

From the Wall St. Journal... Steve Wright

2008-06-18 10:06:05 by Steve Wright

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Honoring Thy Fathers

By W. BRADFORD WILCOX

June 13, 2008;

For millions of children across the U.S., this Sunday will not be a cause for celebration. Because of dramatic increases in divorce and nonmarital childbearing, about 28% of our nation's children — more than 20 million kids — now live in a household without their father, up from 10 million kids (14%) in 1970, according to a recent Census Bureau report. Moreover, because most of these boys and girls see their dads infrequently (once a month or less), Father's Day will offer cold comfort to many of these children.

Our nation's epidemic of fatherlessness is just the most salient indicator of what University of Chicago theologian Don Browning has called the "male problematic" — the tendency of men to live apart from their children and to invest less emotionally and practically in their families than women do.

This situation has not gone unnoticed in America's houses of worship. Religious leaders, particularly evangelical Protestant ones, have expressed their alarm. "As I review the latest research on family disintegration, I am repeatedly confronted with the same disturbing issue," recently wrote Dr. James Dobson, chairman of Focus on the Family. "Boys are in trouble today primarily because their parents, and especially their dads, are distracted, overworked, harassed, exhausted, disinterested, chemically dependent, divorced, unable to cope or simply not there."

But how successful have churches and synagogues been in getting the men in their congregations to put family first? Mr. Browning argues that, historically, one of the signal achievements of Christianity and Judaism is that they underlined the sacred character of the marriage vow — thereby encouraging men to be good husbands and fathers.

Religion continues to have a significant influence, even in today's culture, as I explain in a [report on faith, fatherhood and marriage](#)¹ published by the Institute for American Values earlier this week. Religious faith is linked to happier marriages, fewer divorces and births outside of marriage, and a more involved style of fatherhood.

Take marital happiness. About 65% of married Americans who attend church regularly are "very happy" in their marriages, compared with 58% of married Americans who rarely or never attend. Note that the marital happiness premium is larger for couples who attend church together. Indeed, wives get a boost in marital happiness from attendance only when they worship with their husbands.

Religious Americans are also less likely to divorce. Specifically, Americans who attend religious services regularly are about 35% less likely to divorce than are their married peers who rarely or never attend services. Once again, couples who attend together are especially unlikely to split.

Religion is also linked to lower rates of nonmarital childbearing. Only 25% of mothers who attended church weekly had a child outside of wedlock, compared with 34% of mothers who attended monthly or less. Moreover, unmarried couples who attend religious services together are significantly less likely to have a child outside of marriage than are couples who don't attend together or don't attend at all.

The report also reveals that religious fathers are more likely to devote time, attention and affection to their children than their secular peers. For example, compared with dads who indicate no religious affiliation, fathers who attend religious services regularly devote at least two more hours per week to youth-related activities, such as coaching soccer or leading a Boy Scout troop. Churchgoing fathers are also significantly more likely to keep tabs on their children, monitoring their activities and friends. Finally, religious fathers are about 65% more likely than unaffiliated fathers to report praising and hugging their school-age children "very

often.”

There are at least three reasons why churchgoing typically connects men to families. First, the rituals and preaching that men encounter in America’s houses of worship endow their family responsibilities with sacred power. Second, religious faith seems to help men weather the stresses of work and family life — from unemployment to the death of a parent — better than their secular peers; this is important because stress often turns men into distant or ill-tempered fathers and husbands. Third, the social networks that men encounter in religious institutions tend to keep them on a family-centered path. For instance, religious men are less likely to commit adultery than their secular peers, in part because their religious friends are more likely to stigmatize questionable behavior.

To be sure, religion is by no means a silver bullet when it comes to addressing the modern male problematic. Divorce, domestic violence and desertion can still be found in virtually every American congregation. Nevertheless, studies suggest that fathers who celebrate this Father’s Day in church are more likely than their secular peers to stick around, and to have children and wives who are happy to have them around.

Mr. Wilcox is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Virginia.

Intentional Manhood...

