

Daddy Issues

“My, friends tell me I have daddy issues,” was the comment that ended a short synopsis of why a client I was seeing for the first time told me why she was coming in to see me. She rattled off a string of broken relationships (beginning with her family of origin) and she jokingly said at the end, “my friends tell me I have daddy issues.” I asked her what she thought they meant by that and she responded that she really was not sure.

We began to explore the possible healthy role an earthly father is meant to play beginning with love (unconditional), modeling (walking similar to Christ), and protection (physically, emotionally, spiritually, boundaries, and even “sexual protection”). When this is done well young adults can have healthy boundaries and understand what is involved in giving of oneself completely to another person. They can use wisdom and discernment in evaluating friends and a potential spouse.

Daddy issues often times come into play **when those intended actions aren’t met and it leaves wounds or questions – or “issues”** - in our life that surface in relationships with others and need to be worked out after we leave the house (maybe even before we are gone). Unfortunately, these issues never get resolved and one lives in relational chaos and a state of loneliness and hurt for much of their life.

We talked about a healthy design of biblical masculinity as a father. A father can comfort his children while allowing them to see the world accurately and realizing life indeed involves many potential idols, pain and disappointment and also a wonderful opportunity for fulfillment, peace and joy through Christ. He also has a role to teach his children (Deuteronomy 6:5-9) about their Heavenly Father, His character, His design for life, and the 66 love letters (aka the Bible) that He wrote to us to share his heart, his plan and purpose for us. Our earthly father can help us through conversations, studying, and modeling what it means that we are created in the image of God himself. In His image we are relational, creative, beautiful, generous, forgiving, intentional, loved, purposeful, rational, thoughtful, caring, productive, and stewards of God’s resources (our body, time, finances etc.: I Corinthians 6, Romans 12:1-21 Cor. 14, Genesis 1:28) and the grace first given to us, (I Corinthians 1:4-9). Created in the image of God is universal to all with the exception of gender differences.

The masculine image of God is to move into life covering and protecting as he goes. When a boy grows up with “daddy issues” he oftentimes becomes passive in the areas he needs to lead and engage, (though he may be a womanizer, abusive, violent or aggressive), is unable to bond deeply, and often times fails to take responsibility in major areas of his life and family.

Femininity is to be inviting and relationally life giving and supportive. The woman with significant “daddy issues” often times looks to a male relationship as a god, or test of her femininity, or closes herself off (unable to deeply bond), and instead of being inviting can look more like an angry porcupine unable to bond deeply with another.

We acknowledged that though we have acted irrationally, unlovingly, been unproductive at times, and passive for the male and uninviting for the female, our history does not negate factual truth of who we are because of who made us and therefore in whose image we have been made (Genesis 1:27). Though others have hurt us, possibly used or violated us our value or worth is not changed. Our purpose, “To make God famous and enjoy Him while doing it!” remains. Understanding the wounds we walk around with can allow our perfect Heavenly Father – yes the very one who allowed us to have a imperfect earthly father – to reparent us and help us to grow into the man or woman of Christ He intended. We can then navigate relationships in a God honoring, healthy, satisfying, and joy filled manner.

In Christ - My ONLY hope

Doug