

A Father's Toolbox – You Already have What it Takes!
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I have a special message for fathers today – but if you're not a father – don't think you can just tune me out. The truths I will share in this message can revolutionize your life, your family and all your relationships. So – even though I'm mainly directing this to fathers – in can help everyone immensely.

I know that many times Mother's Day sermons build mothers up and Father's Day sermon beat fathers up. I'm not going to do that today dads – I'm going to build you up! So fathers - relax and enjoy!

The title of my sermon is A Father's Toolbox – and the subtitle is You Already Have What it Takes! If you're not sure you have what it takes to be a great father, you will be sure by the time I finish today.

There are several reasons that many fathers feel inadequate. For one thing, our culture picks on dads, especially the media. Research was recently conducted to see how TV portrays fatherhood. They reviewed every prime time show on the major networks and they discovered this: Fathers were 8 times more likely to be portrayed negatively compared to mothers. Unfortunately, when prime time television portrays a dad, it is usually either as incompetent or uninvolved.

But dads, please don't get your information from TV! Get your information about fatherhood from the greatest Father of all – your heavenly Father! And He says in 2 Peter 1:2-4

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises...

What I want you to see is that God has given us what it takes to succeed in life. He has given us everything we need to be the spouse and parent our family needs! You have God's grace – God's peace – God's knowledge and wisdom – God's Spirit – God's power – and God's great and precious promises!

You already have what it takes! So take heart – you can do this and you can do this well! God has given you the tools to be a great father.

My wife can tell you that I'm great at a lot of things – but I'm not a handyman. I'm not good at fixing things around the house. But I try! One of the things I hate is when there is a job I know I can do – but the tool I need to do that job is missing!

One thing I've learned is that half the job is having the right tools!

I've also learned that if you only have a hammer, you'll treat everything like a nail! That's what many of us do as fathers – just hammer everyone. But God has given you a toolbox full of everything you need to parent your children! You already have what it takes!

Another reason many fathers feel inadequate is because they did not have good role models to show them how to be fathers. So – we're going to look at the role model of our Heavenly Father today. Matthew 3 records the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. He had spent 30 years preparing and now it was time to go. Matthew 3:16-17 says:

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."

Jesus was about to enter into His ministry and He needed 2 things: He needed the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit, and He needed the spoken blessing of the Father. We all need the same things from our Heavenly Father and from our earthly fathers.

1- Fathers need to empower their children

The word empower means a lot of different things – but for today – I mean to give them the power of the Holy Spirit.

I know that in and of ourselves we don't have much power to pass on. But we are not operating in our own power! We have some power tools in our toolbox! We need to plug into God's power tools -- His Word and His Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 says:

We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ. It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.

Listen closely – we all feel unqualified - because we are!
We all feel inadequate – because we are!

In our own strength we can do nothing – but through Christ we can do all things!
We need to get our eyes off of our insufficiency and onto His sufficiency!
We need to get our eyes off of our weakness and onto His strength!
We need to get our focus off our inability and onto His ability!

We have the same Word and the same power of the Spirit that Father God gave to Jesus! Romans 8:11 says:

And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who

raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.

If you are a Christian – you have the same Spirit living in you that raised Jesus from the dead!

The same supernatural power is living in you!

The same supernatural wisdom in living in you!

It's not you – it's the Spirit of God living in you! And you can tap into that resurrection life and power. You have power tools in your toolbox! That same Spirit gives power gifts and these gifts are not just for church services!

We need the gift of prophecy in church – but we need to speak prophetic words over our family at home!

We need words of knowledge and wisdom in church – but we need knowledge and wisdom in our homes!

We need discerning of spirits at church – but we also need it at home!

We need faith and miracles and healings at church – but also at home!

The heavenly Father sent down supernatural power to Jesus when He was baptized – and fathers – your children need you to call down that power on their behalf!

There's a second thing the Heavenly Father did for Jesus - He spoke words of blessing over Him.

