

Fil-Am Community Church

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### A God Who Develops Me

*“For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.”*

Hebrews 3:4 (NIV)

Some men in a pickup truck drove into a lumberyard. One of the men walked in the office and said, “We need some four-by-twos.” The clerk said, “You mean two-by-fours, don’t you?”

The man said, “I’ll go check,” and went back to the truck. He returned in a minute and said, “Yeah, I meant two-by-fours.”

“All right. How long do you need them?”

The customer paused for a minute and said, “I’d better go check.” After a while, the customer returned to the office and said, “A long time. We’re gonna build a house.”

I’m just wondering if you’d trust those men to build your house.

All people are builders in some form or another. And probably the greatest building we do is in regard to people. We’re all building people, because we all influence people and hopefully, for God and for good in life.

When I was still starting my journey in ministry, there is a woman who I’ll never forget. She is the wife of my former pastor in New Jersey. She is the one who helped me to develop as a Christian. There were others who helped me in my walk with Christ but she stood out because of two words she always said to me whenever I felt like giving up. She would say in Tagalog, “Tuloy lang.” Keep on.

Then I got married, now it's my wife who says these words to me, "Keep on... or else." Just kidding.

So, these are two women who have been building me and developing me. But, above all, there is someone who I recognize is the real developer of me. And that is God himself; he is the greatest builder and developer of all.

He builds people in ways we never could. The Bible says in Heb. 3:4 "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."

God is the builder of everything that is good and holy and right. And God is in the business building of good fathers as well.

We're continuing our series on "What Kind of God is He?" We're on the second part and we're looking at the "A God Who Develops Me." For Father's Day I would like to share a few thoughts on the kind of father that God develops.

#### I. GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP A PATIENT FATHER

There is a story about a father who became disturbed about the length of time his six-year-old son was taking to get home from school. The father decided he would make the trip to discover for himself how long it should take a small boy to cover the distance. The father settled on 20 minutes but his son was still taking an hour. Finally the father decided to make the trip with his son.

After the trip, the father said, "The 20 minutes I thought reasonable was right, but I failed to consider such important things as a side trip to track down a trail of ants...or an educational stop to watch a man fix a flat...or the time it took to swing around a half dozen telephone poles...or how much time it took for a boy just to get acquainted with two stray dogs and a brown cat.

"In short," said the father, "I had forgotten what it is really like to be six years old." Folks, it takes great patience to be a good father.

A study in 2006 came out in HealthDay News that your parenting style affects your child's weight and whether she will be overweight by first grade.

"Children of authoritarian parents had five times the risk of being overweight compared to children of more diplomatic style parents."

What are we talking about? I think they are saying that a child's health is in danger when parents are overbearing and don't demonstrate patience with their children.

And it may be that far more than their health is in danger. Sometimes this type of parenting could cause children to become estranged to people and to God.'

If a parent, for example, is a Christian and yet is extremely dogmatic and authoritarian those children could eventually become alienated from their parents and their God!

We've all heard the stories about parents who were perhaps overly strict and then when the children got older and were on their own that they had nothing to do with God and the church. [Ephesians 4:2](#) "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Also, in [1 Thessalonians 5:14](#) "And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."

We are admonished to be patient with all people, including our children. There have been times in my life when I was not so patient with my children. They spill milk and I would readily scold them. I realized, however, that first of all, scolding them doesn't change the situation. I still have a spilled milk which need to be cleaned up. Worse, I now have a crying child, too, whose feelings need to be assuaged. So, I'm learning. I don't want to be the kind of dad that I read in a story. You may have come across this. Maybe someone sent it to you in an email. I don't think it's a true story but it has a very important lesson. It goes like this:

While a man was tuning his car, his 4 yr old son picked up a stone and scratched lines on the side of the car. In anger, the man took the child's hand and hit it many times; not realizing he was using a wrench.

At the hospital, the child lost all his fingers due to multiple fractures. When the child saw his father, with painful eyes he asked, 'Dad when will my fingers grow back?'

The man was so hurt and speechless. Devastated by his own actions, he went back to his car and kicked it many times.

A while later he was sitting in front of the car, and he finally looked at the scratches his son had made. What he saw were not random scratches, but WORDS. The child had written 'LOVE YOU DAD'.

God wants to develop me and you as a patient father. Also,

## II. GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP A GODLY FATHER

Years ago, the CBS news program 48 Hours did an investigation into the children of some famous people and how they were influenced by what they saw from their parents while growing up. On this program there was an interview with James Raymond, who is the son of a famous person. You couldn't identify his famous father by his name, however, because he was adopted shortly after birth. He was raised by a California family who kept his adoption records sealed until he was 31. That was when Raymond discovered that his natural father is David Crosby of the group Crosby, Stills, and Nash.

