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DAD
MATTERS™

30 DAY DEVOTIONAL

Day 1

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Living a life of honor should be one of the top priorities of every man’s life. Throughout Scripture, we see the importance of honoring the Lord and others. Honor can mean placing value on someone, but it also means living with integrity. Both aspects are critical to being an honorable man. As we walk through different Scripture verses over the next 30 days, our hope is to better understand what honor is and how it applies to our daily lives. To live a life that is honoring and honorable is at the center of being a “wholehearted dad;”—a dad who is totally committed to his family.

Day 2

“Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the Lord declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed’” (1 Samuel 2:30).

In the U.S. Marine Corps, honor is a foundational principle that men will fight and die for. They describe honor this way: “A code of personal integrity, honor guides those who do the right thing when no one is looking. It is not only a duty, but also a distinction, as those who possess honor are held in honor.” Honor is an expectation. As we see in the life of Eli, his children lacked honor, so God no longer honored Eli’s home. Would your home be considered a home of honor? If so, continue to work for honor in your home. If not, make every effort to establish it.

Day 3

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1).

We want to focus on a passage of Scripture that is at the core of being a wholehearted dad. In Ephesians 4:1, we’re told to “walk in a manner” worthy of our calling. Honor is a principle that’s lived out in the man who walks with integrity before the Lord and others. There is no higher calling than to lead and serve our families. Being a great dad shouldn’t be just an aspiration, but something we need to trust God to help us achieve and then live out.

Day 4

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2 NIV).

As we discussed yesterday, one of the highest callings a man has is to be a father. Many men are fearful of this calling and don’t know where to start. The verse above gives us four ways to lead our families: with humility and gentleness, with patience and bearing with one another in love. Evaluate how well you’re doing in these four areas. Not sure? Ask your wife or kids. Then start working on one area and begin to lead your family well.

Day 5

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3 NIV).

Would you say that a peaceful home is one of the dividends for your parenting efforts? Would you say you’re unified as a family? If not, what’s keeping you from that? Schedules, media, technology, brokenness, divorce or co-parenting? Take the bull by the horns: Find and champion ways to bring unity and peace to your home and kids.

Day 6

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call” (Ephesians 4:4).

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21).

In today’s Scripture, we see Christ ask that God would unify those who hear the disciples’ message, “so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” When we fulfill our calling as a dad and try to honor God through our actions, unity and peace will rule in our families. And there’s no greater message of who Christ is than that unity in our families.

Day 7

“Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:12).

In the Book of Samuel, we’re introduced to Eli. As a priest, Eli was probably a respected person at the “city gates,” but respect at home was a different matter. His sons brought him much grief because of their bad behavior and disobedience to God. How are your children doing spiritually? Don’t be passive in this area. You are your kids No. 1 pastor. Love your children by leading them in prayer and devotions.

Day 8

“Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people’ ” (1 Samuel 2:22-23).

When we finally see Eli confront his sons about their dealings, they reject their father’s appeal to turn from their ways. These interactions not only dishonor their father, but the Lord. There are no guarantees that our children will follow in our footsteps. Regardless of how much (or how little) leadership you have taken in your children’s spiritual lives, it’s never too late to try. Remember, God is in the business of redemption.

Day 9

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12).

It is often said that the family is the bedrock of society. As we see in Exodus 20:12, God promised a long life in the land He gave the Israelites, if they would obey His commandment to honor their parents. When honor is the basis of your family’s interactions, conflicts and crises are an opportunity to strengthen that foundation. Honor doesn’t mean control or “getting my way.” It promotes beauty, dignity and value. Let’s model those virtues for our wives and children.

Day 10

“For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites!” (Matthew 15:4-7).

In Matthew 15, Jesus confronts the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and uses honoring your father and mother as his example. Being a wholehearted dad requires us to be completely dedicated in our relationships—especially with Christ. Eventually, our attitudes will be revealed through our actions. Do you feel like you’re living a double life? Do you feel like you’re managing sin versus confessing sin? Go “all in” with Christ and then seek the support of other men who will encourage you to be wholehearted.

Day 11

“Honor one another above yourselves”
(Romans 12:10 NIV).

