

Man Talk: Like Father, Like Son

Written by Timothy Houston
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This past Sunday, we celebrated “Fathers Day.” It is a special day of recognition for the fathers and father figures in our lives. It also serves to highlight the importance that male influence has in the development of young men. As I think on this topic, the quote “like father, like son” comes to mind. This idiom has been around for hundreds of years and it is used when different generations of a family behave in the same way or have the same talents or defects. It is a reminder that fathers willingly or unwillingly shape the behavior of their son. I was very fortunate to have my father in my life through out my formative years. He was a big burly man whose nickname was “Big Man.” He spoke softly, but carried a big stick. He was street savvy and a jack of all trades. To me, he was not afraid of anybody or anything. When he did speak, he said what he meant, and he meant what he said. The ironic thing growing up was that besides his rugged looks, I saw very little of myself in him. He was quiet, and I talked all the time. I have very little street savvy, and I was not handy with my hands. Although I wanted to be more like him, at that time, I lacked the confidence and the strength of character to do so.

Other men have a different perspective on their fathers. These men don’t want to be anything like them. They see their fathers (absent or present) as a liability. They may even go out of their way to reject any comparison to them or even limit their contact with them to as little as possible. If their father was not a part of their life during the formative years, they often reject the offer from him to infuse himself back into their adulthood. As harsh as it may some sound, some men don’t want to be like their fathers.

Like father, like son, is not just a standard to measure our fathers by, it is also a reminder that we must be a positive role model for our sons and the young men in our circle of influence. These men will then use this influence to model the right behavior for their sons. To take our role as fathers and mentors seriously means to give them our talents and not our defects. Like father, like son means to prepare the next generation to be better fathers than we were. It is no longer a question of wanting to be more like my father as it is to ensure that my son wants to be more like me.

My father passed away 13 years ago and there is hardly a day that goes by that I don’t think about him. Every day, I see more of him in me. I am now handy with my hands, and I now say what I mean and I mean what I say. I still have his rugged looks, and I am not afraid any more. I am a better man because of his example of hard work and dedication. Because I now have a son and grandsons to model good behavior for, I pray daily that I can be the “big man” in their lives. Every one of us as men has this responsibility, and we should always strive to be a positive influence into the lives of young men. For that task, we have been empowered by our Heavenly Father with the strength of character to do so.

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