Raymond's habits, preferences, and attitudes were more closely related to his adoptive parents than his natural father. His behavior and beliefs reflected those of the parents who raised him and what is good came not from ancestry but from what he saw happening in his parent's lives.

What do we learn here? Example is apparently more powerful than heritage.

II [Thessalonians 3:6-8](#) "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat

anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you."

We parents and fathers do set an example for our children to follow. Be it good or bad, they often do walk in our steps.

Many young people, for example, have been raised by hard-working parents and they, too, became hard-working adults. [I Corinthians 11:1](#) "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

The greatest example, however, that any parent or father can set for his children is that of godliness or Christ-likeness. I am thinking of an elder, now 80 years old in Iberia, MO, who raised two children in a Christian home and in the church. I am confident that those children saw their father read God's Word in the home and pray, as well as faithfully attend church and serve anyway he could. Today, both of those children are in the church and serving the Lord. And all because both mom and dad set an example of godly living for their children.

What kind of example are we leaving for our children? Is it an example that is honoring to God? Are we living a life that we would like them to live as well?

Years ago, I shared with you the story of Brian Welch, a rock star who became a Christian. Welch is a founding member of the popular hard rock band "Korn" spelled with a K. In 2005, Welch announced that he was leaving the band because he has chosen the Lord Jesus Christ as his savior and will be dedicating his musical pursuits to that end.

Apparently, Welch went through a time of confusion and turmoil in his life. For two years before he left the band, he had become disillusioned with the band's message of aggression in their music. Also, he had become sick of 'chasing the almighty buck' and being respected by his young daughter was more important than being rich.

In an interview he said, "I have a 6-year-old daughter, and I want her to be able to look me in the eye. I'm a single dad, that's what it comes down to. And the guys were really accommodating when I would tell them that. They'd be like, 'Bring your daughter on tour! We'll work the tour around you.'

But that's not the place for a 6-year-old. She would be sitting backstage sometimes, just counting dollars. Because Fieldy would tell her, 'Every time you hear a curse word, you'll get a dollar. It will help us stop cursing.' And at the end of the day, she'd turn to me and be like, 'Look at all my money, Daddy!'"

Welch struggled with that. It was a painful time in his life.

He was caught between his music and his friends in the band and with the kind of legacy he was leaving his daughter. Then a friend lent him a Bible and he found comfort in that. After a weekend of soul-searching coupled with reading the Bible, he decided it was time to go.

Now, he is determined to help others find their way out. He says, "I always loved that Korn's music helped kids let out aggression. But with my new music, I want kids to know that there's more out there. I want to show them there's a light at the end of the pain tunnel. That there's more out there than just aggression... I had to go through the lows to appreciate the highs."

Let me share with you this interview he had with Fox.

VIDEO: (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23fuPly9mvM>)

Isn't that amazing? God can do wonders in anyone's life. Even someone who is on the verge of Satanism can be rescued by God and turn into a godly father. You may not be in the same category, but nevertheless, you feel that you're acting less than what God intends you to be. Let me assure you that God can turn your life around and you can become someone who your children can be proud of.

God wants to develop me a patient father. He also wants to develop as a godly father. Finally,

III. God wants to develop a loving father.

I Cor. 1:8 “We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”

Harmon Killebrew who used to play for the Minn. Twins said, “My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, ‘You’re tearing up the grass.’ Dad would reply, ‘We’re not raising grass, we’re raising boys.’”

Then, there was this little boy, with a timid voice and idolizing eyes, he greeted his father as he returned from work, "Daddy, how much do you make an hour?"

Greatly surprised, but giving his boy a glaring look, the father said: "Look, son, not even your mother knows that. Don't bother me now, I'm tired."

"But Daddy, just tell me please, how much do you make an hour," the boy insisted. The father finally giving up replied: " Twenty dollars per hour." "Okay, Daddy, could you loan me ten dollars?" the boy asked.

Showing restlessness and positively disturbed, the father yelled: "So that was the reason you asked how much I earn, right! Go to sleep and don't bother me anymore!"

It was already dark and the father was meditating on what he had said and was feeling guilty. Maybe he thought, his son wanted to buy something. Finally, trying to ease his mind, the father went to his son's room.

