Karen’s Kounsel

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**It is much easier to become a father than to be one**.

**Kent Nerburn**

Last month we celebrated Mother’s Day. Moms get lots of attention on that day – flowers, cards, gifts, and all kinds of fond sharing of feelings and memories. This month was Father’s Day. It is accompanied by a little less hoopla. Dads don’t tend to receive quite as much attention and sentiment unless they have already passed from this life. The trend on TV for the last 20 or more years has mostly pictured fathers as either uninvolved or too dumb to be of much use. Most sitcoms give them little respect and the media kids give them even less. Dramas often portray them as absent or deadbeat. But in many of these shows the children and long suffering moms go on to thrive and triumph.

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That would almost lead one to believe that fathers aren’t all that necessary or important. But, as usual, the media and society in general have it wrong. Dads – you are important, in fact you are vital to your children’s welfare. Let me give you a few facts. Families who have fathers present in the home experience less delinquency and less promiscuity. When fathers are involved, kids get better grades, have less chance of being a dropout, have a greater enjoyment of school, are involved in more extracurricular activities, and have less chance of drug abuse, or becoming a runaway. Without a father in the home, a family is far more likely to be below the poverty level, be at risk for teen pregnancy and abuse of alcohol or drugs.

Sounds like in today’s world dads who will step up to the plate and be dads are imperative. Don’t buy into the hype that says otherwise. Below are a few tips to help you along the way:

1. Love their mom. If you are married, the best thing you can do is to show your children that you cherish your wife. It gives an example to your sons that teaches them how to treat their own wives someday. It gives your daughters the idea that they should be treated with dignity and respect when they choose a boyfriend and eventually a mate. If you were not, or are no longer married to their mother, still treat her with respect and dignity. Whatever differences you might have need to take a backseat to the welfare of your children. They need to feel a sense of safety and stability. It is a great gift to be able to give them.
2. Be an example. While it is important to teach your children and convey to them your values in words, if your actions don’t follow, they will have little meaning. Know that they watch you and want to emulate you. They will take lessons on how to treat others, the ethics of how to deal with finances, beliefs on generosity, race relations, and a whole spectrum of topics by what they see you **do**.

**My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it.** **Clarence Budington Kelland**

1. Be a spiritual leader. An earthly father shows a child how to think about his heavenly Father. Show *them* how to relate to Him by the way *you* relate to Him. Talk to them about your faith. Give them a heritage of belief and spirituality. It will take them through the ups and downs and the difficulties of life.
2. Communicate with them. In matters other than spiritual, be someone they can come to when they are in trouble. Let them know that they can talk with you about the issues in life that confuse them. Listen to them. That is the other half of communication. You will be amazed at what they are thinking and how much they understand if you take the time to really hear them. Most kids give more thought to life than we ever realize. Be the one that they can tell anything to and know that you will hear them out
3. Spend time with them. Enjoy them. Know them. No matter how pressing your job or career may be, it will not outlast or outshine your relationship with your kids. Is the ballgame on TV going to leave you with as much lasting pleasure as playing catch with your son out in the back yard? How does that paperwork you brought home weigh in the balance with taking a moment to read your daughter a story before she goes to bed? When you make those decisions in the everydayness of life, give some thought to what will last.

**Sometimes the poorest man leaves his children the richest inheritance.**

**Ruth E. Renkel**

1. Don’t be afraid to stand firm. It’s important for your kids to know who is in charge. It actually makes them feel safe. When they push and push and push your limits they are trying to find out if there are any. Set boundaries that will keep them safe and don’t worry if they are momentarily angry. When a yard if fenced in, it helps to keep predators out and it also keeps little children from running out in the street in front of cars. That is what your firm boundaries will do for them. They may try to climb over from time to time, but they will know that you love them enough to put the fence up no matter what kind of fit they pitch.
2. And you do all of these things because? Because you love them. Above all love them. Love will make up for the mistakes you are bound to make. Love will help you to do what is best for them instead of what is easier for you. Love will pull you away from the TV when you are tired. Love will show you how to imitate your Father in heaven who is the perfect example. What a privilege it is to be a father.

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**Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.** [**1 John 3:1**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John+3:1&version=KJV)