

FairHaven

FATHER'S

DAY

DEVO

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

WHAT
GIVES YOU
HOPE



ROMANS 8:31 “WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS? IF GOD IS FOR US WHO CAN BE AGAINST US!” (NKJV).

WHAT IS IT THAT GIVES YOU HOPE DURING THESE CHALLENGING DAYS IN OUR WORLD?

2020 has certainly been an interesting year. Despite what’s going on God has not been caught off guard by this! He saw it all happening before it did. We’ve had a pandemic that seriously changed all of our lives, and now worldwide we are beginning to unite around issues of racism. Despite this, as Christ followers we have to remember that God is for us! The two questions above are both a response to what the Apostle Paul was writing before these questions. The Apostle Paul is writing about us believers “who are called according to His purpose ...” (Romans 8:28b). That’s the hope that I have in these days. The hope that as a Christ follower, I have been called to a specific purpose. In these days, it is a “purpose” to be Christ to those who are hurting. To emulate that same hope in Christ to my wife, children, neighbors, coworkers. That’s what has given me hope in these trying days that Christ is for me and He is for anyone who wants to follow him!

Men, my challenge to you is if you find yourself without hope to bring your thoughts to Jesus. He wants to know how you’re feeling, and I promise you He will speak words of love to you to know that He is for you!

THE
INFLUENCE
YOU HAVE



PROVERBS 22:6 "TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO; EVEN WHEN HE IS OLD, HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT."

THE INFLUENCE YOU HAVE ON PEOPLE AROUND YOU

I am a father of five kids, and one of the things I am learning as a father is either I influence my children or the world around me will influence my kids. Influence is all around us – tv, music, friends, books, podcasts, magazines, stores, newspapers, and social media. All of these have influenced me; however, I had a dad who has had more of an influence on me than anything else. My dad adopted me, loved me, and taught me about having a relationship with Christ.

Maybe you are not a father, but you may have an opportunity to reach children you're not related to. You can still be a man who has influence and help raise them up in the way they should go as you encourage them to pray and to read their Bible. And you should pray for opportunities to do so. Jesus said let the little children come to Him (Matthew 19:14). We as men have an opportunity to be the positive influence in the lives of kids around us. Maybe this topic is hard for you because you did not have a dad in your life, but you walk with God now. You can use what you've learned to teach those who are without dads to walk with God. Teach them and show them what it means to be God-honoring. Just like my dad did with me, you can do with others.

What are you doing today to influence those around you?

ONE
FRIENDSHIP
AT A TIME



I NO LONGER CALL YOU SERVANTS, BECAUSE A SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW HIS MASTER'S BUSINESS. INSTEAD, I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS, FOR EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU. (JOHN 15:15)

It must have been over 30 years ago when the great Dr. John Perkins graced the pulpit at the old Fairhaven Church on the corner of Marshall and Rahn Roads. A soft-spoken African-American pastor speaking deeply from his heart, no doubt about justice and Jesus, in a predominately white church.

Today Dr. Perkins, an advisor of five U.S. Presidents and co-founder of the Christian Community Development Association, recently penned his last book: *He Calls Me Friend: The Healing Power of Friendship in a Lonely World*. At 86, his answer for those who want to make a difference in this world — “Be friends first with God. Then with others—every kind of other you can think of. Because the simple, powerful, messy, explosive truth is: The world is changed one friendship a time.”

In the early 1970s, my devout Catholic parents invited two middle-aged men they had befriended from Dayton's eclectic Oregon District where they were working together over for dinner. This friendship of a delightful gay couple sharing a Sunday meal at our dinner table penetrated me deeply in my emerging world view. After that, our dinner table continued to be a holy place of a rich diversity of friendships.

As I have comfortably settled into my middle-class routine, I have to ask myself - who have I shared a table with lately? Coronavirus-times aside, perhaps the vacant response I get in return is my conscience and certainly His Spirit gently whispering in my ear that if you want to feel and see more justice and Jesus in your life and community, then pursue friendships that cut across our deeply-entrenched social norms, that perhaps even heal relational wounds. This is a moment for the church in America—all of the church—to be a friend, to build relationships with human beings who are different from ourselves. As the good doctor says, the world is changed one friendship at a time.

QUANTITY TIME



JUST AS THE FATHER HAS LOVED ME, I HAVE ALSO
LOVED YOU; ABIDE IN MY LOVE. (JOHN 15:9)

I BELIEVE THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS QUALITY TIME WITHOUT QUANTITY TIME.

The former is unlikely to occur without the latter. Trying to craft a quality moment can sometimes backfire because of unrealistic expectations and the pressure of making the moment count. More often it will be the moments that seem mundane at the time that turn out to be what our children remember most, for reasons we never anticipated. The “quality time” is a treasure that is buried within the quantity of time. It can only be “found” through diligence and commitment to seeking it out.

During His last hours with the disciples, just before his betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus gave the illustration of the vine and branches. He stated that we are to abide in Him and He in us that we may bear fruit to the glory of the Father. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines “abide” as “staying, remaining, to tarry, to not depart, a constant presence, unbroken fellowship.” Get the idea? It is not just plugging in here and there. It is allowing our every thought in every moment to be stayed upon Jesus.