2008-09-24 20:09:21 by Steve Wright

My good friend Mike Seaver recently wrote an interesting article for men called Intentional Manhood. This article encourages men in a area of responsibility that most men wouldn't willing welcome an encouraging word.

Mike says, "It is often easy for a husband/father to lead his family to watch a movie or go out to dinner. A dad does not struggle turning on the game on Saturday to cheer for his team while his kids cheer on with him. However, an understanding that a father must care for and lead his family spiritually is dropped in many homes. Intentional manhood means leading our family to fulfill their purpose: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

This article [continues.....](#)

Kirk Cameron: I'll only kiss my wife...

2008-09-26 07:09:54 by Steve Wright

Ex-‘Growing Pains’ star refused to smooch co-star in new film ‘Fireproof’

Mike Celizic a TODAYShow.com contributor recently reported that, “In Kirk Cameron’s new movie, “Fireproof,” he has to kiss the actress playing his wife. That was a problem.

Cameron will not kiss any woman who is not his wife.

“I have a commitment not to kiss any other woman,” the former child star of “Growing Pains” told Hoda Kotb and Kathie Lee Gifford Monday on TODAY in New York.”

This story is [worth reading](#).

I hope you are planning on watching this movie this weekend.

When Men Were Truly Men... Steve Wright

2008-07-13 09:07:59 by Steve Wright

In a day when men's heart affections are pulled in so many directions it is refreshing to read the stories of those mentors of the past that led with great conviction. B. B. Warfield was certainly one of these men. Busy? Yes! Most would consider the 1887 to 1921 Presidency of Princeton no small task. He followed in the great footsteps of Jonathan Edwards and many others.

What I did not know until recently through the [great writing](#) of Dr Kim Riddlebarger Ph.D was that "during their stay in Europe an event occurred that would forever change the Warfield's lives. While walking together in the Harz mountains, Mr. and Mrs. Warfield were caught in a violent thunderstorm. Annie Warfield suffered a severe trauma to her nervous system from which she never fully recovered. She was so severely traumatized that she would spend the rest of her life as an invalid of sorts, becoming increasingly more incapacitated as the years went by. Her husband was to spend the rest of their lives together giving her "his constant attention and care" until her death in 1915 (Allis, "Personal Impressions of Dr Warfield," 10)."

"It was his tremendous energy which perhaps, more than any other single factor, contributed to Warfield's wide reaching influence. As Kerr notes, one of Warfield's most important forums was the book review, so often overlooked as an important "bully pulpit." "Book reviewing is, I think, one of the most important means of theological communication," adds Dr. Kerr, and somehow the Princetonian managed to publish over 780 of them in various publications, of which 318, were "very substantial critical reviews." (14).

Warfield's remarkable literary output is, no doubt, in large measure due to the frail condition of his wife and his amazing devotion to her. With the pen he was a formidable foe, but as O. T. Allis recalls, "I used to see them walking together and the gentleness of his manner was striking proof of the loving care with which he surrounded her. They had no children. During the years spent at Princeton, he rarely if ever was absent for any length of time" (Allis, "Personal Impressions of Dr Warfield," 10). Machen recalled that Mrs. Warfield was a brilliant woman and that Dr. Warfield would read to her several hours each day. Machen dimly recalled seeing Mrs. Warfield in her yard a number of years earlier during his own student days, but notes that she had been long since bed-ridden (Stonehouse, [J. Gresham Machen](#), 220).

According to most accounts, Dr. Warfield almost never ventured away from her side for more than two hours at a time. In fact, he left the confines of Princeton only one time during a ten-year period, and that for a trip designed to alleviate his wife's suffering which ultimately failed (Bamberg, "Our Image of Warfield Must Go," 229). As Colin Brown incisively notes, Warfield's lectures on the cessation of the charismata, given at Columbia Theological Seminary in South Carolina shortly after her death, are quite remarkable and demonstrate "a certain poignancy [which] attaches itself to Warfield's work in view of the debilitating illness of his wife throughout their married life" (Colin Brown, [Miracles and the Critical Mind](#), Eerdmans, 1984, 199). Though Warfield may have been known to many as a tenacious fighter, the compassion he directed toward his wife, Annie Kinkead Warfield, demonstrates a capacity for tenderness and caring that is in its own right quite remarkable.

