

On Fathers and Sons

The two familial titles mentioned most in the Bible are fathers and sons. They are mentioned more, by far, than any other position within the family (wife, husband, mother, daughter, children, brother, or sister). This is not to imply that God sees, or man should consider, any of these other relationships as less precious, but the Father/Son relationship is very important in understanding God's relationship with Christ, His relationship with mankind, and men's relationships with the world.

The son is constantly positioned as an extension of the father, and the father that gives his son Godly direction, usually produces a son who eventually follows his example. The Bible says "Train up a child in the way he must go, *and when he is old* he will not depart from it." The father has historically been called into account for his family's wellbeing, spiritually and otherwise, so a good father that teaches a son well is apt to see a duplication of his household when he visits his son's. The same teaching reaches the daughter, but her position as a wife and mother was not designed to be the one whose headship influences the family to the same extent that a fully functioning husband and father does.

Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that our current condition, with so many single parent homes, has forced women to fill that fatherly role, or the children tend to suffer because she is ill-equipped to take the position she has not been trained to fill. Just as much of a problem is a dysfunctional or absent father. Such a man, displayed before his children, can cause a devastating effect on his family that can often take generations to overcome.

It is in the Father Son relationship that our investment in our children most directly assures a perpetuation of our likeness and our name to future generations. I love my daughter in a very special way, and I love my son in a special way as well; but I love them differently. I helped mold her. I shaped him. I protected her. I taught him to be a protector. I helped teach her to be a woman like the best I saw in her mother, and her grandmothers, great aunts, aunts, and cousins. I took charge of teaching him to be a better man than me.

It was not until my daughter, Tamika, was born, and I took on the mantle of fatherhood, that I fully understood the degree of love and protection that comes from our Heavenly Father. It was not until my son, Trevor, was born that I understood the need to be used of God to help shape a life to become my replacement in the cycle of life. I prayed he would become all the best of what I had ever hoped to be. From the physical, to the emotional, the intellectual, and the spiritual, I valued the opportunity to make a better “me”.

I have tried to represent The Father in the lives of my children, and it has been in my relationship with my children that I have come to fully appreciate how He deals with me. I have learned how He loves, because that is how I love my children; unconditionally. There may be rifts in the fellowship, but the love and the relationship never change. They might tick me off and lose my favor, but I have never felt merciless toward them. Their actions might not have deserved it, but my graciousness towards them has never been quenched. Even in the midst of all that love, I have never been reluctant to say “No” to their desires when my fatherly wisdom tells me that “Yes” will cause them harm. I want all the best for them: the best of health, great success, comfort in wealth, and an overflowing of joy and happiness, but I can only provide that which I am able to. My Father deals with me in the same way, but He is limitless in His ability to provide, so when I try to imagine how much love drove the Father to send His only Son to save me, I think on the love I have for my children and try to magnify it beyond measure and understand that I still fall short of comprehending the love of God towards us.

Still the father/son relationship is more like the God/mankind relationship than any other. It is the only relationship where one of the primary objectives is to replicate the original. Mankind was made in the image of God. Sons are expected to closely resemble their fathers, and when that happens, there is great joy or, in some cases, lamentation. A good father/son relationship involves almost constant mentoring, with the objective of maximizing the son’s position in this world as a man.

It is amazing how closely my relationship with my son parallels my maturation process in the Lord. I want to share some of the

communication we have had over the years and you'll understand. Trevor was a division one caliber basketball player, so a lot of our communication was flavored by that experience. I will share the period beginning at his high school graduation to his becoming a father. I am also sharing some of my poetry written for my grand-sons. I pray that some young mother raising a son on her own might be able to teach her son through this. I pray that some young father without a good model might gain some insight on becoming a better father through this. I pray that some boy or some young man might get a better insight into manhood through this. I pray that these words encourage hearts and change lives, in the name of Jesus.

I Hope You Run the Bases Well

To My Grandson Christian Otis at 7

I hope you always get a hit when you come up to bat

And when it's time to play the field may you play well at that.

I hope you always play to win, but most of all play fair

And learn if you expect to win, you must faithfully prepare.

I hope that in your life you find, as well as in your games,

That in defeat or victory, you play the game the same.

I hope that every time you play, you always give your best;

And every time a challenge comes, you'll always pass the test.

I hope you heed your coaches well and take their good advice,

And trust in those who earn your trust, but keep your faith in Christ!

Of all the things I wish for you, that wish is number one

I Hope you run life's bases well, and hit a few home runs.



Christian Otis at 7

Potholes

As I was traveling down life's roads, things were running pretty smooth;
All was well within my life; I thought I'd found my groove.
When suddenly I feel a jolt that shakes my very soul
My vehicle shakes. I hit my brakes. I hit a huge pothole.

As I assess the damages, shock gives way to fear.
The road seems so much darker now, and no help seems near.
"I have no way to fix this mess; I have only worn out tools,
How did I miss the danger signs? I've been such a fool!"

Now what once was confidence has given way to doubt,
"I've assessed the situation; it seems there's no way out.
How could I have come this far and moved so well by plan,
To end up here all broken down? How can I start again?"

Suddenly my mind recalled this light I heard about,
They said I'd find one deep inside; if I just sought it out.
Without much thought I found myself dropping to my knees,
"Lord I've never really called on you, but now I'm asking please

"Lord, it seems I'm stuck in danger here in this place so dark and cold,
Everything was going smooth 'til I hit that huge pothole!
I know that you could help me make it through this night.
I have no help; my only hope is to hold onto Your light."

Suddenly there was a light, but not one I could see

Yet I knew that it was there, shining deep inside of me.
I can't begin to tell you of the joy that filled my soul
When I turned my face to Jesus, and gave Him the control.

Without a word He spoke of peace, this light within my soul,
Of how forever He's been there, and will never let me go.
He said I should remember that His word is ever true,
And when I call upon His name there's nothing I can't do.

So I began to build again, with broken worn out tools,
And found the more I sought the light, the more that I could do.
I used a lot of elbow grease, and scraped my hands a bit,
But I held on firmly to His light, and vowed to never quit.

In morning's light I looked upon, what seemed so hard to do,
I stood in awe; the truth sank in; by grace I made it through.
They were the darkest hours, in that cold and lonely time,
But every time I turned that wrench, His hand was guiding mine.

"I let you hit that pothole son to slow you down a bit,
So you could learn to trust in Me, and learn to never quit.
Now you can share with others what happened on this night;
How in your darkest hour you held onto the light.

Bleeding hands are merely signs of what I brought you through,
But the blood you see is mostly mine; I gave my all for you!
There will be other potholes in the middle of the night
But now you know to call My name, and hold on to My light!"