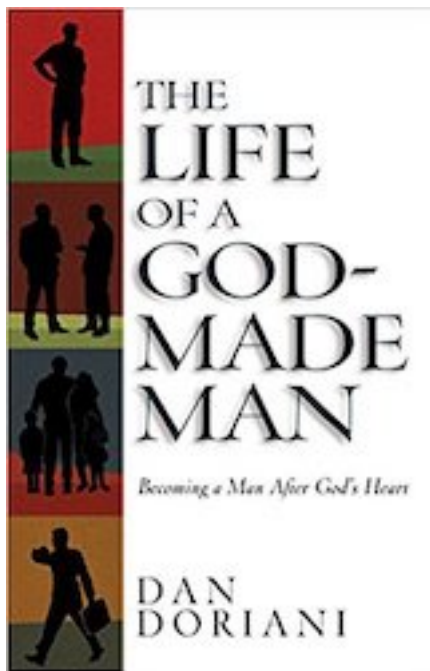


Notes on The Life of a God-made Man Chapter 5

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This chapter introduced to our interaction with our children, as men. There were several insightful notes that resonated from earlier chapters as well.

The main one being - *being over following checklists* as in the quote -

Successful parenthood depends on who you are more than on the techniques you know.

As I have said in previous posts, I was a big technique guy - sucker for latest tips tricks, 7-steps this, check-list that, building these habits etc. From following Dobson to Robbins to Covey, I looked for ways to be a better dad as I knew I

was not one or even if I was, I knew there was a lot of room for improvement.

My parents are great and have given me the love and the support needed through my entire childhood and even into adulthood. My dad especially is even keel and funny. He also exemplified the habits he was coaching us (me and my sis) on. He was a simple guy who stuck to basics. Although, he couldn't explain a lot of open questions I had, I tried to emulate some of that in my earlier parenting. My mom was more the emotional kind and I tried to minimize that consciously in my interactions with my own sons, but failed as it seeped in at more times than I can count. This included how to discipline, raise, entertain or just be there for my sons.

But I also injected all the worldly learnings I had from the various self-help books and psycho babel.

Once I became a believer, the notion of a Father and Father's love became more a reality. I also understood how my own upbringing had taught mother's love over father's love. Biblically speaking, there is no love like a Father's love. I started to ask God for His mercy and grace where I failed as the earthly father. I also saw my role in raising my sons (even if my oldest was over 22 by then) as just earthly stewards of God's children. In the end, I will be accountable for how I raised them, loved them, became Godly men to my Lord Jesus, just as I would about how I treated my bride.

I really didn't know the meaning of mercy or justice or long-suffering (patience) until I read the Gospel. I realize now how shallow one dimensional those words meant until I saw how my Heavenly Father demonstrated that through His Son and to His elect nation in Israel.

Pre-2018, I vacillated between indulgent, neglectful and dominant. Since I travelled a lot and was disconnected from my family, when I came back based on the mood and the house environment it was one of those modes. I can't ever remember being too much of one. I remember having some sense to swing if I felt I was being too neglectful. I would try to be too nice which would border on indulgent.

These days, I am still in the mode of dominant or indulgent. I have, with God's grace and my wife's coaching become less neglectful. But remain dominant most of the times swinging back to indulgent. I don't think I have hardly been godly to them, other than in how I live my life - from an individual standpoint. Some of the verses that I keep reminding to remain balanced and move towards the right bottom quadrant towards positive love and justice to become godly in how I deal with my sons, are the following -

[Pro20:10] Diverse weights and diverse measures, they are both alike,
an abomination to the LORD.

[Pro20:7] The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are
blessed after him

[Exo20:5] You shall not worship them or serve them; for I LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.

[Eph6:4] And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord

[Col3:21] Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

[Pro13:24] Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

[Lam3:22-23] Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

If I am a believer and the Holy Spirit is indwelt in me [Eph1:13] and we are the temple [Eph2:21] of God, then I need to emulate and seek God's counsel and strength in how I act towards my sons. The biggest challenge is that of balance and equity in how I react/behave/talk/verbalize/interact with them. The biggest challenge for me is the patience attribute that is referred to in Exodus as longsuffering. If God can be quick to forgive and patient, how dare I act the opposite, to satisfy my fleshly desires demonstrating a lack of control or influences of the world.

Lack of patience in me demonstrates that I desire to be in control. If my sons dont act as robots following all my commands and wishes and anticipate my mood changes, I usually loose my patience even if I dont show it verbally. I am sure they can sense that in me.

At times I feel like becoming Denethor from Lord of the Rings Two Towers, even though I hate his character!

Having the cultural mismatch doesnt help either. Many of my jokes doesnt hit the mark or worse misconstrued as being rude or inconsiderate or being a jerk. But many of it is just part of my upbringing as well as how I am wired.

If I need to be in control of every little actions of my sons, am I really treating them as God's unique creations or am I really honoring their personhood? Even if they listen to every instruction of mine, do I want them to follow my commands or God's? These answers are obvious, but without thinking about it in this fashion, I will continue to sin in how I treat my sons.

The other extreme is the lackadasical attitude in disciplining them. I wrote about this in Eph 6:1-4 post. I am a martinet. But I become indulgent - as I worry about what would their self-esteem be or how much they might hate me or how they might not feel loved. As you see, a lot of worldly influence. There is a bit of people pleasing there as well. What would my peers or strangers in Starbucks or Walmart think?

The biggest and most conscious thing I am doing these days, although failing at times, are the following

- loving my son's mother as my one and only wife who is the daughter of the High King Jesus
- being present by tuning out work and other worries when I am with my sons, even if its a few minute ride together
- trying to connect with my sons at their level, even when at times it comes across as idiotic
- swiching lifestyles to suit us coming closely as a family; prioritizing quantity time over quality
- used to hate baseball, but have loved it as I started to embrace it as my two younger ones showed a keen interest and enjoyment in participating and watching in it. Its grown now more than they love the game :)
- trying to walk in their shoes when my first reaction is - *when I was your age, I was blah blah blah*
- encouraging and empathizing that doesnt look like a sycophant
- giving their space and time and not assume they wait around and live around my schedule or for my purposes
- becoming conscious and praying when I start using them or manipulating them to do my goals, which doesnt align with God's will
- praying more with them
- asking their forgiveness when I fail or sin against them and God
- figuring out some fun activities that are innocent and devoid of sin (or what I perceive to be bad for the soul)
- trying to take bike rides with them, need to do more in 2018 as we enter into Fall
- taking them out to treats for no reason, without looking or sounding like an indulgent
- asking for my wife to pray for me as she asks God for the man she married as promised by her Heavenly Father in rasing young men that bring glory to Christ Jesus.