

# SESSION FOUR



# THE DAD FACTOR



# 1 Why Is Dad So Important?

A. Dad is \_\_\_\_\_!

“ Upon all the rocks on which we build our lives, family is the most important, and we are called to recognize and honor how critical every father is to that foundation.<sup>1</sup> **President Barack Obama**

B. The positive \_\_\_\_\_ of dad in a family shapes in many ways, a healthy masculinity in his sons and a healthy femininity in his daughters.

“ As a father, the good family man is not perfect. But he is good enough to be irreplaceable. He is a father on the premises. He knows that nothing can substitute for him. Nothing. He would never consider himself ‘not that important’ to his children. He is in fact essential.<sup>2</sup> **David Blankenhorn**

C. The Old Testament ends surprisingly with an important word about dads.

“ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse. **Malachi 4:6**

1

(Continued...)

**D. Making the impact of dad personal:**

- What one or two words (or phrases) come to mind when you think about your dad?  
Write them in the space below.

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- What words do you want your children to say about you 20 years from now?  
Write them down below.

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2

## Three Types of Dads

**A. The \_\_\_\_\_ dad.**

- Our society has an increasing number of men who are clueless about fatherhood and what children need in a dad.
- Their absence, neglect, irresponsibility, and parenting ignorance unleash pain, dysfunctional and hurtful behaviors, and long-lasting psychological wounds onto their children. Over half of the fathers in America today could be labeled “problematic”.

## 2

(Continued...)

### B. The \_\_\_\_\_ dad.

- Many dads want the best for their children and seek to give it.
- Sometimes, however, a good dad's efforts fail to get good results. Why?
- Often it's because this dad lacks understanding. His words and actions, however sincere, may still fail to connect rightly with his child's heart and emotions, or miss critical needs his child has in terms of affirmation, direction, gender understanding, spiritual insight, or life skills. As much as he tries to be a good dad, these "misses" can unintentionally hurt his child and bring on negative reactions, shortcomings, and problems.
- The good dad needs more than good effort. He needs smart effort.

### C. The \_\_\_\_\_ dad.

#### THREE THINGS THE SMART DAD HAS OTHER DADS DON'T:

- He has acquired from various sources (the Bible, books, videos, seminars, other successful dads, etc.) sound understanding of what his children need most from him as a dad.
- He has developed (or adopted) an intentional " \_\_\_\_\_ " for meeting those needs.
  - It's a big picture plan that covers the years his kids are at home.
  - It's a plan with practical specifics, key dates, and measurable results.
  - It's a plan that is best written out and periodically reviewed.



# A Sample Dad Plan

## The Smart Dad

Your Child's Age

He Knows His Son/Daughter Needs

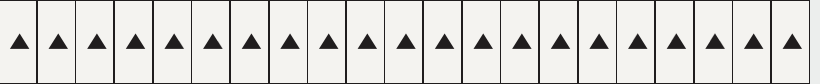
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

### TO SEE...

Dad's Character/Spiritual Life



Dad Loving Mom

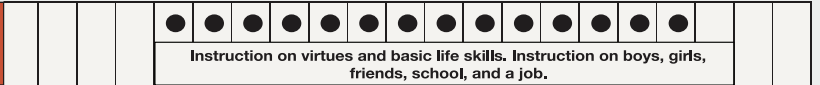


### TO RECEIVE...

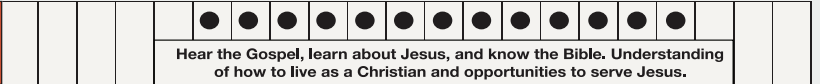
Affirming Encouragement



Manhood/Womanhood Instruction

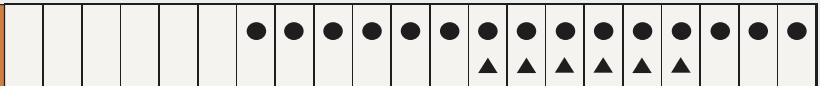


Jesus in His/Her Life



### TO EXPERIENCE...

Special One-on-One Times



Manhood Ceremonies for His Son +



### TO HEAR...

"I love you"



"I'm proud of you"



"I admire you..."



- ▲ Denotes a year where this item is especially important to your child's life.
- Denotes a year where there are special opportunities for you and your child.
- + For creating powerful ceremonies, see the book *Raising a Modern-Day Knight* by Robert Lewis <sup>3</sup>

## 2

(Continued...)

- He has committed himself to “dad plan” \_\_\_\_\_.
- He knows “follow through” best happens when his plan includes other dads who are as committed as he is to raising their children well.
- He knows while a plan can’t guarantee a great outcome with his children, it will significantly increase that possibility.
- He regularly calls on God to help him be the best dad he can be. But when he fails his children (and he will), he asks God for grace to make up for his dad mistakes.

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**Healthy, well-adjusted sons and daughters don’t just happen. Smart dads, joined to God, make it happen!**

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## 3

### Helpful Advice to Fathers with Parenting Challenges

**A. If you’re a dad “disconnected” personally and emotionally from your son or daughter, know it’s \_\_\_\_\_ to close this gap no matter how old they are.**

- Be courageous and request a meeting.
- Declare your love, express genuine sorrow over your separation, ask forgiveness where necessary, and explore ways to move forward.
- Reconnecting may require a series of meetings. Be open to that. Resist pressing for immediate reconciliation if your son or daughter is not ready.

**B. If you’re a single dad through divorce or death, or a dad with a blended family, don’t \_\_\_\_\_ at your situation. Instead, seek outside help and wisdom to build a sound parenting strategy for going forward.**

- Read helpful books and expand your horizons.
- Talk to successful single and blended-family dads. Let their experiences mentor you.
- Humble yourself and ask forgiveness where necessary, to repair damaged relationships with your kids.

## 4

## Helpful Advice to Sons with a Dad Wound

### A. Approach your dad wound \_\_\_\_\_.

- Find out what your dad's story was with his dad. Often, knowing your dad's story helps with understanding how he wounded you.
- Admit the truth about your wound. Admit not just how dad hurt you, but also what you lost as a son by him not being the dad you wanted him to be.
- Choose to \_\_\_\_\_ your dad.
- Choose to \_\_\_\_\_ your dad to God.

### B. Take the initiative with your dad. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ for him to come to you. Instead, courageously step forward and seek reconciliation with him while you can.

### C. Ask your dad to \_\_\_\_\_ you. If you never heard him say to you, "I love you" or "I'm proud of you"; then go to him and courageously ask him for those blessings.

### D. Reclaim the relationship you missed with your dad by becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ dad that blesses your children.

### E. If you know a man who never knew his dad, or a man who was rejected by his dad, consider asking some men he admires to join you in coming together and speaking a special blessing of affirmation and admiration over his life.

## Your Table Discussion Questions

1. What words came to mind when you were asked to think about your dad (1/D)? Explain. What words did you write down that you would want your children (or future children) to say about you 20 years from now? Why those words?
2. Did you hear anything in today's session that could help you be a better dad? What was it? Explain. Also, was there anything you heard today that called up something that needs attention right now from you with your children? Explain.
3. As a son, did you get what you needed from your dad? If not, what did you miss? Is it possible to reclaim some of what you missed now? How? If not, what still needs to happen to make peace with your dad?



## Your “BetterMan” Question



Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes, and then answer the following question: What possible action step could I take from this session that could make me a better man? Write your answer down in the space below.

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