

## CHAPTER 18 - His Fatherhood

from The Power of a Praying Wife by Stormie Omartian

**When I asked my husband to share with me his deepest fears, one of the things he mentioned was the fear of not being a good father.** “I believe it’s something men in general tend to fear,” he said. “We get so caught up in doing what we do in our work that we’re afraid we haven’t done enough with our children. Or we’re afraid we haven’t done it well enough, or we’re missing something. It becomes even more of a problem with teenagers. We fear we can’t communicate with them because we’ll be perceived as old and irrelevant.”

I was touched by his perspective and resolved to pray for him to be a good father. I believe my prayers made a difference because I saw him become more patient with our children and less insecure about his own parenting skills. He grew increasingly relaxed and able to enjoy them. He became less guilt-ridden or angry when it was necessary to discipline them and more able to speak wisdom powerfully into their lives. He now sees that any flaw in our children is not necessarily a reflection of his value as a father.

**Thoughts of failure and inadequacy are what cause so many fathers to give up, leave, become overbearing from trying too hard, or develop a passive attitude and fade into the background of their children’s lives.** It can be especially overwhelming to a man who already feels like a failure in other areas. Mothers get overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy, too, but only the most deeply disturbed ever abandon, ignore, or hurt their children. That’s because we have the opportunity from the moment of conception to pour so much of ourselves into our children’s lives. We carry them in the womb, we nurse and nurture them as newborns, we guide and teach and love them so much that we have a full sense of bonding from the start. Fathers don’t have that privilege and often feel they are starting on the outside, trying to work their way in. If they are also spending a great amount of time and energy trying to establish their careers, they can easily feel hopelessly removed and ineffectual. Our prayers can help redeem this situation.

**Have you ever had someone pray for you when you couldn’t think straight, and after they prayed you had complete clarity and vision?** I’ve experienced that countless times. I believe this is what can happen for our husbands when we pray about their parenting. If they are tortured with doubt and burdened by a sense of responsibility, we can minimize these feelings with our prayers. **Prayer can help them gain a clear perspective of what it means to be a good father, and open the door to Holy Spirit guidance on how to handle the parenting challenges that arise.**

My husband recalled a specific incident where he knew my prayers for him regarding his fatherhood had made a big difference. It happened when our son, Christopher, was about seven and we had caught him in a lie. We knew we had to deal with it, but we wanted a full confession from him along with a repentant heart. Neither was forthcoming at that moment. Michael wanted to teach him a lesson but didn’t know what to do, so he asked me to pray. While I was praying, it became very clear to him. As Chris watched, Michael drew a triangle and a picture of Satan, God, and Christopher, one at each of the points. He then described Satan’s plan for Chris, and God’s plan for Chris. He illustrated how lying was part of Satan’s plan that Chris was going along with. He described in detail the ultimate consequences of going along with Satan’s plans—which meant traveling on a spectrum away from God—and it shook Christopher up so badly that he broke down and confessed the lie with a completely repentant heart. Michael said he knew that without that clear picture from God he would not have been able to get through to his son with the depth he needed to.

**The best way for a man to be a good father is to get to know his heavenly Father and learn to imitate Him. The more time he spends in the Lord’s presence, being transformed into His likeness, the better influence he will be when he spends time with his children. He will have a father’s heart because he understands The Father’s heart.** This can be difficult if your husband didn’t have a good relationship with his earthly father. The way a man relates to his dad will often affect how he relates to his Father God. If he was abandoned by him, he may fear being abandoned by God. If his father was distant or uncaring, he may see God as distant and uncaring. If he doubted his father’s love, he may doubt his heavenly Father’s love. If he is angry with his father, he may be angry with his Father God as well. Events of the past with regard to his own dad can serve as a barrier that keeps him from truly knowing the Father’s love. This will carry over into his relationship with his children.

Pray that your husband grows into a greater understanding of his heavenly Father’s love and be healed of any misconceptions he has in his heart and mind about it. Where his father has failed him and he has blamed God, ask the

Lord to heal that enormous hurt. The Bible says, “Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness” (Proverbs 20:20). Unless forgiveness happens in his heart for his dad, he will be in the dark as to how to be the best father for his children. His father doesn’t have to be alive in order to right that relationship, because it’s what is in his own heart regarding his dad that matters. Pray that he will gain a right attitude toward his earthly father so nothing will stand in the way of his relationship with his Father God.

**Men don’t always realize how important they are to their children.** They sometimes feel they are only there to provide materially for them. But the importance of a father’s influence can never be underestimated. How he relates to his children will shape their lives for bad or for good. It will change his life forever, too. For if he fails as a father, he will always carry that sense of failure with him. If he succeeds, there will be no greater measure of success in his life.

## **PRAYER**

**Lord, teach (husband’s name) to be a good father. Where it was not modeled to him according to Your ways, heal those areas and help him to forgive his dad. Give him revelation of You and a hunger in his heart to really know You as his heavenly Father. Draw him close to spend time in Your presence so he can become more like You, and fully understand Your Father’s heart of compassion and love toward him. Grow that same heart in him for his children, Help him to balance mercy, judgment, and instruction the way You do. Though You require obedience, You are quick to acknowledge a repentant heart. Make him that way, too. Show him when to discipline and how. Help him to see that he who loves his child disciplines him promptly (Proverbs 13:24). May he never provoke his “children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). I pray we will be united in the rules we set for our children and be in full agreement as to how they are raised, I pray that there will be no strife or argument over how to handle them and the issues that surround their lives.**

**Give him skills of communication with his children. I pray he will not be stern, hard, cruel, cold, abusive, noncommunicative, passive, critical, weak, uninterested, neglectful, undependable, or uninvolved. Help him instead to be kind, loving, softhearted, warm, interested, affirming, affectionate, involved, strong, consistent, dependable, verbally communicative, understanding, and patient. May he require and inspire his children to honor him as their father so that their lives will be long and blessed.**

**Lord, I know we pass a spiritual inheritance to our children. Let the heritage he passes on be one rich in the fullness of Your Holy Spirit. Enable him to model clearly a walk of submission to Your laws. May he delight in his children and long to grow them up Your way. Being a good father is something he wants very much. I pray that You would give him the desire of his heart.**

## **POWER TOOLS**

Children’s children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father. - Proverbs 17:6

**For whom the LORD loves He corrects,** just as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:12

**The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice,** and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. - Proverbs 23:24

**Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.** - Proverbs 29:17

I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty. 2 Corinthians 6:18