



An example of the Divine Dad

By Cyrus Mad-Bondo

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ~ Romans 5:8, ESV

In this commonly quoted Bible passage, God has given men an example of fatherhood to follow in loving and caring for our children.

Our Heavenly Father, the Divine Dad as I affectionately call Him, loves us with a sacrificial love. This divine fatherhood and sacrificial love calls for a loving kindness that treats every life as sacred.

In parenting my three children – Becky, Michael, and Irene, who is now in heaven – I must confess that demonstrative love, frankly, is challenging, although critically necessary.

Loving unconditionally

It is easy to love all my children unCONDITIONally until a tough CONDITION arises. But, in godly fathering, I have to dig deeper and not withdraw my love when they go astray.

In calling me to be a Christlike father, God is pointing me to His example of the Divine Dad.



Cyrus with grandsons, Arthur and Isaac.

So, what does that look like in my life?

My wife, Julie, and I have two precious grandchildren, Isaac and Arthur. Neither boy's father is involved in his life. Shockingly to some, these children were born out of wedlock. But they did not choose the circumstances of their conception. They have been born into a reality that is out of their control.

Nonetheless, they are created in the image of God and should be loved unconditionally and without prejudice for how they came to be. This means I must love my daughter and my grandchildren in a way that honors God.

(over)

The authoritative Word of God, the Bible that I hold with reverence, says the Lord is the “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows, is God in his holy habitation” (Psalm 68:5, ESV).

The ministry of JHC passionately advocates the sanctity of life. Wherever women and children are in precarious situations, we must summon the courage and the resources to ensure that these lives are protected and to help them thrive.

Many kinds of absent fathers

I cannot, with a clear conscience, claim to honor God and willfully ignore the plight of my two grandchildren who are, in fact, fatherless. It is hypocritical to neglect these children while serving in any ministry, especially this one. I have the opportunity and responsibility to love them in such a way that affords me the right to tell them about their Heavenly Father, who loves them and has a purpose for their lives.

I am often disappointed that many Christians are so vocal about the sanctity of life but are unwilling to engage with the vulnerable children who need them most. They choose to criticize the lack of fathers’ involvement in the lives of children and their mothers; yet, they adamantly refuse to help them in any meaningful way.

God is not asking us to care only for children whose fathers have died. Fatherless children are also those whose fathers are living but just not present.

The nagging question in my mind is simply this: What is my role when I see children whose fathers are not involved in their lives? I have chosen to answer that question by

“stepping up” in the lives of two. My grandsons!

Help, encourage and support

My plea to all men is to come alongside fatherless children and their mothers – to mentor, help, encourage, and support them.

It’s often easier to debate the frustration of helping single women who continue to have multiple children outside of marriage than it is to act and begin to change their culture. But that’s a discussion for another time.

While it *is* necessary to address these behaviors, I would like to sound an alarm. I want to challenge other men to invest their time and resources in helping children whose fathers are not part of their lives. We can simultaneously challenge absentee fathers to do the right thing while helping vulnerable children and their mothers.

I am choosing to love my daughter and grandchildren purely by imitating my Divine Dad. He has loved, and continues to love, me with new mercies every day. I will provide my grandchildren with a father figure who will be there to love, guide, teach and support them — a man they can count on in good times and bad times.

Fatherlessness is a major global crisis that JHC is addressing by reaching out to as many people as possible through the self-sustainability initiative. This strategy helps provide dignity and stability to women and their children for many years to come. I pray we all do our parts.