

Life Lessons

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7 Things Kids Want to Tell Their Dad

1. I want you to spend time with me. There is a modern myth that says “quality time is as good as quantity time.” The truth is that quality time comes out of quantity time. Children know the difference if all they receive from you is “quality” time but no involvement in the day-to-day affairs of their lives. Kids spell love T-I-M-E. Dads, whatever you enjoy doing, let the kids tag along.

2. I want to see you love Mom. One of the best ways to show love to your children is to show love and respect to their mother. Kids want to see mom and dad getting along and demonstrating their love for each other. The best way our children feel secure is for them to see Dad love Mom. The Scripture teaches men to treat their wives with respect or risk their prayers not making it past the ceiling! (1 Peter 3:7)

3. I want your encouragement. Even kids can criticize and complain. They want more encouragement and less criticism. Fathers, give your children someone to live UP to or else they will live down to your negative remarks of them. Catch your children doing something *right* and then brag about it to the world. Admit your faults when you are wrong, and they will learn to admit and overcome theirs. The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, once said, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” (Proverbs 18:21) Speak life over your children. Do not tell them how they are; prophesy how you want them to be!

4. I need discipline. Newton’s law teaches us that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. It is not the end of the world when we make wrong choices, but we all need boundaries. Our children need to be corrected and disciplined when they disobey. On the other hand, children need to be praised and rewarded for doing what is right. Discipline is an inseparable part of love.

5. I need a role model. This is huge. Famous American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “What you do speaks so loud

that I cannot hear what you say.” Children will copy your actions more quickly than they will hear your words. Do not be the father who is “super–this” or “super–that” in front of others, but turns into a monster at home. This will turn children against God (and you) faster than you can imagine. Be *consistently* kind, gentle, and a man of peace and integrity – especially to your children and their mother.

6. Respect my individuality. One of the phrases kids hate is, “Why can’t you be more like your brother or sister or so-and-so?” I tell you, there is nothing more damaging to your children than to compare and prefer one child over the other. Each of your children is unique and wears a tag that reads, “Handmade by Almighty God.” Treat them as such. Every so often, I whisper into my oldest daughter’s ear, “You are the best. You are my favorite!” She does not know I tell the same thing to my other two kids! Dads, be creative to love and respect the individuality of your children.

7. Lighten up. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life.” (John 10:10) Dads, no matter what kind of stress you have outside the house, do not bring it home. It is time to stop being a thermometer and start being the thermostat at home. You would not allow an intruder to invade your house. Why would you allow anger, rebellion, and quarrels to steal the joy in your home? Make your home a fun, loving environment in which to live. Turn off the TV, get off the internet, and focus on an activity together as a family.

Dad, you have what it takes! If you need help, you have a role model – your heavenly Father. You are God’s very own representative in your home. Remember, what your kids see in you is what they will grow up believing God is like. What picture of God do your kids see in you?

Happy Father’s Day!