

What values do you think a father should teach his son? Are you teaching those values to your son?

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closing the cellar door, he stood vigil on the cellar steps.

I went to the back of the dugout, lay down, and fell asleep. What did I have to fear? My father was on the steps of the storm cellar!

A father can provide many kinds of protection, not just of a physical nature. The important thing is to be there when your son needs you.

Discipline

Children kept within the bounds of certain restrictions and guidelines are happier than those without restriction. Believe me, they will test those bounds over and over again. But they feel more secure and more loved when there is discipline.

Discipline should not be authoritarian in nature; it must be seasoned with love.

Punishment should never be given in anger or frustration.

Values

What are the most important values you think a father should teach his son? Are you teaching those values to your son?

Truman Dollar states in *Teenage Rebellion*, "In our survey, 100 young people were asked, 'Does your father personally communicate to you his moral and spiritual ideas?' Only two answered yes."

As Christians most of us know what we consider important. We must spend more time sharing these with our sons. What a tragedy for a boy to grow up not knowing what his father believed was important.

Respect

Each boy is an individual and should be respected as a valuable member of the family. We should respect his right to express himself.

There are times when a boy badly needs someone to talk to—someone who will really listen. He may wish to talk out a problem, share an achievement, or complain of an injustice. At such times he needs someone to hear and to care.

Let him make decisions for himself. I realize there are areas which

involve the physical, mental, and moral welfare of our sons—areas which a conscientious father must control. However, there are many other areas in which a boy can make decisions—good or bad—that will affect his well-being. Boys who learn to make such decisions are better prepared for life. And it helps their father gain their respect.

Encourage your son to identify with you and the family. This will give him a sense of self-esteem or self-worth. A father who makes his son feel unwanted and unimportant has driven a wedge into a good father-son relationship.

Laughter

I think perhaps some of the most memorable times I have spent with my son were times of laughter: laughter at the humor of a situation, laughter at ourselves, laughter from the joy of sharing adventure and fun.

An overly serious father will have difficulty in making his children feel comfortable around him.

The other day I heard a boy pay his father a high compliment. He said, "My dad is a lot of fun to be with." I would like to be remembered that way.

Example

Some things can be taught only by example. Your son's attitude toward his family, circumstances, people, religion, and life in general will reflect greatly upon your own attitude.

A boy made a trip around town with his father. During the drive he observed the comments his father made about other drivers. Upon arriving home he exclaimed to his mother, "Guess what? We passed five idiots, four dumb dumbs, and three knuckleheads!"

Your son will remember your actions and attitudes long after your words are forgotten. To paraphrase a famous sage, "What you are speaks so loud your son can't hear a word you're saying."

The closeness of home relations seems to exaggerate our flaws and shortcomings. When we should be at

our best, we often demonstrate our worst. Being a good example may not always come easily, but it pays high dividends in father-son relationships.

Another need is spiritual example. Too often it is left to the mother to give such guidance. It should be the father's role. Dad, your son should have the privilege of hearing you pray, hearing you read the Bible, seeing you lead the family in spiritual matters.

Love and understanding

A Christian father must make his son feel he is loved and that he is trying to understand his needs and problems. The son must feel loved when he is bad as well as when he is good. (This does not exclude discipline.) When he faces the rough and tumble of life, he must know home is a haven where he can always find love.

Your son needs understanding. The stresses, temptations, and obstacles a boy faces do not make it easy for him in today's world. The one person he should be able to count on for support and understanding is his father.

Three of the most important and most influential words in the English language are, "I love you." Say them often to your son and back them up with your actions.

Good memories

I heard a touching story of a father and son who had an exciting trip together. Both agreed it was a highlight of their lives. Returning home they made a pact. If there was ever difficulty between them in the future, they would use a code word that would remind them of this time together. Many times they used this word to smooth the rough waters of disagreement and resentment.

Periodically plan a special trip for you and your son; it may be the most valuable time of your life. Good memories will cement father-son relationships better than anything I know. Start building some now!

