

24/7 MEN

BEING INTENTIONAL IN 2024



BEING INTENTIONAL FATHERS

By W. A. Mills, Jr.

“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse [total destruction].”

Malachi 4:6 (NKJV/NIV)

THE PRINCIPLE

“The role of fatherhood is one of the most overlooked yet crucial roles in our society. The data and our experience could not be clearer. When a father is present, emotionally healthy, and involved in his child’s life, the child has a tremendous advantage in the world to navigate its complexities and challenges with joy and confidence.” Pastor Jon Tyson, *The Intentional Father*¹

INTRODUCTION

Properly raising young men and women is a massive need in our contemporary culture. We’re living in a time where men don’t know what it means to be men anymore, and women don’t know what it means to be women. There is total confusion and subsequent chaos due to a satanically-inspired identity crisis.

At the heart of our culture’s inability to raise boys into men and girls into women is an epidemic of fatherlessness. According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, children without fathers:

- are four times more likely to live in poverty.
- are more likely to suffer emotional and behavioral problems.
- have higher levels of aggressive behavior than children born into married homes.
- have two times the risk of infant mortality.
- are more likely to go to prison. Only one in five prison inmates grew up with their father present.
- are twice as likely to be involved in early sexual activity.²

A man's willingness to step up and intentionally father his sons and daughters is essential to leaving a legacy, not only in the life of his children but in the flourishing of his community, the advancement of his nation, and even the thriving of our world. Such was the spirit of Elijah, whose prophetic preaching would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, preempting destruction of the human family as God designed it.

Five Kinds of Fathers

Pastor Jon Tyson identifies five kinds of fathers in his book, *The Intentional Father*.³
Which of the following types best describes you?

1. **The Irresponsible Father** has literally zero involvement with his kids. He takes no responsibility, provides no child support, and contributes no meaningful support to the lives of his children, who may not even know who their father is.
2. **The Ignorant Father** has no idea of what he's doing and continually wreaks havoc in the lives of his children without even realizing it. He doesn't know anything about being a father and doesn't try to learn or improve. Hence, he projects his brokenness into the lives of his children.
3. **The Inconsistent Father** is torn by personal ambition. He can do better at fathering but instead prioritizes his job, career, and hobbies. Binges of selfishness are often followed by guilt and feeble attempts to fix everything, but in the end, there is no stable sense of security or identity passed down to his children.
4. **The Involved Father** shows up at sporting events and gets a lot of things right, but because of the busyness of life and the failure to ask the right questions, he never seeks to understand precisely who his children are and why God gave them to him. This is a noble dad, but one haunted by the sense that there is something more, another layer or level in his parenting.
5. **The Intentional Father** is deeply invested in discovering who his children are and how he can help them reach their redemptive potential. He seeks to understand the children God has given him and wants to form them into young persons who can fulfill their God-given purpose. He sees parenting as central to his call before God and does it with all his might. This kind of father leaves multigenerational blessings in the lives of his children.

FOUR BIBLICAL PORTRAITS OF AN INTENTIONAL FATHER⁴

1. He's a **LEADER**.

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 (NLT) 14 I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children. 15 Even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you. 16 So I urge you to imitate me.

Definition – He makes things happen.

Questions leaders ask:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we need to go?
3. What must we do to get there?

Focus – Objectives

How?

1. Modeling
2. Taking initiative
3. Setting direction
4. Ongoing evaluation

Stewardship – Morally responsible for the home before God.

2. He's a **PRIEST**.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NLT) 4 "Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. 5 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and, when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 8 Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Definition – He makes God known.

Questions priests ask:

1. Do my kids know God?
2. Do they have an accurate view of God?
3. Does our home honor God?
4. Are we growing in holiness?

Focus – Worship

How?

1. Modeling authentic worship.

2. Initiating family worship
3. Encouraging private worship

Stewardship – The spiritual climate of the home.

3. He's a **TEACHER**.

Ephesians 6:4 (NLT) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Definition – He imparts wisdom and builds character.

Questions teachers ask:

1. What do they need to know, do, and be?
2. How do they best learn?
3. When and how will I teach them in this season of life?

Focus – Wisdom

How?

1. Modeling a “Word-centered” life
2. Formal instruction
3. Informal instruction

Stewardship – The transfer of godly wisdom to the next generation

4. He's a **LOVER**.

Malachi 4:5-6 (NLT) 5 “Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. 6 His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

Definition – He gives people what they need most.

Questions lovers ask:

1. How are my kids “really” doing?
2. Do they sense my approval and acceptance?
3. Are we “connecting” at a deep level?

Focus – Relationships

How?

1. Modeling a loving relationship with God and wife
2. TIME
3. Providing tender love unconditionally
4. Providing tough love when necessary

Stewardship – The “issues of the heart” in the home.

APPLICATION

How do you become the intentional father your children need you to be?

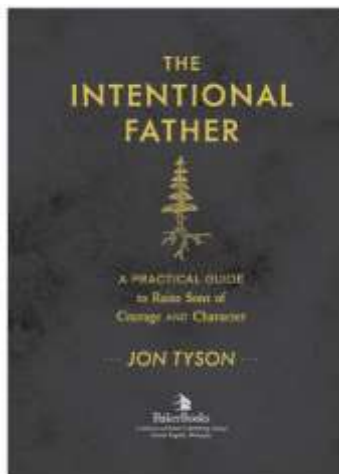
1. It must begin with your **THINKING**.
2. It only becomes real with **SUPPORT**.
3. It requires supernatural **GRACE**.
4. It is sustained by pondering the **FUTURE**.

Are you an intentional father? Do you have an intentional plan for how to guide, train, and teach your son/daughter to become a man/woman? Why not do a twenty-four-hour fast and dedicate that time to prayer? Write down the things that come to mind about how you were fathered and the kind of father you would like to be. Offer the years ahead to God, and ask for help in what's to come.

NOTES

1. Jon Tyson, *The Intentional Father: A Practical Guide to Raise Sons of Courage and Character*, Baker Books, 2021), 19
2. "The Proof Is In: Father Absence Harms Children," National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed November 3, 2020, <https://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistic>.
3. Jon Tyson, *The Intentional Father: A Practical Guide to Raise Sons of Courage and Character*, Baker Books, 2021), 32
4. Chip Ingram, "Portrait of a Father," *Living On The Edge*, 2024

FOR MORE STUDY



[The Intentional Father: A Practical Guide to Raise Sons of Courage and Character \(Includes Activities, Rites of Passage, and Steps for Parenting Boys. ... for Dads, Grandpas, and Expectant Fathers\): Jon Tyson, Kinnaman, David: 9780801018688: Amazon.com: Books](#)