



Bulletin

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Hooray for Dads!

WHAT WOULD ALIENS THINK?

BY JIM DALY

IF ALIENS LANDED ON EARTH, I WONDER WHAT THEY'D BELIEVE about dads. If Hollywood was their only guide, they'd probably think fathers were buffoons. Dads are goofy and always one step behind their smarter, cleverer teenagers. They can't build things or open a box without spilling the contents everywhere.

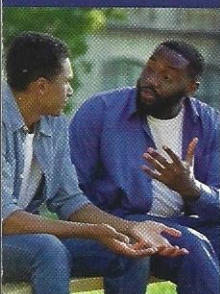
But if aliens could see inside American homes, they would discover something entirely different. Dads are the family "super-heroes"—they fix crashed bicycles, help their teenagers learn to drive and check out strange sounds in the middle of the night.

And if those aliens understood research, they'd learn that homes with dads are significantly more stable. Those families are better off financially, emotionally and psychologically. In almost every measurement, children are healthier and happier, and they *thrive* when Dad is present and engaged in their lives.

Good dads model for their children how to live—with strength and courage, and with humility and grace.

If aliens landed on earth, I think they'd conclude overall that this earthling called "Dad" is a lot more like Mr. Incredible than Clark Griswold.

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**Tough
Questions
from Kids**

**Where can
I find some
friends?**



THE GIFT OF RESPECT ON FATHER'S DAY

My husband, Greg, and I were attending our weekly marriage group. The food was great, and the company even better . . . but I have to confess the teaching was difficult for me. Not because the teaching wasn't great, but because of the conviction it brought to my heart.

The primary verse presented that evening was familiar—Ephesians 5:33.

“Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” There it was, straight from the Word of God, teaching that men are called to love their wives and wives are called to respect their husbands.

This Father's Day, I cannot help but think there's no greater gift for Dad than respect—both for the day and in the months that follow.

Here are a few things that might help with your endeavor:

- Every day be on the lookout for one thing in your husband's behavior for which you can praise him. It can be as simple as brushing his teeth. Or maybe it's his faithfulness to go to work each day and be a great provider. Or maybe it's simply emptying the dishwasher. If you look for praiseworthy behavior, you will find it! Consider writing it down on a list of what you most admire about your husband. Encourage your kids to do the same.
- Offer your husband words of encouragement and affirmation—maybe even at the dinner table in front of your children. Consider inviting your children to share as well.
- When you are alone with your kids, always talk positively about your husband. Tell them how much you appreciate their dad.
- When you blow it by speaking to your husband in dishonoring ways, simply “clean it up.” Acknowledge that you were wrong and ask your husband to forgive you.
- Commit to honoring and respecting your husband, regardless of what he does or does not do in response to your respect. He is worthy of honor because his value does not change based on his behavior. Scripture makes it clear that a person's value does not change because of his or her actions (Genesis 1:27; Exodus 19:5; Isaiah 43:4).
- Ask the Lord for strength and self-control and for His love to abundantly flow through you toward your husband.



—Erin Smalley

FUN SUMMER ADVENTURES (THAT DON'T BREAK THE BANK)

One of our family's values has long been to trade the "stuff" of life for experiences together. That's often easier said than done.

We've come to appreciate the valuable payoff in prioritizing shared adventures and experiences—a deep bonding with one another and family memories that will last a lifetime. We've also discovered that committing to regular family adventures doesn't have to cost a fortune.

Even if you don't live near a big city or tourist area, there are likely a number of interesting events and places to stay within a 45-minute drive from home. Put aside weekend chores and camp out in your backyard or living room, and then spend the next day exploring your hometown. Discuss with your family what means the most to them when it comes to time together.

You needn't spend unnecessary money on something that doesn't speak to your family's sense of adventure. Aim to keep everyone's expectations realistic. Remain flexible, brainstorm alternatives together and remember the old saying: Sometimes the journey really is the destination.

—Sami Cone



IT'S SUMMERTIME! NOW WHAT?

As a struggling single mom, I dreaded the stress of summers. Summertime simply meant school was out, evenings were longer, I'd need extra funds and I'd be worried about how to keep my kids entertained while I was at work.

But I learned a few things about parenting alone while school is out. These tips might help you, too:

Check with extended family members, even friends and neighbors, to see if they can help. They may not be aware of your struggle to provide quality care for your kids. In appreciation for their help, you and your kids can bake cookies to share. Your children can also express gratitude by doing odd jobs—like watering plants or walking dogs—for friends and family.

Make summer special by planning evening and weekend activities you can do with your children. Develop a chore schedule so your kids are done early in the evening, and you'll have more time to do things together.

And don't forget to plan things to do at home. You can do crafts, explore in the backyard and enjoy cooking projects together.

—Linda Ranson Jacobs

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

As a couple, when should we agree to disagree?

ANSWER:

Many couples assume that if they're truly compatible and in love, they'll agree on practically everything. They may think that a difference of opinion is a sign of drifting apart or settling for second best. That's a faulty judgment based on unrealistic expectations.

Differences are often what attracted a couple to one another in the first place. Sharing all opinions and preferences isn't going to happen. Agreeing to disagree, when it's appropriate, is realistic—and can help each of you appreciate the other's uniqueness.

If you have children, the way you disagree can set

a good example. Children aren't usually confused or upset by parents disagreeing, but may feel threatened by behavior they observe when there's no resolution.

Certain decisions—such as having children, setting life goals and choosing where to live—may require outside help to negotiate. Other cases—whether to have pets, where to go on vacation, how much to spend on dining out, who cleans the bathrooms—may be easier to work out on your own. The key seems to be your willingness to not get defensive or insist on winning.

When an unresolved disagreement results in either of you harboring resentments, agreeing to disagree may only be a cover for

“stuffing” feelings. If that happens, get help so the resentment can be released.

Here are some key principles to keep in mind:

- Don't expect to agree on everything.
- Convey your desire without anger and without having to be “right.”
- Ask yourself if you're being selfish.
- Realize that your relationship, not the issue, is most important.
- Try not to take things too personally.
- Remember that building a relationship takes time.
- Forgive, forgive, forgive.
- Keep a sense of humor.

(Adapted from *The First Five Years of Marriage*, general editors Phillip J. Swihart and Wilford Wooten.)

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

One place to look is in a group or activity. If you play sports or sing in a choir, for example, you probably will find friends. Also consider your church and neighborhood. Maybe there's a new family in your neighborhood or church with a child your age. People like that need friends. Perhaps you can be a friend to them.

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