't erase hurt (far from it), and it doesn't mean there's no accountability (this part is often missed). But it keeps us from getting stuck. Hebrews 12:15 warns, "*See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*" That bitter root? It's a darn weed and it'll choke out joy, love, and connection—unless we yank it out with grace.

Every time we choose to forgive, we're choosing freedom. Not just for the other person, but for ourselves. And every time our kids learn to forgive, they're becoming more like Jesus. That's the goal, right?

Advise from Briana, 18 y/o daughter

And yeah, this might get a little deep but stay with me - because I want to talk about something most people avoid or just don't get:—**forgiveness and how to move on after and actually improve**. It's not always easy to explain, but I've learned a lot about both, mostly from my dad.

Life gets complicated and sometimes a real disaster. People screw up. I've made decisions I wish I could take back, said things I regret, and reacted in ways I'm not proud of. I feel we all can say we have done the same. There were moments I honestly thought, "That's it. I've messed up too badly this time." But my dad never made me feel like I was beyond repair. He didn't look at me like I was a disappointment. He sat with me, talked with me, and helped me figure out what came next.

He taught me that forgiveness isn't about pretending everything's fine or letting people off the hook as we still need to be accountable for our actions (yes, I'll take my grounding now please). It's about deciding not to carry around something that's only going to keep hurting you, which was hard for me. And that includes forgiving yourself, which is sometimes the hardest thing to do. He always says that holding onto mistakes doesn't help us grow, it just keeps us stuck—and that part finally started to make sense the older I got.

What changed me most was how my dad handles his own mistakes. When he messes up, he doesn't lie, deny, or avoid it. He owns it. He tells me when he was wrong. He apologizes. And he changes how he

does things. Once we even let me determine what his accountability in the future needed to be. That taught me more than anything he's ever said. It showed me that being accountable isn't something to fear—it's something to respect.

He also helped me understand that failure doesn't mean I'm done. When I mess up, we talk through what happened, why I made the choice I did, how it affected people, and what I could do differently next time. He'll sometimes say "Ok, it is what it is at this point, so what are we going to do to make it better?" He never makes it about punishment, although that still comes. It's always about growth. That's a hard balance to get right, but somehow, he does.

If you're a dad reading this, just know that how you react when your kid fails will stick with them. There will be times when you will get angry. You might want to snap. But the way you respond will shape how we deal with our own mistakes going forward. We'll either learn to face things head on or get good at excuses. We'll either keep improving, for as my dad says as long as we are moving forward, we are making progress; or we will get trapped in a negative spiral of reasons it's someone else's fault. A lot of this will all depends on you.

My dad made it safe for me to be honest, even when I didn't like who I was being. That's what gave me the space to change and be better now than I ever would have been.

Don't Suck Task for Dads: Have a heart-to-heart with your child about forgiveness and learning from our mistakes. Share a story about a time when you made a mistake and how you learned from it. Encourage them to talk about a mistake they've made and discuss what they can learn from it, or what they would have done differently knowing what they know now. Show them that growth and forgiveness go hand in hand

Chapter 12

Building a Supportive Fatherhood Community

Dad - Don't Suck!

Before you start reading, I know there is that one dad out there that has been counting and has noticed I said there was 10 things that was supposed to help make me a better dad and this is Chapter 11. For that dad, Kudos, you win an Oreo cookie. The truth is I wrote this chapter after the first rendition for multiple reasons. One: I wrote that first book to see if I could even write a book, and see what the publishing process looked like, and...Two: There was a ton of help writing these Dad support books, as I have gotten tons of stories, advice of what to do & not to do, while also learning a lot about my own fatherhood skills along the way. Ultimately, I knew that I knew I

needed to include something about being part of a team, as we can't survive this crazy world together, so whether it's your partner or "Your People" - Your team is what keeps the party going, so here is your bonus chapter:

It's Saturday morning and somehow, you've managed the impossible—got all the kids packed into the car for a family day out. You're feeling like you got this dad thing all figured out.... until you realize you left the diaper bag sitting on the kitchen counter. Now you're in the zoo parking lot, staring at a T-shirt of Colo the Gorilla and wondering if it could double as a makeshift diaper. It's one of those moments when you think, "Man, I could really use a backup dad right now."

That's where a solid dad community comes in, or quite honestly a support group in general. You know—guys who've also been knee-deep in baby wipes and toddler meltdowns and lived to tell the tale. I wrote this chapter so we all could find those fellow dads who can swap stories, share advice, and yeah, even spare a diaper or two.

When you become a dad for the first time, you quickly realize, life is much different than your single friends, and if you were the first to jump into this role; you can feel isolated. That's why having a group of dads in your corner is huge. You get to trade battle stories (like the time your kid turned the living room into a peanut butter art studio), get real advice, and hear different takes on the same wild ride you're on. Suddenly, you're not stranded—you've got a crew navigating the same crazy waters.

And to be honest, fatherhood is better than any party I've even been to (Sorry to my fraternity, but they know it's true) but it's also exhausting. Having other dads to lean on can take a lot of the pressure off. Whether it's figuring out how to finally win the bedtime battle or finding someone who gets the work-life-family juggle act, a dad group

can make a huge difference with your mindset. Joe Cocker said it best, as sometimes "We Need a Little Help From My Friends!"

