**The Perception of Single Fatherhood**

*“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord.”* –Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV)

Be honest: when you hear the words “single dad”, what sort of image immediately pops into your mind? Do terms such as “absentee” or “deadbeat” top the list? Or, do you think of a man with solo custody of his children? Do you see them as equal to a single mom? Is he a sinner- or a prime candidate for the same grace God bestows upon each one of us daily? Interesting topic, one I’m sure that many people do not think of regularly- but why not? Are there not plenty of men out there raising their sons and daughters, either by themselves or in a co-parenting situation? Is it possible a “single dad” can be any man who is involved or wants to be involved with his children? (I whole-heartedly believe that is a big “Yes”!) This was a topic we covered a while back in our small group. To help shed some light on the subject, I will quickly cover four “point of views” that all add up to one very important question: *Are we viewing single fathers the way we should be?*

**The World’s Point of View**

Look, I am not going to deny that one bad apple can ruin a whole bushel. I am well aware of the devastating effect fatherlessness has had on this world. However, to place all single dads in the same category would be equivalent to stereotyping any racial or social class in a likewise manner. It just doesn’t work. We put great emphasis on the struggles of single moms in this country (and I am not disregarding that at all here) and we immediately assume there is no dad in place; but please be encouraged that there are in fact THOUSANDS of loving and willing fathers whose main focus is to stay involved in their kid’s lives to the greatest capacity they are able. I asked the guys in our group what sort of “tags” had been placed on them as single dads by others. Many of the responses were less than pleasant or supportive. Single parenting in any aspect is extremely difficult and those who don’t experience it think they know more than we do. Do not be deceived, however, God’s wisdom is infinitely superior (1Cor 2:14, 3:18-19) and the Bible tells us that we really shouldn’t be shocked if others don’t care for us (John 15:18, 1John 3:13).

**Our Children’s Point of View**

I would guess that any sort of single parenting arrangement must be confusing in some way to a child- because it is not God’s natural design and our human nature knows it. Recently, I’ve even had to face some tough questions from my own daughter about me and her mother. Regardless of how we got here, as fathers, we are still called by God to raise our kids in Christ and to prepare them for adulthood (Psalm 145:4, Prov 20:7). The world is not doing anyone a favor when it comes to this, so that makes consistency in our own lives that much more important. Children are masters at picking up on the unspoken and unseen atmosphere of a home; which is why we need to be aware of what sort of perception we are putting off. Use your time with them to get in some great one on one time and build a solid foundation of security, even if the whole situation may be anything but secure. Our kids need us to be there as their protectors and life leaders. A strong, authentic, and Christ-centered lifestyle will only be effective on them if we are truly walking that way and have found what it means to “be still”- even when all hell is breaking loose around us.

**Our Point of View**

Isn’t it amazing how quickly we can forget who we truly are sometimes? God’s Word tells us that we are hand-stitched and perfectly created for His good works (Gen 1:26, Psalm 139:13-14, Eph 2:10). News flash: God doesn’t make mistakes! What that means to us as single fathers is that despite all of the ridicule and empty slander that we sometimes join with the world in dumping on ourselves, the Bible gives us a clear-cut picture that though we may be broken and flawed, we are never beyond repair and redemption. In our current book study, *Good to Great in God’s Eyes”,* author Chip Ingram poses the question as to whyis it human nature to look at all of the prohibitions of Scripture so quickly, but not the promises? The answer we came up with is found in Romans 7 where Paul tells us that it is not us who fall, but sin within us; and later on in Galatians 5:17 that the flesh and Spirit war with one another. When we begin to view ourselves through spiritual eyes rather than our natural, we position ourselves to get a glimpse of the only point of view that truly matters…

**God’s Point of View**

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*-2Cor 5:17 (NKJV)

Once we really grab the magnitude of what it means to be “in Christ”, our whole understanding of our lives and our identity comes full circle. Jesus never promised it would be easy, but He did say that through Him we can overcome anything. He tells us in John 10 that His sheep hear His voice. The question is, *“Are you listening?”*

If we truly believe that Jesus is with us always and we can do all things through Him- then our victory has already been secured. Others may choose to put labels on us or be quick to judge without all of the facts, but as one of my single dads so perfectly put it, “Just because she left me doesn’t mean He will too.” Brokenness may hurt when it’s fresh, but it is only when a wound is left unattended that it can become infected. God does not see us as the world sees us; He doesn’t even see us as we see ourselves sometimes. Hold fast to His Word tonight, knowing that in Him, all of those promises are “Yes” and “Amen”.

So, going back to my original question: *Are we viewing single fathers the way we should be?*

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