

Abundant Living

MINISTRIES

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The Day That Norm Charles Had His Case of Beer!



Those of you who knew Dad will enjoy this humorous story for Father's Day.

It was 60 years ago... July of 1964. I (John) was 12 at the time. Our family of seven had driven from Lancaster County to the west coast, getting on a rusty Japanese ship in Los Angeles, as Dad and Mom were taking their family back to Brazil for their second term of missionary service. It turned out to be a long ship ride (31 days), down the west coast of the United States, through the Panama Canal, then down the east coast of South America.

This ship lacked comfort provisions... we were traveling "special third class." Our family of seven was in one room (three bunk beds and a wrap-around sofa in the corner). No deck chairs, no table or board games, and fish to eat at an average of more-than twice a day. (That was EVERY evening meal, every noon meal except Sundays when we had curry, sometimes fish even at breakfast... for the 31 days!) And, this was big... there was no provision of towels... as in *bath towels!* (Our own towels were packed away in barrels, down in the cargo hold of the ship.)

As the ship crossed the equator, there was a party on deck. One of the main events was a tug-of-war. Noticing a large stack of towels on the announcer's table, Dad immediately concluded they would be the prize. Bath towels! He scrambled, quickly forming a strong team that included we four sons. "Boys, we want those towels! We NEED those towels. Let's go! I want you to pull with all your might!"

We tugged and pulled. We grunted and groaned, and... WE WON! Recognized as the captain of the team, Dad was called to receive the Grand Prize. Lo and behold, he was awarded NOT the tall stack of bath towels but, instead, a full case of BEER. And the beautiful towels? They were the SECOND-PLACE prize, given to the runners-up. After a half-hearted but be-a-good-sport laugh, we took a picture of Dad holding his once-in-a-lifetime case of beer.

Dad, a problem solver, bartered with the other team captain, trading a case of beer for the bundle of towels. After distributing to his other team members, we retreated to our tiny room, enjoying bath towels for the rest of the trip.

That's it. Dad was quite a man. How I would enjoy sitting and talking with him. **Happy Father's Day** to all dads!



In three short years, Jesus trained twelve men to take His message to the world. Eleven of those followers remained faithful to their calling and effectively spread the gospel throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Just before ascending to heaven, Jesus commissioned His followers to "go and make disciples." This challenge is frequently repeated in our churches today. Christians are urged to reach people of all nationalities for Christ.

However, when it comes to evangelism and missions, one often-overlooked demographic is children. The word "discipline" has the same root as "disciple." Parents com-

monly view themselves as disciplinarians in their family. But they are not as quick to view themselves as “disciple makers.” Yet that is precisely what parents are. The goal of discipline is not to merely correct inappropriate behavior. Its real purpose is to produce Christ-like character.

Since June is a month focused on fathers, a practical question might be, “How does a dad *disciple* his child?” Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of disciple-making is leadership. So what makes a dad a good leader?



✂ **A good leader knows where he’s going.** Proverbs 29:18 states that “without a vision, people cast off restraint.” Children need to be challenged by Dad to live for a cause higher than themselves... the cause of Jesus Christ. Children will feel most secure with a father who confidently leads his family in God’s ways. Such a dad makes it a priority to point his children to God’s Word and its life-changing principles.

✂ **A good leader sets an excellent example.** The apostle Paul said, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Children learn from their parents every day and will be inclined to follow in their footsteps. They watch and listen to their parents and are likely to adopt many of the same habits. Dad’s speech and actions present a model for the family to copy... both for the good and the bad. The child who sees his father being kind, who hears his father speak with wisdom and patience, who watches his father show love to others, will have a tremendously valuable pattern to copy.

✂ **A good leader is not afraid of his followers.** “Fear of man will prove to be a snare” (Proverbs 29:25). Many dads easily give in to the demands of their children. Perhaps they think it is easier to let children have their way than to put up with pouting and screaming. Such an attitude perhaps exhibits laziness... or even a lack of love. Sometimes dads are afraid they will damage their child emotionally if they do not comply with their wishes. Actually, the oppo-

site is true. Children benefit from the security of knowing that Dad won't just cave in to their pressure. They are reassured when they know that Dad has firm, loving boundaries for them that he will enforce, even when they fuss and complain.

✝ **A good leader sacrifices himself for his followers.** "Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). A father who wants to disciple his children for Christ will often need to give up his own schedule and personal desires in order to invest in the life of his child. This doesn't mean that the children rule the household. It means that Dad shows his love for the Lord by caring for his family, even when it isn't convenient or easy.

Unfortunately, many Christian fathers are more willing to sacrifice financially for family entertainment or vacations than for church events or a missions trip which could be life-changing for his children. And also, sadly, many dads are much more willing and eager to sacrifice their time in cheering for the child's athletic efforts than in training their children in the ways of the Lord.



✝ **A good leader has a humble dependence on God.** A father overheard his son pray, "Dear God, please make me the kind of man my Daddy is." Later that night, the father prayed, "Dear God, please make me the kind of man my son wants me to be." Such is the heart of a dad... a heart which God honors. And such is the heart of a dad who raises his sons and daughters to follow his Christ-like example and then watches them grow up to teach their children to do the same.

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