

## “God is An Involved Dad”

**1 John 3:1** “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

The dinner conversation was interesting in the Triplett household last night. My wife made one of our favorite meals, chicken fettuccine with broccoli, so the spirits were high.

The conversation turned to the number of people we know who are welcoming new babies in the coming year. Then we began talking about the birthdays of each of our children. I think it’s a joy to remember and recount these things with your kids.

But then my oldest son said, “My friends and I at school were talking about the worst pain the world. I told them having a baby really hurts.” I kept a smile on face. My wife didn’t look up from her plate.

Then he asked, “Mom, how bad did it hurt to have us?”

She stopped chewing, looked up at him with a pleasant grin and then looked at me for a split second. I looked back as if to say, *I am no help to you here*, then she simply said, “hurts pretty bad”.

I swung into action and tried to avert the conversation, “Yep, pretty amazing, God has made women so they can fully bring babies into the world and care for them all on their own, pretty awesome.”

My six-year old son then chimed in. “Dad, if mommies can take care of babies all on their own, what do you do?” I felt like the guy in the company whose job was marginal in the overall scheme of things. *What do you do here anyway?*

I fumbled as I searched for something to say, then blurted, “I helped a lot with you when you were babies.” My six year old, curiosity satisfied, nodded and went back to his pasta.

That question got me thinking. What am I *supposed* to be doing as a dad? Let’s face it; moms have their work cut out for them. There are many grey areas where moms are unsure, but please allow that we dads are often clueless as to what we’re supposed to be doing.

I don’t remember being given a manual specifically for each child when they came home from the hospital. No one told me that our oldest as a baby would require gas-reducing drops after every meal for six months or he’d throw up on us with impunity. No one told us that my daughter would cry unceasingly every time my wife left and would only stop when she came home. My wife worked 2<sup>nd</sup> shift, full time. No one told me that my other son would be so agreeable and peaceful as a baby that it freaked us out a bit because we thought something was wrong. Those tidbits of info aren’t given to you when you are given the responsibility of parenthood.

So sometimes I feel like I’m making up a lot of this as I go along. Stuff happens, I respond. I have to say I am a bit unsure of how I’m raising my kids. I believe God teaches us how to be dads based on how He’s a dad to us. God’s raising and loving me in my relationship with Jesus, I’m raising and loving my kids in my relationship with them. This has to be enough for me because I trust God and can’t tell the future.

Scripture teaches that God has three main roles with us as his children. He is our protector, *you may go this far and no further because it’s dangerous*. He is our provider, *let me supply for your needs by taking from my supply*. And He is present, *I will never leave you or abandon you because I love you*. I think Dads

(maybe deservedly) are often left outside the center of involvement with their kids because they are missing one or maybe even all of these three things.

Some dads provide in abundance. Ends are meeting and everyone has what they need. Yet, if a dad stops there or goes overboard in seeking provision they tend to leave a deficit in protecting their kids or in simply being present. The same goes with the other aspects of being dad. Some dads are always present, but never protective or providing. Some are over-protective but not present enough to know who their kids are personally.

Granted, I think there's imbalance in human parenting. We aren't perfect and aren't expected to be. But thankfully there isn't any imbalance with God. He's the perfect father in protection, provision and presence. He longs for us to be safe with Him, He gives us exactly what we need and He's always there when we need Him.

I do the best with the questions challenges my kids pose. I am like any other dad or mom. We are fielding the many unknown or downright scary aspects of having kids. But I feel that God is our good involved father by bringing us to Him in Christ, teaching us His ways and allowing us to love our kids like He loves us.