



Village Christian Church



(Disciples of Christ)

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Man of God

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Happy Father's Day everyone. This is the 6th Father's Day we've been together with me as your pastor, and over the past 5 years I've given sermons that pointed out the important role that fathers play in God's design of human life and families...

I've talked about the fact that anyone can be a father but it takes love and dedication to be a dad...

We've looked at the ways a good dad is a reflection of the relationship we can all have with God as our loving Creator and provider...

We've looked at the father in the Prodigal Son parable as an example of the forgiveness and compassion that loving dads have for their kids and God has for us...

And last year we wrote on work gloves like this (hold up) as a way of remembering, honoring and thanking God for the special fathers in our lives.

So, over the last ½ decade, we've covered a lot about the topic of fatherhood and dads – but it's always been me who has done almost all the talking, and I decided that today I want to change that. Today, instead of a normal sermon, I'd like for us to honor dads (and thus, by extension, God – who created and put dads in the world) by simply sharing our thoughts and memories about them with one another.

Now, I know I'm taking a slight risk by doing this, because:

- A) You weren't forewarned and might feel shy about saying much. -Or-
- B) You might have so much to say there won't be enough time. -And-
- C) I have no control over what you're going to say, and that scares most preachers to death!

But I think it's going to be ok, because I know you guys and the beautiful souls that you are. So, let's give it a whirl!

As you think about the questions and topics I'm going to bring up and have things you want to share, they can be about your own father, or (for the moms here) what you've seen in your spouse's parenting, or (for the dads here) you can even answer about yourself if you want to. After all, we **are** honoring all dads on Father's Day!

I do need to make one more statement, unfortunately, before we get started though – And that is that I know not every father in the world has been what God intended for him to be. Some were too broken in their own soul to give their children the love and nurture they needed.

If that was the case in your life, I'm very sorry and I pray that God was able to send other male figures into your life who were able to fill some of the void left by absent fathers or heal some of the pain caused by hurtful ones. I encourage you to think about those positive examples in your life as we discuss the questions I'm going to ask.

Ok, so here we go. Dads come in all sizes, shapes, and personalities with all different sorts of gifts, abilities and quirks. We know that is true, but I do think that there are some commonalities among most dads that we can also talk about.

Let's start with the most light-hearted one – Which is that most dads do and say things that make us laugh (even when, or perhaps especially when, they're not trying to be funny!).

My dad, for example, was always joking around with us. I remember him singing the silliest songs on road trips. And the time when we had just arrived at our camping spot by a lake. We kids couldn't wait to go swimming, so we asked and he said, "Sure." But then, just as we ran down the bank and were about to jump in, he yelled, "Just don't get wet!"

Is there a funny memory about your dad, spouse, or yourself you are willing to share?

Another thing I think is funny about dads is how they all seem to say a lot of the same things. Is there a secret school where they are taught to say, "Shut the door, we're not heating the whole neighborhood!" and "We're not lost, this is the scenic route." And "Money doesn't grow on trees!" ???

To illustrate this point (in the opposite sort of way) I found a video called "Stuff Dads Never Say". I hope you enjoy it.

What are some of the dad cliches you grew up hearing? Or that your kids would tell me that you always said?

Let's shift gears now and talk about the more serious side of dads. I think most dads work hard to try to provide for all the material needs of their families. The biggies are a "roof over our heads, food on the table, and clothes on our backs" but I think that most dads also try to provide some fun and special things for their kids.

What job (or jobs) did your dad work at, and is there a special gift you remember getting that you know was a sacrifice to buy? And wives, you can answer in regard to your husbands too.

Another thing that I think most dads do is they try to help their kids develop important character traits which will help them in life. I'm talking about things like confidence, strength, and self-reliance.

I remember my dad always encouraging us to do our best... telling us that we could be and do anything we set our minds to... reading "The Little Engine That Could" to us... and saying, "Can't never did anything. Say you'll try."

What are some ways that your dads or father figures encouraged you and helped you build character? Or what did you do along those lines with your children?

That's great! Dads really do want to see us grow into strong and confident people – so we can live happier lives! But the lessons were not always about character. Most dads try to teach us a few practical skills, too!

My dad helped me learn to tie my shoes... taught me how to change a flat, change the oil, and jump start a car... and how to drive a boat, among many other things.

What are some practical things that your dad taught you, or that you taught your kids?

Thank you for sharing those things. Now we will turn to the most important questions of all...

It's kind of well-known that some men aren't as comfortable expressing their emotions (especially the softer or "mushier" ones) as most women are. But I think that most fathers (even the ones who seldom say it) find many ways to show their children that they love them.

What are some ways that you remember your dad showing his love? Or wives, that you saw your husbands do? Or dads, things that you did to show your love?

Thank you for sharing those. I want to wrap up now by asking you a slightly different kind of question. We've all heard guys be described before by using the phrase "Man of..." and then you fill in the blank.

For example: "A man of many trades." "A man of few words." "A man of the outdoors (or nature)." "A man of influence." "A man of sorrows." "A man of integrity." And so on.

If you were to describe your father, your spouse, or yourself with that phrase – how would you fill in the blank?

Thank you. I know that question is kind of hard to answer, because we are all complex individuals and can't be described with just one word. But it is a good exercise to think occasionally about how we might be described in one word!

As I thought of my dad earlier this week, I thought of a lot of words and eventually came down to "A man of relationships." When I look out at all you guys who are here today, I think of many different words too...

But there is one word that I think I can fill the blank in with for all of you – And it's the most important one of all: GOD. I see all of you as "Men of God" and I'm very grateful for that. It makes it very inspiring and rewarding to be the pastor of this church!

In closing, I want to share another video and dedicate it to all the dads who have done their best to live out their faith in the world and amidst their families.

Please pray with me.

God, we thank you today for all the fathers in the world, present and past, who have done their best to nurture, encourage, guide, protect, and inspire us with the love that you gave them.

Bless those who have striven to balance the demands of work, marriage and children with an honest awareness of both joy and sacrifice.

Bless those who did not have a good model to follow but have worked to become worthy and virtuous fathers.

Bless those who were not always able to be there when their children were young, but nevertheless have continued to offer their love and support even after they were grown.

Bless the fathers who are bursting with pride and joy – but also those who have been wounded by things that their children said or did.

Bless the fathers who, despite marital discord, remained active in their children's lives.

Bless the fathers whose children are adopted, and whose love and support have nurtured thriving lives.

Bless the stepfathers who freely chose the obligation of fatherhood and earned their children's love and respect.

Bless those fathers who have lost a child to death and continue to hold that child in their heart.

We also thank you, God, for the men who have no children, but cherish the next generation as if they were their own... And for the men who have "fathered" us in their role as mentors and guides during our lives.

And lastly, God, we thank you for our fathers who have died, but live on in our memory and whose love continues to nurture us.

In ways too numerous to count, the world has been blessed by the men who accepted the roles you called them to, God, and who were guided by your love in fulfilling those roles.

So, thank you and may this Father's Day bring honor to them all.

Amen.