2- Fathers need to bless their children

The Father said to Jesus - *"This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."*

Parents - that's the basic message your children need to hear from you, "I love you and I'm proud of you." Say that after me – "I love you" – "I'm proud of you." See, you can do it.

Parent – your fundamental mission in life is to make sure your children know you love them. Married folks – your fundamental mission in life is to make sure your spouse knows you love them.

You do that by telling them and you do that by showing them. Say it and show it. Walk it and talk it. You can't say it too much or too often.

What I want you to understand is this: every boy asks 1 basic question. Every girl asks one basic question. If you know the answer to their question, and you answer that question correctly on a regular basis, you will be a success as a father. If any of us know the answers to these questions, we will be a success in relationships at home, at school, at work, wherever we go.

Let's think about the differences between boys and girls. I'm going to generalize here – so it may not be totally true of all children – but we generalize because things are generally true.

A lot has been said about the differences between men and women. You can see much of this in the behavior of boys and girls. Think about a playground. Boys are usually fighting wars, conquering kingdoms, or playing some sport. They want adventure. Boys are warriors. They want to fight and they want to win.

On the other hand, girls are usually standing around talking. They're examining how each other looks and talking about relationships. They say things like, "you're my best friend" or "you're not my friend anymore."

When they get older, the boys fight harder to win because they want the girls to notice them. The girls try to look as good as they can to get the boys to notice them. This observation of how boys and girls and men and women's behavior is leads us to this conclusion:

Every little boy wants one question answered: "Do I have what it takes?"

Every little girl wants one question answered: "Am I lovely and loveable?"

Your job as a father is to answer both those questions in the affirmative. "Son - yes, you have what it takes. Daughter - yes, you are lovely."

These questions need to be answered by the father. Unfortunately, these questions have been answered by our culture in crippling ways. The answer is almost always "No, you don't have what it takes or you're not worth fighting for." If we don't answer those questions for them, they will spend their lives trying to get it answered from whomever they can however they can.

That's why so many men are driven in life – going from job to job trying to succeed and it's never enough because they feel so inadequate – why? Because they don't have their father's blessing!

And that's why so many women are driven in life– going from relationship to relationship trying to be loved because they don't feel loveable.

Men and women are fundamentally different from a theological perspective and from a scientific perspective. You can even see it in the movies they like.

A man desires adventure - a battle to fight and a beauty to pursue.

At the same time, a woman wants to be pursued and to be fought for.

Women want to be loved – men want to be respected.

The Bible teaches this in Ephesians 5:33

Each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

There you have it – God tells us that women need to be loved and men need to be respected. Another way of saying this is that a man’s biggest fear is failure – to not have what it takes - and a woman’s biggest fear is abandonment – to not be loved.

So, men – love your wives and daughters. Fight for them. Pursue them. Tell them they are lovely, beautiful, pretty, gorgeous. Women – don’t disrespect your husband or sons. Don’t belittle them. Build them up, don’t put them down. Tell them they have what it takes. You can do this!

Do you know why many men want to be at work rather than at home? Because they feel they have what it takes at work, but not at home. They know how to succeed at work, but relationships with wife and children is whole different ballgame. But I’m showing you that you have what it takes to succeed at home.

Men and women are different and they parent differently - and a child needs both influences. Men, your children need you – your influence – your blessing. Jesus gave us a great example of how fathers should interact with children in Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.

We see 3 specific things Jesus did for children:

- 1- Jesus valued children
- 2- He took them in His arms – He was affectionate – hugged them
- 3- He laid hands on them and blessed them

A biblical blessing involves spoken words that reveal the value of the person being blessed and words that encourage their prophetic destiny.

My wife has specific phrases for every grandchild that she has taught them since the time they could understand. One says – “I’m the apple of God’s eye” – Another – “God knit me together in my mother’s womb” and another “God has a special plan for my life.” You may think that’s no big deal, but I believe our grandchildren will remember these words for the rest of their lives. And what would you rather have ringing in their ears – “I’m stupid and I’ll never amount to anything” or “I’m special and God has a special plan for my life”? Spend time thinking of different ways to speak and show your love.

