



# DADS & DAUGHTERS

*Timeless wisdom and  
reflections on teaching, guiding,  
and loving your daughter—  
her whole life long*

DR. JAMES DOBSON

PRESENTED TO

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FROM

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DATE  
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*Dads and Daughters*

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## *From One Dad's Heart* **TO ANOTHER**

**T**he passion I feel for the subject at hand is related to the daughter who still calls me Dad. Danae is grown now, but I love her like I did when we were first introduced in the delivery room. Something electric occurred between us on that mystical night, and it endures today. I thank God for the privilege of being the father of this remarkable woman!

Being a father and a type A personality myself, I look back on my parenting experiences and recall instances where I could have done a better job. I wish I could relive some of those busy days at a slower pace. Unfortunately, none of us is allowed do-overs or mulligans. When our record is finally in the books, not a word or a deed can be altered.

Would it be self-serving to tell you that I also did some things right during my early days as a father, and that the memories of some very special times with my kids rank at the top of my list of accomplishments today? Among my favorites are recollections of Danae when she was five years old. We used to take bike trips together to a nearby park on Saturday mornings and play in a sandbox with shovels and buckets. I taught her to build sand castles, explained what a moat and a drawbridge were, and talked about anything else that seemed to interest her. Then we would go to a nearby taco stand and have lunch before riding home. On the way back, we listened every week to a favorite recording of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* on a small Craig recorder, and we sang the songs together. Danae loved those outings, and she can tell you in detail about them today. And guess what? I loved them too.

*From where I sit today, I can say that nothing, and I mean nothing, from that era turned out to be more significant than the hours I spent with my little family. The relationships we enjoy today were nurtured during those years when it would have been very easy for me to chase every professional prize and ignore what mattered most at home.*



Some years ago I asked our radio listeners to call our organization and record a message for their dads. More than six hundred people participated, and not one caller focused on what their father did professionally. None of them said, “Thanks, Dad, for earning a lot of money” or “Thanks for the big house you provided for us.” Instead, caller after caller said, “*Thanks, Dad, for loving me and for being there for me.*” Some said with strong emotion, “*Thank you for letting me interrupt you, even when you were busy.*” Nearly all of the calls coming from women mentioned *the presence of tenderness* in the relationship.

I address this specifically to dads who are still raising daughters and want to respond to the desires of their little hearts. My advice is also relevant to fathers whose daughters are grown. The woman who used to be “Dad’s little princess” may still long for what she didn’t receive when she was young. Even though these fathers can no longer play in the sandbox with their five-year-olds, it is never too late for them to say,

*You are precious to me.*

What I am sharing with you has become my obsession. I get a lump in my throat when I think of our precious kids who know so little about life, and I worry about how we can protect their innocence and preserve the joys of childhood.

That is our task as dads. So get a cup of hot coffee or put on a kettle of tea, settle down in a comfortable chair, and let's talk together.





## *What It Means* **TO BE A DAD**

*Fathers inevitably change the course of their daughters' lives—and can even save them. From the moment you set eyes on her wet-from-the-womb body until she leaves your home, the clock starts ticking. It's the clock that times your hours with her, your opportunities to influence her, to shape her character, and to help her find herself—and to enjoy living.<sup>1</sup>*

Dr. Meg Meeker

**P**ediatrician Meg Meeker has written a wonderful book entitled *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*, in which she writes brilliantly about the way girls are made as well as the difference fathers make in their daughters' lives. The influence that dads wield for good or harm in their daughters' lives touches every dimension of life.

Parents have a fundamental responsibility of not simply overseeing the growth and development of their girls (and boys) but of raising them purposely—building into them certain qualities and traits of character. Wise King Solomon addressed that obligation more than 2,900 years ago when he wrote, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6, kjv). The apostle Paul added another dimension when he said, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

As a father, think for a moment about the implications of these Scriptures.

*First and foremost, they mean a child should be taught to revere God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to understand the spiritual dimension of life.*

But they instruct us to do more than that. Children are a gift from God, and we are stewards of their welfare. Training up our daughters in this sense means to:

- ✿ *Help them to navigate the cultural minefields that lie in their paths.*
- ✿ *Teach them eternal values, talents, and perspectives.*
- ✿ *Instill within them an appreciation for truthfulness, trustworthiness, self-discipline, self-control, generosity, and sweetness of spirit.*
- ✿ *Teach them modesty, morality, and manners.*
- ✿ *Teach them to work and learn and think.*

That is just the beginning, which is why parenthood is such a daunting responsibility, requiring careful forethought and planning.

As fathers, how can we allow ourselves to get so busy with the cares of life that we neglect our vulnerable little girls and leave them unprotected from evil influences? How can we fail to give them the love and attention they crave? And how can we send them into a dangerous world without laying a secure foundation to hold them steady? No other priority comes close to this responsibility to raise our children, as Solomon said, in the way they should go.

Children are a gift from God,  
and we are stewards of their welfare.

