12 Vows Every Godly Single Father Should Make for His Family by Matt Haviland, A Father’s Walk

* Men, as a single parent, have you ever considered any of the following questions: Do I hold fast to solid, biblical virtues? As a single father, what levels of excellence am I representing when it comes to raising my children in Christ? Am I ready and willing to stand before God and rise to a higher calling for me and my family?

These surely are tough to answer, perhaps even intimidating—but they don’t have to be. Life can be overpowering at times; but I believe every God-fearing father can boldly raise his children in Christ the way God commands us to. Single fathers are not exempt from this. Below are the vows of the Resolution from the movie Courageous—with a bit of a single dad twist. I encourage you to contemplate living out this Resolution and the eternal blessings it could produce in your life—as well as the lives of your children.

**I do solemnly resolve before God to take full responsibility for myself, my wife, and my children.**

Although you are not currently married, as a single father, you have the full responsibility for the care of yourself and the safekeeping of your children—accountable to God as much as anyone else is.

**I will love them, protect them, serve them and teach them the Word of God as the spiritual leader of my home.**

God has placed a specific calling on fathers (married or single) to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:7, Ephesians 6:4).

**I will be faithful to my wife, to love and honor her, and be willing to lay my life down for her as Jesus Christ did for me.**

Perhaps you previously fell short in this area; or you may have done all you could and still found yourself as a single father. No matter what happened before, this is the standard the Bible gives us as husbands and should be what we are always striving for. If you decide to get married in the future, you are already resolving this vow in your heart now.

**I will bless my children and teach them to love God with all of their hearts, all of their minds, and all of their strength.**

Jesus said this is the greatest commandment of all. As a single father, you have an amazing opportunity to teach your children a strong faith by not allowing circumstances to shake yours. Also, ask any adult how many times their father blessed them. It will be minimal. A father’s blessing is one of the greatest gifts he can ever bestow upon his children—you can begin this today (Numbers 6:24-26).

**I will train them to honor authority and live responsibly.**

Whether your children live with you full-time, or very minimally, you still have authority and influence over them. Teaching and modeling both godly authority and how to live responsibly will carry great weight in the way you raise your children.

**I will confront evil, pursue justice, and love mercy.**

The latter portion of this statement is wonderful guidance in conquering evil and unhealthy manners of pursuing justice. Never should we become spiteful or vengeful—especially when it comes to getting even or keeping score against the other parent. James both warns and encourages us of the importance of showing mercy to others (James 2:13) and Jesus commands us to exercise compassion rather than empty sacrifice (Matthew 9:13, cf. Hosiah 6:6).

I will pray for others and treat them with kindness, respect, and compassion.

I cannot think of a better way for a single parent to lead their children in love and hope than praying with their children and applying these other godly attributes through their faith in Christ.

**I will work diligently to provide for the needs of my family.**

There are two things that single parents are usually short on: time and money. Work in an honorable way to provide for your household; entrust the rest to God to fill in any gaps (Psalm 37:3, Colossians 3:23-24).

**I will forgive those who have wronged me and reconcile with those I have wronged.**

Part of being a Christ follower is taking ownership of our wrongs and asking for forgiveness. The other half is forgiving those who have wronged us. Seek the Lord through prayer in both areas and when you are ready, make take the necessary steps. It may or may not be received well, but either way you will stand right before God.

**I will learn from my mistakes, repent of my sins, and walk with integrity as a man answerable before God.**

One day we all will stand before God and must give an account for our lives here on earth. By taking the initiative now to turn from our old ways, our children are blessed when we walk in our integrity (Proverbs 20:7).

**I will seek to honor God, be faithful to His Church, obey His Word, and do His will.**

This is what we as Christians continually strive for. Our walk with Jesus is a continual work in progress. Find encouragement in your faith—knowing that our Lord and Savior has gone before you. He has been tried and tempted in any way we can be, and He is all we need to fight the good fight.

**I will courageously work with the strength God provides to fulfill this resolution for the rest of my life and for His glory.**

Single parenting is not easy. God gives us the strength to be strong and courageous; not fearful or dismayed. He promises that He is always with us, wherever we go (Joshua 1:9, Matthew 28:20).

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15)

Lord, please give me the strength to be the man and father you have called me to be. Help me to take full responsibility for my family, to love and protect them, and to teach them your truths. Help me to be faithful in all my relationships, and to bless my children continually. Teach me to train them in Your ways and for me to live righteously for all to see. I pray to show the love of Christ to everyone I encounter and glorify You through my work. Father, help me to know forgiveness so I can both receive it and grant it to others. I pray to turn from my wicked ways, to honor You in all that I do, and to live this resolution out for the rest of my days. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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