***More Than a Conqueror***

**-Part 3**

***Overcoming the Everyday Challenges of Being a Single Father***

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.* –Phil 2:3 (NIV)

*…continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.* –Phil 2:12 (NIV)

Blended families are now as common in our nation as single parenthood is. Over 68% of remarriages now include children from a previous relationship, and the majority of these times the children reside with their mother and her significant other. Go ahead and chalk up one more trial I’ve come across in my own life recently. My daughter’s mother was married back in April. From what I know, he’s a pretty good guy; yet, I still don’t know him that well. He and I have never had a conversation for more than a few minutes and my daughter’s mom does a pretty good job of keeping him away from me. So once again, I’m involved in a situation that is beyond my control- and I am once again turning to the Lord for answers. My goal with this article is to help any single father living in a similar situation to overcome- all while honoring God and keeping our children’s best interest in mind.

**When Another Man Enters Your Children’s Life**

The majority of single fathers do not have primary custody of their kids- that is a fact. This is not to say that it does not happen, but even if a dad is the custodial parent, there is always the possibility of another man entering the picture. If and when this does occur, we need to be very discerning in how we approach and handle the situation. In my own case, the whole thing sort of blindsided me. My daughter’s mom and her husband did not date long, and they sure got married pretty quickly (at least in my opinion). What really got me was the fact he never approached me to introduce himself and despite being obviously very passive, I feel he’s been fed a lot of stuff into his head that may not be necessarily true of me. Through it all, I have been cordial to him, never disrespected him in front of my daughter (we make it a point to pray for him as well every chance we get), and I have always done my best to model Jesus when he is around. My daughter seems very fond of him and although I may not know him well, I am not about to sabotage his relationship with my daughter. Obviously her safety is a front burner priority for me, but unless I sense any danger on her part, I need to stay in communion with the Lord through the Spirit during it all. Here are three key points to help guide you when another man becomes involved in your children’s life.

1. Do not judge. Jesus tells us in Matt 7:1-2, “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (NKJV) Basically, we have no right to judge anyone, and God is the one and only just Judge. We must also remember our own character flaws before we start pointing out someone else’s. (Matt 7:3-5) As I mentioned above, however, our kids’ safety always comes first, but make sure you have the facts before you start pointing fingers. Yes it may be hard, especially when emotions are running high, but we are to honor God in every area that is within our control.
2. No crossfire. Whether it’s during an exchange of the children; whether or not the other man is present; and ESPECIALLY when you are alone with your children- keep the talk about the other guy either very respective or general. NEVER bash him in front of your kids; NEVER argue about him with their mom in front of them (or ever if possible); and especially NEVER use your kids as pawns for finding out gossip about him. All that will do is diminish your credibility as a man of God and as a father to your children, and what you may have thought would help the situation could actually hurt both you and your kids. Paul reminds us in Eph 4:29 to watch our talk and make sure that whatever we say only brings edification to those around us. This is especially true when it comes to our sons and daughters.
3. Love unconditionally. Jesus tells us in Matt 22:39, “And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (NKJV) I quoted Phil 2:12 at the beginning of this article to help sum up all of this when put together. To “work out your salvation” is similar to opening a giant gift, one that is constantly being unwrapped and discovered. As we learn to die to self and become more Christ-like through the application of God’s Word in our lives, the grace that has been bestowed upon our own life continues to manifest itself all around us. In other words, when we have that healthy and very necessary “fear of the Lord”, when we see others as God sees them, and when we allow our Creator to do good works in us, we then become the type of father that trains his children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph 6:4)

Guys, the road of a single father is rarely easy, as is the walk as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Just remember, when we are walking in harmony with Jesus and submitted to His Lordship, we are always able to overcome. Without Him, we can’t do a single thing. Stick close to God and draw off His Word when it comes to these tough times, for “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.” –Jer 17:7 (NJKV)

*Matt Haviland is the founder of “*A Father’s Walk*” single dad ministry and the author of the book, “*A Father’s Walk: A Christian-Based Resources for Single Fathers*”. He currently lives in his hometown of Grand Rapids, MI and is a single dad to a beautiful 6 year old little girl himself. For more information on the ministry, please visit* [www.afatherswalk.org](http://www.afatherswalk.org).