Parents, I want to give you some relief today. You don’t have to be perfect. We’ve all blown it with our children. We’ve got to know that there are no perfect parents.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:8 that *love covers a multitude of sins*. There are several interpretations of that passage, but one is that when we love someone, we don't have to be perfect. They will know we love them even though we occasionally blow it. Love covers.

Sometimes we do it right, sometimes we don't.

Sometimes we are motivated by love, sometimes we're selfish.

Sometimes we have the energy to play with our kids; sometimes we're too tired. Even so – our sons and daughters know if we really love them. When they know that, even they don't expect us to be perfect. This is no excuse to be a bad, lazy, selfish parent. We need to get it right more than we get it wrong. But you don't have to be perfect to be a good parent.

Dads – you can do this. You have what it takes. You can value your children. You can tell them you love them and tell them you're proud of them. Hug them. Bless them. Love their mother. Tell her you love them in front of them. Doing this is your main mission as a dad.

By the way - to a child, love is spelled T-I-M-E. So they won't believe you value them if you don't spend time with them. Dads - you can carve out a little time for each child. Talk to them. Enter their world. Find out what they like to do and do it with them.

It's great to do things with your family. It's also great to have a date night with your wife without your children. You need to do that on a regular basis. If you can't find a babysitter, find a family in the church about the same size as yours and take turns watching each other's children so you can have a date night.

Husband – do you want to be a hero in your wife's eyes? Work that out on your own without her.

In addition to family time and husband/wife alone time, I encourage you to have date nights with your daughter and boys' night out with your son. This is a big deal for a child – having time alone with dad. Dads – you have what it takes. You can do this – it doesn't take a lot of time, money or effort – just a little thought, time and love.

There were 5 kids in my family so there was not a lot of alone time with my dad. However, he did make time for me and me alone. Not just me AND all the other kids – that is important – but he took time for me alone. We would play catch. We would go hunting and fishing. On our birthdays he would take us wherever we wanted for breakfast.

I loved it when he would occasionally get me out of school early so we could go fishing. I remember one time when we lived in Florida – my dad came and got me out of school early to go fishing in the Everglades. I'll never forget the attendance lady in the office.

She asked my dad, “Why are you taking Joey out of school early?” My dad said, “We’re going fishing.” The attendance lady got a condescending look on her face and said, “Well, Reverend, do you think that is an appropriate reason to take your son away from his education.”

My dad just looked at her and said, “Yes I certainly do. Joey’s my son and I think it’s important for us to spend time together. So sign him out.”

My dad was my hero that day. Now get this – I was in the 3rd Grade – so that was over 55 years ago – but I still remember it to this day.

Dad’s you can do this! You have what it takes. Think of some way to show each of your children how special they are to you. Just take a little of your time and invest it in your children.

Men - You have what it takes because you have what’s in God’s toolbox!
 You have the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
 Your family needs you man of God!
 They need you to be a man of faith and a man of the Word!

They need to hear you speak the Word of God!
 They need to lay hands on them when they are sick so they are healed.
 They need you doing spiritual warfare on their behalf - using the word and the name of Jesus to overcome the enemy!
 They need to see you standing in faith when times are tough!
 They need to see that going to church is a priority for you!
 They need to see you worshipping God with abandonment – not holding back because of embarrassment!
 They need to see you tithing and giving and sowing seed!
 They need to see you praying when they have a need!
 They need you to use the tools God has given you!

Jeremiah 23:29 says that the word is a hammer – it can drive home a point and it can break down obstacles.

Amos 7:7 says the word is a plumb line – it sets the standards and keeps us straight.

Psalm 119:105 says the word is a light that shows us the way.

The word is also sandpaper that smooths off rough edges –
 The word is a screwdriver that anchors our souls.
 And we have the oil of the Spirit to keep everything powered up and working smoothly!

Men, you already have what it takes!
 When you speak the word of God in the power of the Spirit – you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you!