In the mysterious providence of God, it was the nature of his wife's illness and his devotion to her, that ironically provided the greatest impetus for his massive literary output. Personally vital and energetic, "he did not allow" his wife's illness "to hinder him in his work. He was intensely active with voice and pen" (Allis, "Personal Impressions of Dr Warfield," 11). Thus his creative energies were focused in two directions: his writing and the classroom. As caretaker for an invalid wife, Warfield spent many hours each day in the confines of his study."

Today marriage appears to have more options than Baskin-Robbins. We read daily of men walking away from their wives and their children. The temptation that "other things" are real, are more satisfying and more fulfilling is as passing as the fruit that Eve so desperately tasted.

The truth is that very few things in this life will cross over into eternity. May God give men today the grace to see those things which are eternal and that brings Christ the most glory in this short life. May these lasting riches captivate our hearts and set straight our desires and may our faithfulness stir future generations to put their hope in Christ.



An Unbelievable Video Resource... Steve Wright

2008-08-03 11:08:19 by Steve Wright

Last week a friend sent this video link to me. I hope to share it with the parents in my ministry soon. It is called "[Family Man](#)". Feel free to share this with your friends.

I hope it encourages you.

If you know of other video resources like this please let me know.

The Feminization of the American Male...

2008-08-05 12:08:47 by Steve Wright

Where have all the masculine men gone? Do dads even see this training of their sons as their jobs?

When I grew up I knew what a real man was suppose to act like, talk like and look like. My father was my role model. We would watch John Wayne, Chuck Norris and other men that were manly. My dad gave me a knife and a gun when I was young and he taught me to be safe and how to care for these weapons. He once bought me a hatchet when I was a young boy that I was particularly proud of.

I have never had a manicure, pedicure, waxing, I've never had my hair dyed or had my ears pierced. I never will.

My close friend Randy Stinson recently wrote an [article](#) called "The Feminization of the American Male". In this article he makes several very good points that I hope you will read.

Boys to Men... Steve Wright

2008-08-06 11:08:52 by Steve Wright

10 very practical tools for raising boys who will grow up to look like men.

1. When they are young lay Field & Stream magazines around the house. Also get some good hunting magazines.
 2. Buy your son a knife when he is small. Only let him get it out when you are around so you can have some "MAN TIME". Get a stick and whittle.
 3. If you don't hunt-start. It is good to get outdoors and hanging a few mounted animals will go a long way towards making your son a man.
 4. Watch movies with your son where the main actor protects and defends a girl, his wife, his family or something he felt was worth fighting for. You know the type I'm talking about.
 5. Buy the "Dangerous Book for Boys" and read it to him.
 6. Take him camping. He will come home feeling he has conquered a great fear of being outside at night.
 7. Get him in a sport that allows him to have success. He doesn't need to be the kid on the bench in every sport he plays. It is better that he play only one sport and gain confidence than to play 5-6 sports that tears down his confidence.
 6. Work. When he gets around 10-13 give him something difficult to do. Something that makes him ask for help and something that makes him sweat. He needs to get his hands really dirty with this one.
 7. Teach him to fight. Our hope is that they will NEVER need to fight BUT someday his wife or your grandchildren may need his protection. He needs to feel prepared.
 8. Never let him define his life by all the things he can't do. How sad is it for a boy to go around saying, "I don't do that" or "I can't do that"? Teach him that trying and failing can actually be fun and worth the risk.
 9. Make sure he NEVER waits in his car for his date to come out. If he is too immature to look his date's father in the eye then he shouldn't be dating. Make sure he knows to look this girl's father deep in his eyes and ask "What time would you like your daughter home?" He will have gained a friend.
 10. Teach him to always serve others with great humility, always taking the low place and showing preference to others. That is what Christ did.
-

