

THE INTENTIONAL FATHER

Five Types of Fathers — and the One Worth Becoming

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The Journey to Fatherhood

Stage 1 — Born MALE

You didn't choose your biology. God did. Maleness is biological; manhood is moral. One is assigned, the other is achieved.

Stage 2 — Grow as a BOY

Boyhood (birth to ~13) is marked by play, discovery, and wonder. But the body growing does not mean the boy grew. Every healthy culture understood that boys do not become men automatically — they must be initiated by older men who have already crossed the threshold.

Stage 3 — Choose to Become a MAN

A boy asks, "What do I want?" A man asks, "What is required of me?" A boy becomes a man when another man tells him and shows him. A man takes responsibility. He is not passive, not aggressive — he is assertive.

Stage 4 — Marry and Become a HUSBAND

Marriage is not the finish line of manhood; it is the first major test of it. A husband lays down the full weight of his manhood in service of one woman and what God builds through her.

Stage 5 — Graduate to FATHERHOOD

Fatherhood is not an extension of husbandhood — it is a graduation into something weightier, more permanent, something that outlasts you by generations. Just because you have a child does not make you a great father. That requires intention.

1 FIVE TYPES OF FATHERS

The Irresponsible Father (Eli)

Absent, uninvolved, no-show. Even if physically present, emotionally and spiritually checked out. Did not confront sin in his house. His passivity became a generational curse.

The Ignorant Father (Isaac)

Responsible but completely unaware. Never picks up a book. Not engaged. Loved based on personal taste, not spiritual discernment — disconnected from what God had spoken over his children.

The Inconsistent Father (David)

So focused on career and position that he overcompensates with vacations and gifts, but is gone emotionally. Present but not there. His sons had no stable model for how a man handles failure, sin, or conflict.

The Involved Father (Job)

Present and active. Regular rhythm of intercession for his children. Protective and generous. Yet primarily ritual-based rather than truly relational and formational.

The Intentional Father (Joseph)

Involved AND intentional. Not just physically in the room, but mentally and spiritually present. Sought God's will for the child. Acted on revelation immediately. Raised a child not as his own possession, but as a loan from God.

2 WHAT DOES AN INTENTIONAL FATHER DO?

1. He AFFIRMS His Children

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:17

God affirmed Jesus before a single public miracle. Affirmation came before performance. Children who are never affirmed by their fathers spend their adult lives auditioning for an audience that is no longer in the room.

PRACTICALLY:

- Say it out loud — not just in your head
- Affirm character, not just achievement: "I saw how you handled that" matters more than "great game"
- Write it down: a letter, a note in a Bible you pass on
- Do it publicly when the moment calls — don't make your child wonder if you're proud of them in front of others

2. He PROVIDES For His Children

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8

Provision is more than a paycheck. It is the daily act of saying: I am here and I am responsible for you. Financial provision is the floor, not the ceiling.

PRACTICALLY:

- Meet financial provision without excuse. That is the floor.
- Provide emotional safety — your children should be able to bring you their worst day
- Provide spiritual covering — someone in the house should be praying and believing when no one else is
- Provide presence — there is no substitute for being in the room, mind and body

3. He INSTRUCTS His Children

Hear, my children, the instruction of a father... for I give you good doctrine: do not forsake my law.

Proverbs 4:1-2

The government did not raise your children. The school did not raise your children. The algorithm did not raise your children. An un instructed child does not raise himself — he gets instructed by whatever is loudest in his environment.

God did not ask the government to instill doctrine in your kids. That is the responsibility of the father and the mother. The youth group and the church come alongside to reinforce what parents are doing — not to replace it.

PRACTICALLY:

- You don't need a curriculum — you need a rhythm of conversation
- Teach in the moment: the drive home, the dinner table, the hard situation unfolding in real time
- Don't outsource what matters most — sex, money, faith, identity — let someone else explain first
- Let them see you learning — a teachable father teaches more than one who pretends to have arrived

4. He DISCIPLINES His Children

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Proverbs 13:24

Discipline is an act of love, not anger. The father who never disciplines doesn't have a peaceful house — he has an unguarded one. Most discipline problems are not discipline problems — they are consistency problems.

