

The Power of Fatherhood

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I was struck by a teen whose father died recently. As I talked with him I felt I knew his dad. I could see and hear the time invested as the father's values oozed out of the son. Things that took me years to learn, as an adult on my own, this teen already knew with confidence. This parent had done nothing that we would call heroic. He made an investment that paid off with eternal dividends. The father had been very candid about his own failings in the past as lessons for the son to learn. He had been there almost daily to be involved in his son's activities. He cared about every missed pitch, lost ball, poor/great grade and scuffed knee as if it were his own. His father had shown him by example, by training, and by encouragement. They had faced the world together. Now the boy was truly ready to face the world on his own.

Yes, he will miss his dad. Yes, it would have been great to have him teach, train and share life some more –as our learning is never over, it just changes content. His father would be proud of him now. I wondered if he knew how big an influence he had on his son. This leads me to wonder about my influence on my own son, and the legacy I will leave.

As he faces his first Father's Day without Dad, he is very sad, but no longer overwhelmed with grief. With skepticism, I inquired into his confidence. What I found was consistent, realistic and solid beliefs. It wasn't a set of religious platitudes. He knows that his Dad is in heaven because his Dad talked about it for years and made sure his son knew the way with certainty. The transformation of one man by God has spread to another. Through the crushing grief of this teen came the sweet aroma of his faith and following of Christ. The faith of this teen has not been shaken by his father's death. It has been strengthened – partly due to the example of his earthly father who introduced him to the strength of the Heavenly father. Dad's faith and values lives on in the life of this confident young man, a testimony to the power of fatherhood.