A Reminder For Fathers... Steve Wright

2008-08-12 10:08:41 by Steve Wright

Quotes taken from Rick Johnson's book-Better Dads, Stronger Sons

"I don't think it's coincidence that the last words God spoke to his people at the end of the Old Testament-his last words for four hundred years-were on the importance of fathering: 'And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.'" (38)

"I know of no man or woman, regardless of age, who doesn't still yearn for his or her father's approval and love." (32)

"Fathers have an innate ability to influence their children and the community around them. I call it 'Father Power' in my workshops for men. It's not the physical power of being bigger and stronger than their wives and kids but the generational power with which God has endowed them-the power that allows fathers to affect people's lives positively or negatively, for good or evil, for hundreds of years." (31)

"Conversely, men who father intentionally and put their children's needs ahead of their own start a legacy that snowballs with positive ramifications down through the centuries." (31)

"When fathers neglect this duty or are absent from the home, families are attacked by predators. Families are like flocks of sheep. Children, like lambs, are naive and simple in their understanding of the world. Fathers are like sheepdogs, guarding the flock from marauding wolves. We protect our families from human predators and from corrupt television programs, movies, music, books, friends, and other people or influences that enter into a child's life." (26)

"...you are so important that you are nearly irreplaceable in the lives of your children-especially your son. Fatherhood is a privilege given by God, and with that privilege comes the power to impact lives." (30)

"Be a man. Stand tall. Give your son an example of masculinity that will survive through the generations." (30)

Boy's Illness Credited for Survival at Sea

2008-09-14 08:09:48 by Steve Wright

You may have read of the father and son who swam in open ocean for over 12 hours recently. I was encouraged when I read this story for several reason but one of the greatest was how this father battle for his autistic son.

“Walter Marino shouted to his 12-year-old son, Christopher, as he drifted farther away in the Atlantic Ocean.

“To infinity,” the father yelled.

“And beyond,” Christopher replied.”

What an incredible [story](#).

Just Waiting on You, Dad...

2008-09-15 09:09:35 by Steve Wright

A husband and wife on vacation at a lake didn't notice their three year old son Billy wandering toward the dock to investigate a boat. He tried to stretch his short legs from the dock to the boat, but didn't quite make it - and fell into six feet deep water. The splash brought Dad running. He dove into the murky water, groping with his arms and legs trying to find Billy. His lungs nearly bursting, he pushed toward the surface - and touched Billy, whose arms were locked around a piling four feet underwater. Dad pried him loose, and they hit the surface together grasping for air.

When they had recovered, Dad asked little Billy what he was doing hanging onto that piling. Billy's answer: "Just waitin' for you. Dad".

Faithful Till the End...

2008-09-16 08:09:03 by Steve Wright

There is a great story about a father's love from the [Man in the Mirror](#). These 3 men went to Alaska Salmon fishing on their annual fishing trip and one man brought along his 12 year old son. One of the men was a pilot so they rented a sea plane, like they always did, to fly to some great fishing spots. They plane landed in the ocean near the mouth of a stream where the Salmon were running, and they had a great day fishing. They were having so much fun fishing in fact they lost track of time. When it came time to leave they had a little problem.

The tide had gone out leaving the plane 30' from the water. Tide changes in Alaska are huge, 20 feet or more. No big deal, bush planes come with survival gear so they built a fire and had fresh salmon for dinner. Next day when the tide was back in they loaded up to fly home. Pilot gunned the engines but the plane just wouldn't get off the water, then it went nose down and started to sink. When the plane had gone aground it had ripped a hole in one of the pontoons and the force of the take off had filled it with water until it was too full to float and too heavy to fly. The plane just didn't have enough power to take off with all that extra water weight. They all survived the crash but they were a long way from shore.

The men were good enough swimmers to reach shore but the 12 year old boy wasn't. His dad stayed with him as the tide carried them both out to sea. The thought of letting his son die alone and the thought of life without him was more than he could bear. So he stayed with him and they died together. Being a father is not for wimps.