We are to love our children in the same manner that our Father in heaven loves us. Here are some practical ways we can do that as earthly fathers:

Next time you run an errand to the hardware store, take one of your children. Not every trip will turn into a deep discussion about the issues of life with which they are wrestling. But you never know which trip might turn out to be exactly that.

When your child asks for your attention, give it to him or her. Completely! Turn off the television. Put down the device or magazine. Obviously, there are times you will have to ask them to give you a minute to complete something, but then follow up and give them your undivided attention. Show them the honor of being fully present to whatever is important to them.

Plan a special date night with your kids. It might just be running out and grabbing a coke or a hamburger. Maybe it will be an overnight camping trip or a visit to a place that is special to them. Make the plans together; let them be involved with the logistics and decision-making. Those moments are just as important as the event itself. It creates moments of “doing life” together.

WALK
WITH THE
WISE



WHOEVER WALKS WITH THE WISE BECOMES WISE, BUT THE COMPANION OF FOOLS WILL SUFFER HARM. (PROVERBS 13:20)

I was raised by two parents who programmed me to believe that it was wrong to get angry and that the only way to deal with anger was to suppress it. By the time I was 20 years old, my anger was uncontrollable. I sought help from pastors a couple of times, however, their advice to pray and read the Bible was too broad to help me.

Fortunately, my new pastor, Thom, was familiar with anger management principles. For 13 weeks we met and discussed *The Anger Workbook*. Finally, I had tools to help me manage my anger. A couple of months after I finished the book, Thom challenged me to lead other men through anger management. I began with a group of 7 men and it quickly grew to 10-12 men every week who wanted to begin managing their own anger.

The Holy Spirit used Thom to mentor me over 20 years ago, and his influence still drives me to mentor other men. I have led over 40 men through anger-management, love languages, and relational parenting. I thank God for Pastor Thom!

REFLECTION: God uses broken people. Consider how you can use your struggles to help other men become better husbands and fathers.

GROW YOUR SPIRITUAL FITNESS



NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WE REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERINGS, KNOWING THAT SUFFERING PRODUCES ENDURANCE, AND ENDURANCE PRODUCES CHARACTER, AND CHARACTER PRODUCES HOPE. (ROMANS 5:3-4)

I've always been passionate about health and fitness and these days you can find me running or biking almost every day. Training is not easy, but I want to get stronger, so I push through to achieve the results I'm hoping for. Growing my spiritual strength isn't much different, but having a strong faith has helped me through troubles and hardships in life. Here are three ways to grow your spiritual fitness:

Cross Train: If you want to be fit, it's important to vary your workouts by duration, frequency and intensity. Doing so prevents you from becoming stagnant. In the same way, our spiritual lives need cross training. No one Bible study will singlehandedly keep you focused on Jesus, but doing so alongside of corporate worship, serving, prayer, or even a small group will all help to strengthen your faith.

Stretching: It's interesting how easy it can be to see stretching as a waste of time. Many begin their fitness journey only wanting to focus on the workout itself and leave stretching for an injury. One of the best ways to stretch your spiritual muscles is through prayer. Just like stretching, prayer better prepares us for the work ahead and relaxes us when it's done.

Accountability: Your best successes happen in community through accountability. Building strength is hard work. Find a good coach to pour into you, to cheer you on, to challenge you and to support you.

WHAT PLAN WILL YOU MAKE FOR THE NEXT WEEK TO GROW YOUR SPIRITUAL FITNESS?

If we want to endure suffering joyfully, we must make time for spiritual exercise. As martial artist and philanthropist, Bruce Lee once said, "Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one." Life is full of change and surprises. We are not in control, but with good spiritual fitness, we will build the strength necessary to handle whatever comes our way.

CONTINUE TO BE BOLD



JOHN STEINER

FOR I FULLY EXPECT AND HOPE THAT I WILL NEVER BE ASHAMED, BUT THAT I WILL CONTINUE TO BE BOLD FOR CHRIST, AS I HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST. AND I TRUST THAT MY LIFE WILL BRING HONOR TO CHRIST, WHETHER I LIVE OR DIE. FOR TO ME, LIVING MEANS LIVING FOR CHRIST, AND DYING IS EVEN BETTER. (PHILIPPIANS 1:20-21)

Our changing world can bring out the best in us or it can break us. When our routines and worldly identities are taken from us, and our desires are not at our finger tips, we can feel lost. I think of Paul, before encountering Christ - he had everything a man would want in this life: position, power, knowledge, and authority. But he left it all for Christ. His identity was no longer in the things of this world. He was heavenly-focused, a bond servant to Christ. He knew that what ever happened to him nothing could take away his identity and his hope in Jesus. I want this! I want to be so rooted in Christ, so heaven-focused. I want to walk in step with the Spirit of God, and be bold and courageous to share the message of Christ, no matter the cost. To live every day as a gift from God, living for Him until He takes me home, and not loving this world even unto death.

- What is your Hope in?
- Is your identity built on what the world gives?
- Are you longing to be with Christ?

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR THE HOPE WE HAVE IN JESUS CHRIST. LEAD ME IN THE WAYS I MUST GO TO GLORIFY YOU, AND PREPARE ME BY YOUR SPIRIT TO NOT LOVE THIS WORLD EVEN UNTO DEATH.

IN JESUS NAME I PRAY. AMEN.

The logo for FairHaven, featuring the word "FairHaven" in a serif font. The "H" is stylized with a small bird-like figure perched on top of it.

FairHaven

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2020