Now I know I talked about other dads, but there are tons of ways this support can show up. From meetups at the community center or church, to online forums where you can vent or laugh with dads across the globe. Sweden's even ahead of the game, offering group sessions for dads as part of child health care—because apparently, they get that we need a space too. These groups are run by someone who's a bit of everything: expert, buddy, and guy who keeps the snacks coming. It's all about building those connections and talking through real stuff.

And hey, once you've found your footing, pay it forward. Honestly, this is a big reason that I enjoy writing these books. Not because I have it all figured out - just the opposite, but I feel I have my feet on solid ground and can share a little support. Volunteering at parenting events or being a mentor for a new dad figuring out which end of the diaper goes where—that's the kind of stuff that keeps the circle alive. You're not just helping others; you're reminding yourself how far you've come.

Jesus said, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, NIV). That's what this is about—being there for each other, through the messes, milestones, and midnight feedings.

So yeah, go ahead and find your crew. Show up, share a story, lend a hand. Fatherhood's way better when you've got a team walking with you—cheering you on, calling you out (lovingly), and maybe handing you that diaper when you forgot yours... again.

Building Connections Through Church and Groups

Sunday morning rolls around, the coffee's brewing, and you're shaking off a long week. Church might feel like just another thing on your plate, but it's a chance to plug into something deeper—a community that gets what it's like to juggle work, family, and everything in between. For me, this truly is a way to flush my cares away, and refresh for the next week.

Men's ministry events and church-based parenting groups give you space to connect, laugh, and talk through real-life dad stuff. From toddler meltdowns to marriage struggles, these moments of connection help you realize you're not alone. You gain wisdom, share your own, and build friendships that last beyond Sunday. If your church does not have small groups, then you may have a calling to get one started.

It doesn't take much to get involved—show up to events, ask around, check bulletin boards, or jump online to find local or virtual groups. These circles will become lifelines, offering support, accountability, and encouragement as you grow spiritually and lead your family with intention.

Prayer groups and Bible studies with other dads deepen your faith and keep you grounded. You'll find strength in shared struggles and clarity in shared scripture—just like Proverbs 27:17 says, *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."*

So, grab that coffee, head to church, and connect. You're not meant to do this alone—and thankfully, you don't have to.

Sorry, there is not advice from a child, as when I gave outlines asking for reasons their dads are awesome, this was not included. But let's just image there is a lesson on teamwork. Maybe they talked about being a part of a baseball team, or how they were part of a dance team. The

lesson is obviously we all play a key part, and like the old saying says, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together"! If you have even picked up this book and read a paragraph, then there is a part of you that wants to be a better father, and like we said, you are not alone. Find your group of people that can motivate, encourage, and make you a better Christian, man & father!

Chapter 13

Conclusion - "That's All Folks"

Congrats, you finished to tell the story! We've walked through a lot together—ten real, practical steps to becoming the kind of father who shows up, loves well, and leads with heart. If you've made it this far, take a breath and give yourself some credit. You're here because you care, and quite honestly that is what really matters.

Along the way, we've talked about the stuff that matters—like really listening to your kids, carving out intentional time, setting boundaries with love, and walking your talk every single day. You've heard me say it before: being a dad isn't about having all the answers. It's about being willing to grow, learn, and try again, even after a tough day as there will be many along the way.

And yeah, we've tried all this back to something bigger—your faith. The way you show up at home reflects the way you walk with God. It's not about being perfect, it's about being present, faithful, and consistent. Let that guide you when the road gets messy.

So where do you go from here? Start with one small step. Make eye contact with your kid when they talk. Choose patience over frustra-

tion just once today. Say a short prayer before bed. It's the little things, done with intention, that shape the kind of father you're becoming. Don't try to do this alone. Get around other dads. Build your circle. Encourage each other. Laugh about the madness, cry if you need to, and **keep showing up**. That's how we grow.

As you look ahead, think about the kind of legacy you're building. Not just the things you'll teach them, but the way you make them feel. That they're safe. That they're loved. That they matter. That's the kind of father who changes everything—for generations.

Thanks for sticking with me. Your willingness to lean in and reflect means you're already doing more right than you realize. Keep your heart open. Keep learning. Your kids don't need perfection. They need *you*—steady, loving, and fully engaged.

I'll leave you with this verse from Proverbs 22:6:

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.”

I know I probably mentioned that verse a few times, and honestly that probably should have been the title as it truly is the heart of the book. Keep pressing forward. You're doing holy work, right there in your living room. And I promise—it's worth every bit of effort.

You've got this. As we close this chapter, I offer you a blessing & prayer. May you find joy in the little moments, strength in the tough ones, and wisdom to guide you through it all. May your family be blessed with love, laughter, and an unshakeable bond. Keep faith as your compass, and let it guide you through the beautiful madness of fatherhood.

God bless you and your family on this incredible journey called life. You've got this.

Chapter 14

References

Typically when a reader sees a reference page, they just close the book, but I will ask you to truly keep this as a reference to read later. Yes, some of this may have an article listed that I truly just took two lines and referred to them but wanted you to feel I studied a lot when writing this-lol! Honestly what I encourage is you to observe the sites for many of the references as they are great to visit with many father questions you may have down the line. I obviously want you to keep reading my books (pretty please), but some of these are great mentor groups like Dad Central (even if they are Canadian) and Focus on the Family. These along with many others listed can answer a ton of questions along the way.

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