"Are you asleep son?" asked the father. "No, Daddy. Why?" replied the boy partially asleep. "Here's the money you asked for earlier," the father said. "Thanks, Daddy!" rejoiced the son, while putting his hand under his pillow and removing some money. "Now I have enough! Now I have twenty dollars!" the boy said to his father, who was gazing at his son, confused at what his son just said. Then, the son said, "Daddy could you sell me one hour of your time?"

Dr. James Dobson observed that love spells T-I-M-E for children. This is borne by the results of a study done to determine the amount of interaction between fathers and their small children.

First, the fathers were asked to estimate the amount of time they spent each day communicating with their child. The average answer was about fifteen to twenty minutes. Next, microphones were attached to the father so that each interaction could be recorded. The results of this study were shocking: The average amount of time spent by these middle-class fathers with their small children was thirty-seven seconds per day. Their direct interaction was limited to 2.7 encounters daily, lasting ten to fifteen seconds each!

Time is a gift you give that you can never get back. You can give money, and always make more. You can give gifts, because you can always get new things anyway. But once time is given, it never comes back. Time reveals the priorities in your life.

Now, aside from time, communication is also a very important thing. It's important in any relationship. For a relationship to thrive there must be communication. So, it helps a lot in adult relationships, but it helps a lot more for children. Children need our assurance and approval. If we don't give it to them when they're small they're going to get it from their peers or from others when they grow up. And usually, what they get is not what they need and they end up in trouble.

My dad is not a communicative person. He is quiet. Most of the time he wants to keep to himself. I can't recall a time when he praised me for something I'd done well. So, I grew up wondering if he ever appreciated me or loved me or was proud of me. I hungered for his encouraging words.

Then, when I was in fourth year college, a friend of mine approached me and said, “Hey, I was hanging out with your dad the other night at your uncle’s birthday party. There were a few folks around.

And boy, you should hear how your dad talked about you. He’s just so proud of you. He talked of your achievements and all.”

I realized that my dad had been telling others what he couldn’t tell me. He’s a typical Filipino. And my perception of him changed. I just wished I’d learned it earlier then I could have graduated summa cum laude instead of “suma-kunwari”. That’s Filipino for “pretending”. The thing is, don’t be frugal with your words to your children. Tell them directly how you appreciate them and love them and how proud you are about them. It helps to build their self-esteem when they hear it straight from you.

Fathers, how are you doing with your time and communication with your children? Deuteronomy 6:7-9 says, *“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*

Dads, do you want to know what is important in your life today? Look at your day timer, your outlook calendar, your schedule, and where your time is devoted to, that’s what is important. Unfortunately, many dads say that they love their jobs. They love their hobbies. They love their entertainment, their comfort. If you asked them if they loved their children, they would swear to you that they do. But their time doesn’t match up.

And some of you have bought into the thinking of this world. I’ve got to keep working and working and working so I can provide for them the finer things

of this world, and providing for family is important and biblical, but I think that we sometimes go beyond what is necessary.

Dads, our children are watching us. They're looking for a hero, a role model, someone they could imitate.

It's kind of like this situation—A little boy was caught swearing like a sailor. "Young man, where did you learn to talk that way?" said the boy's mother. The boy looked at his father and said, "Well, Dad, should I tell her?"

Now, as fathers, we want to be good examples to our children. But is being good, good enough? We have to qualify that. You see, any dad can be a good dad to their children. You send them to the best schools, you're a good dad. You buy them what they need, you're a good dad. You attend their school activities, play with them, eat with them, you're a good dad. But even the head of some criminal gang can be a good dad to his children. What we need are not only good dads but godly dads as well. Dads who know God, dads who impart God's word to their children, dads who are patient, godly, and loving.

Fathers, this morning, I hope this message resonates with you. God wants you to succeed as a father because he is a Father as well. He did everything that was right and beneficial, even sending his own Son Jesus to die for your sins. He knew that unless Jesus changed us, we couldn't change. You see, real change can only come by submitting our lives to Jesus. He is the one who died for you, was buried and rose from the dead for you. Our heavenly Father sent Jesus because he loves you. He doesn't want you to die in your sins but to be saved and go to heaven. The greatest privilege is to know God as your dad in heaven.

There were these young boys debating whose father was the best. This discussion highlighted who their fathers knew. The first boy started the debate by

claiming his father knew the mayor. He was soon topped by the second boy who said, "That's nothing. My dad knows the governor." The third said, "My dad knows the senator." The stakes were getting pretty high, and the eavesdropping father wondered what his young son would say about him. The little boy shot back, "So what! My dad knows God!"

Would your son say the same thing? May our children always be able to say, "My dad knows God!"