

Blended Family Life

Today 40% of American families are blended. That is a staggering, and very real statistic, what is even more overwhelming, is that 45-50% of those families will end in a divorce. Nearly 33% of weddings in America are forming blended families*.

Parents in these blended families are in the trenches each and every day. Christian parents are trying to do their best to raise these children in such a way that glorifies God. With 2 sets of parents, sometimes even more, and multiple sets of beliefs, it can be overwhelming to do right by these innocent children. We believers must do all we can do to come along such families and give support in the fight for their family.

Meet Pastor Kevin and Christie Vanderlaan, close friends of the Stacey's. The Vanderlaan's pastor a church in Aurora, MO. and have four children together. Kevin's children, Isaac and Brianna, and Christie's, Veronica and Nathaniel, were all between the ages of 11 and 17 when they married in May of 2014. "God helped me see that our blended family was an opportunity to have additional children in my family to help raise to have an impact on the world for the cause of Christ" Kevin explains.



Kevin says one of the hardest things for him to adjust to was his parenting style. He was used to parenting his two in a certain way and Veronica and Nathaniel didn't respond to it the same way his kids did. "We came to the realization that I would discipline my biological children and she would discipline hers. However, we really haven't had too many discipline issues, our kids are really just good kids. I also had to learn how to relate to my new family while keeping emotional stability with Christie at the same time, and that was a big thing for me."



When asked if he felt more pressure to "get it right" being a lead pastor and a step father his response was "I already felt pressure to get everything right just because I knew our kids were being watched because of my position. Adding in the fact of being a blended family just enhanced that feeling. Parents have to realize that our parenting isn't the end all be all for our kids though. Parenting takes them so far, then they have to make their own decisions.

Prayer is key. Praying that God will help you be the man you need to be for THAT family. Forget the past and let that go. Pray to be a man for the glory of God and the good of his people."

Kevin's biggest piece of advice for men is "You have to realize that God created you to be a servant in your home not a master. If you try to be a master in a blended home, you will most likely fail. We are called to serve our family just as Christ served the church".

*Statistics taken from www.smartstepfamilies.com

Manhood Tips

- No matter the age, children spell the word "love" with T.I.M.E.
- You're influence matters, make it count!
- If you don't have a child, find a young person to invest in, the reward will be great!

June Resource Winners

George Krebs
Williamsville, IL

Dustin Wright
Terre Haute, IN

CONGRATULATIONS MEN!!!



RELEVANT PRACTICAL MINISTRY FOR MEN

A Father's Grace

Men, as we approach Father's Day on June 21, I just want to encourage you with this, God's grace is sufficient enough to save us and sufficient enough to sanctify us. Being a dad covers a lot of ground from the time your son's and daughter's are born until you launch them out into the world.

For the younger or new dads, enjoy the process, even the harder aspects of it. Know you will NOT do it perfectly, but you will do it with lots of love and grace. For you dads that have been at it a while and may be tempted to dwell on the things you don't feel you did well, give yourself grace and know you still have time to love them and lead them well. Know that part of fatherhood is saying I am sorry and allowing your kids to see humility modeled well. If your dad is still alive be sure and thank him for loving and doing the best he could with you!

Look around you and seek out older men who have raised their children in the Lord and ask them their advice. If you want to mimic God the Father with your life, then do as He did with His son, tell your children that you love them and that you are proud of them and compliment them on character traits you see in them. Let your children see the adventure in living out the Bible and as they get older invite them to live out scripture with you.



"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it, ² so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Deuteronomy 6:1-2

Tom Cheshire - Executive Director, RPM



Fatherhood is one of the most noble yet hardest titles men are given in this world. Men be encouraged that to your kids, you are destiny! Yes, your kids have that high a view of you, though you may not have one of yourself. Find your vision for the kind of man you should aspire to be in the life of Jesus. He is the ultimate man and we are to imitate him in life, faith and action. Just as Jesus modeled in the scriptures, here are a few thoughts to keep in the forefront of your mind.

1. Lead your family by SERVING them SACRIFICIALLY - (Mark 10:42-45)!
2. You are the Spiritual Thermostat in your home - (Matthew 22:34-40)!
3. Love DEEP - (John 15:13)!
4. Extend GRACE and FORGIVE daily - (Matthew 6:14-15)!

Tom Gensler, Director of Ministry Development RPM

Coming up....

- 7.18 - Father/Son Day Camp
- 8.15 - Father/Daughter Day Camp
- 9.12 - Springfield Iron Sharpens Iron
- 10.3 - Champaign Iron Sharpens Iron

