

Father Figuring: Raising a Godly Daughter

It's an adventure like no other. You deal fairly well with the initial excitement and shock of the news that you're having a baby. You make all the arrangements and support your wife throughout the pregnancy. But everything changes the moment you hold your daughter in your arms for the first time.

Feelings of joy and love wash over you like the oceans at high tide. You are indeed the happiest man on earth.

Then suddenly it hits you: God has entrusted you with this life. Twin peaks of humility and pride rise within you, but quickly give way to complete and utter terror. How are you, being so flawed, supposed to raise your daughter in a way that would please God?

I've been struggling with this question for the past three weeks since my daughter Mía Raquel was born. So, in keeping with God's Word in Proverbs 14:11, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety," I sought the



Mario Diaz, Esq., CWA's Policy Director for Legal Issues, and his wife, Jennyffer, with newborn daughter Mía Raquel.

wise counsel of my father-friends (and fellow like-minded men) at Concerned Women for America.

Ken Ervin, father of 9-year-old Shannon

Be her example. Let her see you reading God's Word on a daily basis. Let her see you on your knees daily in prayer. Let her see God as something

so tightly woven into the fabric of your personal life that it is inextricable. Let your love for God be so real and fresh that she wants it too. Let her see you being a man of integrity because of your love for God. Let her see you being the kind of man that you want to see her marry. Above all, be involved — not just in the big things of her life, but in the minutiae as well. A young girl whose father’s love and attention is missing from her life will try and find it elsewhere. Never give her a reason to go searching.

Matt Barber, father of 3-year-old Ana and 4-year-old Helen

Ah, yes. My two daughters. ... As my wife, Sarah, says, I’m “putty in their tiny little hands.”

There’s no doubt that fathers play an incredibly important role in the lives of their daughters from the very beginning. The way in which our own personal relationship with the Heavenly Father gives us joy and helps us to grow emotionally and spiritually offers the perfect parallel to the individual relationship we should strive to have with our girls.

That’s why it’s crucial to set aside one-on-one time with little Mía Raquel



Such a precious bundle of joy is worth every effort to raise in a Godly manner.

from the very beginning. I try to spend individual time with each of my daughters throughout the week. But at least once a week, I take them on a daddy-daughter date to the park, out to lunch, etc. It doesn’t matter what you do. It only matters that you’re together. And above all else, once she’s

old enough to talk ... listen.

George Tryfiates, father of 6-year-old Catherine, 7-year-old Caroline and 13-year-old Anastasia

“Pleasing the Lord” is the same principle in *everything* we do, including raising children. Seek Him first and His righteousness; all the rest will be added. Love Him more than anything. Take *your* every thought captive. Walk in the spirit, not in the flesh. Love the wife of your youth and build your marriage; pray with and listen to Mommy. This isn’t a job for Daddy alone! Don’t focus on externals: teaching the kids the form of prayer is not the same as teaching them to love to pray. Help them build a personal *relationship* with Jesus. Spend time with your children. For us, family

dinner is a top priority – and a huge challenge. Insist on it; eliminate distractions (like TV). Read a lot, together, especially the Bible. If you can have children, have lots of them. It's extremely hard work. Nothing (and certainly no thing) is more rewarding. Finally, like everything else, it's a lot easier to give advice like this than to live it myself – so *pray!*

Geoffrey Putnam, father of 7-year-old Katie

Make an effort to have plenty of daddy/daughter time. Boys tend to have the same interests as the father and can consume a significant amount of free time with sports and activities. Spend ample time with her alone to develop the one-on-one relationship. Also, include her in the activities that may be traditionally geared toward the male gender (sports, watching sporting events, outdoor activities). I have been shocked at what Katie's interests have been with those types of things and have had a very positive reaction taking her to sporting events and taking on rugged outdoor activities. We regularly go to hockey games or watch my favorite sports teams on TV. She has become quite interested in joining me in this pastime, and we cheer for our (now) shared favorite teams and players together.

Robert Stuber, father of 20-year-old Kate

My advice: before your daughter at

ages 8 through 12 will follow your lead, it is critical that you earn that credibility in the earlier years. That means playing dress up (but please, no cross-dressing!), playing tea party and taking an active role in your daughter's young life. The temptation is to hide behind a career and all those things that seem more important at the time. An early investment in time pays off later. And when you get to that stage (presuming you survive), your daughter will appreciate your plan that you will tightly control who she can have as friends. While in some communities it is possible for children to get by in a public school, the reality is that most of America, and especially the Washington, D.C. region, is hopeless. We home schooled Kate, and the result helped build academic and moral character. ■

By Mario Diaz, Esq., Policy Director for Legal Issues

PRAY

For Mario and every man who seeks to raise a daughter in such a way as to please God.

PRAISE

God for not making us do this alone, but surrounding us with friends and mentors.

ACTION

If you've grown lax in any of the areas listed above, don't give up. Work to make it right.