To put Christ and others above yourself—considering their needs and goals first—is at the core of being a great man. Before your day ends, honor your kids by catching them at their best moment today . . . and then letting them know.

Day 12

“More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3-5).

Isn’t it interesting that in the passage above, our character doesn’t define our sufferings but our sufferings define our character? Not all suffering and challenges bring out the best in us. Reflect today on some of the struggles that have made you a better husband and father. Give thanks for those challenges. Your sense of honor is defined in the pressure cooker of life.

Day 13

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless” (Psalm 84:11 NIV).

Blameless. In other translations of the passage above, we see words like *uprightly* and *what is right*. So, how is your walk—you actions, words and attitudes? When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become His adopted sons. He has bestowed on us favor and honor, but we have to “get after it.” A faithful walk is a prerequisite for the good things He has for us (though not a prerequisite for salvation). Those good things aren’t just limited to objects or wealth. A man of honor knows that. He’s not defined by possessions but by his character. So, are you walking faithfully with Christ? Find some time with your heavenly Father today and ask him, “Lord, how is my walk?”

Day 14

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:22-25).

The Scripture above says that if we are just “hearers of the word” and not “doers,” it’s like looking in a mirror and then walking away and forgetting what we look like. One of the best mirrors a dad has is his kids. Want to know how well you’re handling your temper or frustration? Just watch your kids to see how they’re doing with the same things. Usually they’re modeling what they see. We need to carefully consider this to honor the Lord. A man of honor doesn’t forget what he looks like in the heat of battle (anger, frustration, conflict, etc.). He tries to honor his Lord and those he loves regardless of circumstances.

Day 15

“There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good. . . . For God shows no partiality” (Romans 2:9-11).

We are halfway through our 30-day devotional, and have you noticed that so many of the blessings we long for in our lives are contingent upon how we live our lives with honor? We honor the Lord by the way we treat others—and that includes how we treat our children. We’re God’s image bearers in our homes. If you want to be honored, you need to honor those you’re serving.

Day 16

“Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor” (Proverbs 21:21).

What’s the return on investment (ROI) for the things you’re pursuing? Not sure? Take a moment to reflect on how you spent your time and energy the past few days. Did you get the results you were hoping for considering the time you spent? The Scripture above tells us that whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will have three aspects to his or her ROI: life, righteousness and honor. As a wholehearted dad, one way of honoring the Lord and your family is to pursue righteousness and kindness. Think of some ways to show kindness to your kids tonight.

Day 17

“It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling” (Proverbs 20:3).

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus gives us the Beatitudes. One of the Beatitudes declares, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). How would you compare that verse to Proverbs 20:3? How you handle conflict with your spouse and children is a great indicator of your attitude. If you’re frequently engaging in power struggles, or if strife is knocking on the door of your heart, it’s time to become a man of peace.

Day 18

“The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace” (Proverbs 3:35).

To be wise means to have good judgment or the ability to know what is right or true. Foolishness is the opposite of wisdom. Modern TV shows and commercials often portray fathers as fools. A good dad is not the punch line for what is wrong with his family. A good dad is thoughtful and is honored for his wisdom.

Day 19

“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes the important aspects of the body of Christ, and verse 26 is truly an understatement when applied to a family. At the heart of unity is honoring every member regardless of his or her talents, abilities or role. Your leadership requires you to make sure every member of your family is respected and honored. At the dinner table tonight, set aside time to celebrate one another. Ask each member to share something they appreciate about another person.

Day 20

“You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:32).

Honoring our parents and grandparents is an important aspect of the legacy we’re leaving our children. The challenge for some dads is that the relationship he has with *his* father and mother is broken. Think of some different ways you could have your kids honor their grandparents. If that’s not possible (or in addition to honoring their grandparents), go to a nursing home or assisted living center and serve the residents. It’s a great way to honor others.

Day 21

“Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor” (Proverbs 18:12).

