	Sir Godfrey Gregg
We	talk about our moms as the center of the family. And in certain critical
	ways, they always will be.
But	as fathers we have just as important a role to play in the lives of our
boys	and girls that goes beyond carrying the family's mantle of leadership. We
must	get back to the father's traditional roles of provision and protection. A
p	icture comes to my mind — a big, old tree at the waterfront, an almond
tree	that spreads its branches across the sky like open arms, a tree that kids
fi	lled with energy run to in the morning or sit beside for comfort in the
af	ternoon. I think of that feeling of unshakeable security, that sense of
	always being there for you.
Child	ren need that assurance and protection knowing that a father's love is not
far a	way. I remember the assurance when my father would hug me and say you have
to b	ehave yourself. That's a pretty special feeling as a father, knowing your
hug	is as good, or as healing. And even though that sounds very nurturing and
moth	nerly, I see it more as that old almond tree, always there to provide and
	protect.
When	I think of what it means to be a dad, I think of a jolly father who says,
"Com	ne, come and sit on my lap. My boy, what did you do today? Did you make a
mist	ake today? How did that go? What did you learn from that?" That may sound
funny	, but that's the dad figure to me, a reflection of how I see our heavenly
Fath	er. Someone who's always there, almost always smiling, always glad to see
	you, always glad to share a belly laugh.
Th	at father can be stern, but always in a loving way — never harsh, never
cut	ting, never biting. Even when his kids know they've blown it, they don't
fee	el scared to talk with him about it. He fosters a relationship where his
child	Iren can tell him anything. Consequences may come, even punishment. But in
the	midst of all that, he would never speak to them out of condemnation. His
chil	dren would feel comfortable and safe speaking to him, no matter what they
	had done.
Is t	hat an easy relationship dynamic to master? Hardly. Every one of us, even
the g	reatest of dads, falls short. But it's an ideal we should strive for every
	day.
Fathe	erhood is about being engaged with your kids, talking with them, wrestling
	with them, holding them when they need to be held.
It's	wanting to be there for the first step and all the steps thereafter, not
fle	eeing into the safety of a man cave or escaping to the security of work.
Sur	e, career is important, but it's a short, flighty thing compared to your
rela	ationship with your kids. You may go through five or ten jobs during your
worki	ng life. The relationship you have with your children lasts a lifetime. Or
it	should, and it will, if you connect with them emotionally when they're
	young.
	Meeting the Challenge

Of course, being a "big tree" or a jolly, welcoming father doesn't sound all

that heroic. And maybe to some, it doesn't even sound all that manly. Picking up a doll and playing with your daughter and her Barbie Dreamhouse sounds, well, just about as unmanly as you can get. It's not much like extinguishing a fire that very well might burn down the entire forest reserve. But to me, the willingness to grab that doll and play with your daughter for a while lies at the heart of true manhood. Look in the Bible and you'll find that love, the secret to fatherhood, often gets explicitly tied to the idea of sacrifice. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all *things.* – Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13:7. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul also writes, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will. The Lord wills that we be good fathers to our children and good husbands to our wives. Is manliness just brute power and strength and might? Or does it say, "I'm going to lay down my life for you"? On the surface, sacrifice can feel weak and powerless, but it's not. It's powerful. Christ may have looked weak and powerless on the cross during his moment of ultimate sacrifice, and yet that sacrifice remains the most powerful act the universe has ever seen. ON ANOTHER HAND We are at our strongest when we lay down our lives, even in small ways, for our wives and children — maybe especially in small ways. It's hard to do. We get into arguments because we don't always do it well. But I guess that's why it's called a "sacrifice." If it were easy, it wouldn't be a sacrifice. When you look at healthy families, you see one common characteristic – sacrificial men. Men who take time out for their kids — even when they'd rather do something else. Men who talk with their kids — even when some part of them just wants to watch the soccer game. Men who deal patiently with their kids — even when they've got to mop up the spilled milk from the floor for the third time that day. When men do the right thing for their families and offer that life-giving sacrifice, it pays big dividends. The families that result from that kind of fatherly commitment enjoy robust health. The time you invest with your children today will be as seed sworn waiting to be reaped at a later time. There is so much joy to see my grand children come to the camera to chat with me. I love them just as I love my daughter. My grandson beats all when he asks his mother to call grandpa. Oh how I love to see his energy and hear him talk about the things he did in school. Would you believe the first thing he did is pray. Then my grand daughter will steal the show with her smile and handshakes, then she will blow me the kisses. I am so

glad to be a part of their lives and I thank their mother for including me in their lives. I make the sacrifice for them for them in any way I can and soon I will be with them the Lord spare my life. May Almighty God bless us and keep us in His grace and perfect love.