PRACTICALLY:

- Discipline is most effective when the relationship is strong — invest in connection so correction lands
- Correction without explanation produces compliance without understanding
- Follow through — the threat you don't keep teaches your child that your words mean nothing
- The goal of discipline is not a well-behaved child; it is a self-governing adult

5. He Does NOT Provoke His Children

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

There is a specific sin of fathering that creates rage in children. What provokes? Demanding obedience while offering no relationship. Correcting without affirming. Using Scripture as a weapon in conflict. Comparing them to a sibling. Speaking death over their future.

PRACTICALLY:

- Don't discipline in anger — wait until you are regulated before you correct
- Don't use "honor your father and mother" mid-conflict — that is manipulation, not Scripture
- As they become adults, shift from authority to influence — knock before you enter, ask before you assume

3 JOSEPH: THE MODEL OF AN INTENTIONAL FATHER

Joseph never preached a sermon. He never wrote a letter that made it into the canon. He is one of the most silent figures in all of Scripture. But he raised someone who changed everything.

1. Love Your Woman and Treat Her With Honor

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

Matthew 1:19 NKJV

Joseph had every legal and social right to walk away. Instead, his instinct was to cover Mary, not expose her. The way you treat your wife is the first fatherhood lesson your children will ever receive.

FOR THE MODERN DAD:

- Speak well of your wife in front of your kids and in front of other men
- Don't let your children disrespect their mother and call it staying out of it
- Resolve conflict in a way your kids could watch and not be afraid
- The security of your home rises and falls on the health of that marriage

2. Stay Sensitive to God's Voice — It Will Protect Your Family

Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.

Matthew 2:13 NKJV

Joseph received four angelic messages in dreams and acted immediately every time. No delay. No demand for 27 confirmations. He was not a pastor or a priest, just an average man who feared God and listened.

A father who cannot hear God cannot protect his family from what is coming. You cannot hear God if your inner life is constantly full of noise.

FOR THE MODERN DAD:

- Your family needs you spiritually alert, not just spiritually adjacent
- Don't let the economy, emotions, fear, or anger guide you. They can inform you, but the Spirit of God must guide you.
- Protect your prayer life the way you protect your income — it funds everything else
- God will give wisdom for your marriage, your children, and your work — but you have to ask

3. Don't Hand Your Kids Off to the Church and School and Check Out

So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple...

Luke 2:45–46 NKJV

Even the most faithful fathers can get moving so fast in the business of life that they lose track of where their child actually is. Jesus was not raised in the temple — he was raised in Joseph and Mary's home.

The youth group and the church are there to complement your parenting, not replace it. Nowhere in Proverbs did Solomon say "whatever your youth pastor tells you" — he said "whatever your father and mother tell you."

FOR THE MODERN DAD:

- Know where your kids are — not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually
- Don't assume the church is doing what you haven't
- Be the first voice in their life on faith, not the backup
- Don't check in with "how was church?" — ask a real question: "What are you actually wrestling with?"

4. Take Responsibility for Children Who Aren't Biologically Yours

And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

Matthew 1:16 NKJV

Joseph had no biological claim on Jesus. He could have done the minimum. Instead, he went all in. God chose him for that role, not despite the fact that Jesus wasn't his biological son, but knowing it fully and trusting Joseph anyway.

A biological connection makes you a father by nature. Choosing a child makes you a father by covenant. In the economy of God, that may be the highest form of fatherhood.

FOR THE MODERN DAD:

- Your stepchild is watching to see if you stay. Stay.
- Foster care and adoption are theological statements about how God fathers us
- You don't have to have produced a child to leave a mark on them that lasts a lifetime

5. Your Kids Are a Loan From God — Raise Them for His Purpose, Then Release Them

Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?

Luke 2:49 NKJV

Joseph raised the Son of God and then released him. Every child you hold is on loan. They came through you, not from you. The intentional father raises his children toward God's purpose — and then gets out of the way.

Don't make your children extensions of your dreams, passions, and visions. Check with their Heavenly Father about what plans and goals He has for them — then realign.

FOR THE MODERN DAD:

- Your job is to prepare them for their calling, not draft them into yours
- The goal of intentional fatherhood is to work yourself out of a job
- Pray specifically about who your child is becoming, not just what you want them to become
- When the moment of release comes, let it be a blessing, not a wound

4 CLOSING

The Holy Spirit wants to take the weight. He wants to give you direction, wisdom, and strength to be a father that honors Him. Not a copy of your own father if he fell short, but a father that honors God.

It is not enough to be present. You have to be intentional.