***The Failures of Being a Single Father:***

***Truth vs Lies***

*Brethren, I do regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

–Phil 3:13-14 (NASB)

As a single father myself, I can easily see where being a single parent can be considered synonymous with failure. I mean, even in my own life I have basically put my daughter in a situation where she will not grow up with me in the home full time. There will be weekends and events I want to take her to that may not happen because of parenting time; I do not have the opportunity to put her to bed every night and pray with her; and even recently- I enrolled her in intramural basketball and she will only get to play in the games every other Saturday. All because of my own selfishness, the fact that I gave in to lustful flesh and had a child out of wedlock. I am such a loser.

**STOP!!!** That is the way I used to see myself: as an unfit dad with a life that was barely holding together. That is, until I had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and He began to not only restore me, but build me into a better father (I’m saying this EXTREMELY humbly, by the way) than I could have ever imagined. I now see challenges as opportunities and trials as tests to grow in my faith. Has life gotten any easier since I came to Christ? Not really. However, I am now more equipped than ever to handle the tough times and die to self to become more like Him. Let’s look into this.

In general, I would say the majority of single dads are the noncustodial parent- that is, mom has primary physical custody. This may or may not be the case in your life, but even we dads with 50/50 parenting time are still experiencing loss on a regular basis. I also learned that NO ONE is a perfect parent, and we will all fail our kids one way or another- big or small. Now, I definitely do not want to focus on the negatives, so I will draw from the few personal examples I gave above to help you discern between the truth God speaks to us daily and the lies our enemy so delicately (or not) likes to slip in our minds constantly as well.

Jesus called Satan the “father of lies” in John 8:44. There is no truth in our adversary. He either lies completely, or takes the truth and twists about- as he did in Matthew 4:6. He is very slick at getting to our minds and can be quite successful if we are not standing on a solid foundation in Christ. Even then, we must constantly pursue the Lord through prayer and Scripture to arm ourselves for battle. Here are a few examples of situations you may regularly encounter as a single father, the lie that is presented to you, and the TRUTH behind it based on God’s Word.

1. ***I am not able to attend all of the events I would like to with my children because I don’t have them all of the time.***

The Lie: *“You are missing out on the fun and important times with your kids; and they are suffering because of you.”*

The Truth: Ecclesiastes 9:10 states, *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might…”* (NIV) My best friend said it perfectly when I first became a father and was facing parenting time challenges: “Even if you have her only one hour a week” he said, “make it THE BEST hour of her week!” I’ve found over the years that it is not the *quantity* of time I spend with my daughter, but the *quality*. So many parents miss this on a daily basis.

1. ***I’m not able to tuck my kids into bed and/or pray with them every night.***

The Lie: *“Because I’m not able to pray with my kids every night, they may not get as much Christian upbringing as they normally would if I was there full time.”*

The Truth: *“The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.”* –Prov 20:7 (NKJV). This is one that I struggled with for years. Despite whatever is being taught at the other home, as fathers we still have spiritual authority over our kids and as Ezekiel 22:30 states, the ability to “stand in the gap” on behalf of them before the Lord. Trust me, when we walk solid and they see it, it will have a greater impact on their lives than we may know.

1. ***My child only gets to participate in some activities part time.***

The Lie: “*Your child can’t ever become fully involved in certain activities because of split custody arrangements.”*

The Truth: “*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”* -2Cor 4:17-18 (NIV) As with any parents (married or not) with sons and daughters in sports and whatnot, scheduling is always a factor. Even if you do place your child in recreational activities and custody time does not allow full participation, YOUR participation is what really matters. Look at it this way. What do you think is more important: a married father who rarely makes his son’s games or his daughter’s concerts, or a single dad who was there every opportunity he got? The latter is one of the eternal factors that will matter then most when our children are full grown.

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