What does it mean to be humble as a dad? Author T.S. Eliot stated, “Humility is the most difficult of all virtues to achieve; nothing dies harder than the desire to think well of self.” Christ tells us in Matthew 16:24 that if we want to follow him, we need to take up our cross—giving up what we want or find comfortable for a bigger, better cause. How sincerely we love our kids or Christ will ultimately be revealed by what we’re willing to sacrifice. We cannot honor others if we’re unwilling to give up our own desires. Without that sacrifice, it’s simple lip service and not an attitude of love and honor.

Day 22

“The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life” (Proverbs 22:4).

Honor is not only something we attain by doing the right things. God also rewards us with honor when we simply live in submission to Him. Throughout Scripture we see stories of men whose lives are fully submitted to God and the blessings that follow submission. Whatever you’re battling right now, He will bless you if you submit and honor Him.

Day 23

“Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor” (1 Peter 2:17).

In the New Testament, we see Jesus “flip the script” in how we should treat others—especially our enemies. Honoring everyone is not only difficult but (depending on who it is) often seems impossible. Sometimes our home can feel like enemy territory. So, instead of sharing a foxhole, we find ourselves in enemy trenches. How we handle conflict and our anger is critical in the health of relationships. If you’re experiencing some tough situations, submit to the Lord and look how to honor Him, even if it means loving your enemies.

Day 24

“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21).

There are only a few verses in Scripture that call fathers out on specific issues. Colossians 3 and Ephesians 6 exhort fathers not to provoke or exasperate their children. This emphasis is critical when raising children, because negative attitudes tear away at the fabric of honor in our homes. Are your children feeling any discouragement that could be a result of your words or actions? Nothing is more honoring in your relationships with your kids than saying, “I am sorry. Will you forgive me?” Honor your role as a dad by honoring your kids.

Day 25

“The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.” (John 7:18).

Scripture is constantly exhorting us to live in humility and to avoid the sin of pride. Too often in Scripture, we see men make horrible decisions for themselves and their families by trying to gain honor for themselves. God will bless the man who honors the Lord by working to establish His kingdom—not the man who strives to establish his own kingdom. Reflect today on your calling and mission. Do your actions line up with that calling? If they don’t, make decisions that will right your ship.

Day 26

“Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land” (Proverbs 31:23).

Proverbs 31 is best known for describing a wife of noble character, yet verse 23 momentarily shifts the focus to her husband—a man who is respected at the city gate. Today, “city gate” might not mean much, but in biblical times that’s where invaders were repelled, courts convened and critical decisions affecting the city’s residents were made and proclaimed. Would you be respected at your “city gates” (work, home, church, etc)? When your name is mentioned, would people say, “He’s a man of honor” based on the decisions and choices you’ve made? Living a life of integrity and honesty in the marketplace honors the Lord and our families.

Day 27

“Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate” (Proverbs 31:31 NIV).

In the verse above, we’re told to honor the work of our wife’s hands and let her works be known. When was the last time you praised your wife—honored her for not only the big stuff she does, but for the small stuff? When was the last time you praised your wife in public? Before the end of the day, *honor* her with praise. When you find ways to thank her for who she *is*—not only for what she does—you protect the heart of your most important human relationship.

Day 28

“Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ‘Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all’ ” (Proverbs 31:28-29 NIV).

Honoring our wives seems like it should be such a simple thing to do, but sometimes our schedules work against us. Even time spent with the kids can distract us. Create the expectation that Mom is to be respected and follow through with appropriate consequences. If we want peace and harmony in our homes, it usually starts with us. Protect the heart of your home by teaching your kids to respect their mother.

Day 29

“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:8-9).

In the film *We Were Soldiers*, Lt. Col. Hal Moore (played by Mel Gibson) says to his men prior to leaving for Vietnam: “I can’t promise you that I will bring you all home alive. But this I swear, before you and before Almighty God, that when we go into battle, I will be the first to set foot on the field, and I will be the last to step off, and I will leave no one behind.” Let’s make sure we’re not leaving our families behind. Our actions will reveal if we’re the “real deal” when it comes to leading our families with honor.

Day 30

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Our prayer is that whatever you do, honor is at the core of being a wholehearted dad who longs to honor the Lord and your family. Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “I firmly believe that any man’s finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is the moment he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle—victorious.” There is no greater cause than living as a wholehearted dad, leading our kids and championing our relationship with our Lord.