

# A Few GOOD MEN *By j. d. stegall*

“**T**here are over 14 million single parent families in America today, and that number is on the rise.”<sup>1</sup>

Often single fathers are depicted as deadbeats – wanting nothing to do with their children. But what about the men who want to be loving fathers in the few days a month they get their kids? What about the mothers who destroy those fathers’ reputations with lies; what about that father’s pain and emptiness? Does the system give these men a chance, and if not, where does their hope come from?

## THE PAIN OF A SINFUL DECISION

The picture of a child with his head down, sulking over his father’s broken promise is too common. However, some single fathers actually love God and fully accept their responsibilities to their children.

As a single father living in sin at the time of my first daughter’s birth, I feel I got what I deserve. The pain of my decision not to follow God’s Word still stings like a hot branding iron at times. I don’t get to see my daughter very often, even when I am scheduled to see her. Although God has forgiven me, His principles of sowing and reaping remain in effect.

Yet when a good father is kept from his children by the child’s mother, it can be harmful for the child as well as hurtful to the dad. Trying to fight for your rights as a father, though, in most state courts is like being an NFL running back without any blockers. He is doomed from the start. “The entire justice system is against [you].”<sup>2</sup> This is especially true when the ex-wife is vindictive. These single parent fathers feel isolated on

an island. Like Tom Hanks in the movie *Lost*, there is no help on the horizon.

On the opposite spectrum of deadbeat dads, we find broomstick mothers. Broomstick mothers cast spells that put great gulfs between child and father, mixing magical potions of lies and deception. Whip, bam, poof! Another father’s credibility is destroyed in a child’s eyes. How can a man overcome such odds?

## HOPE IN GOD

Even though we good fathers may have had our reputations assassinated and our children falsely imprisoned by broomstick mothers, we are still to put our hope and trust in God. The Bible says, “You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word” (Psalm 119:114).

One way to stay hopeful is by joining a church support group for single fathers. Most men fear if they open up they are being “soft.” But, accountability is a biblical principle. We see it in many relationships in the Bible, for example, Joshua and Moses, or Paul and Timothy. Once we dare open the secret chamber in our own hearts, then God shines His eternal flashlight in that area, removing the bitterness and pain that weigh us down.

When we get a strong base of men in the church who know their rights, take a stand against sin, and uphold their rights for their children’s sakes, state governments will take notice. The system can be made strong by faithful warriors who fight to be with their children. Pain will turn into restoration, a few good men into soldiers of the Lord.



j. d. stegall loves getting to know Jesus better through reading and studying His Word and praising His name. He says, “It is important to know and love Him with all my heart, soul, and strength so I can be the best husband and father to my wonderful wife and kids. j. d. and his family attend Experience Church of the Open Bible in Des Moines, Iowa.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL VISITS

- *Create positive anticipation.* Plan early for your visit. Engage the children in the planning.
- *Know your child.* What is her favorite food? his favorite sports team? his personal habits?
- *Don’t push your agenda on your children.* Going from house to house can cause emotional jetlag. Keep similar rules/schedules as much as possible.
- *Give kids their own space.* Give them their own room – or a dresser or bookcase – something that is “theirs.”
- *Keep kids first,* especially if you have a girlfriend or new wife. Don’t force new relationships on your children.
- *Keep the kids out of conflicts.* Your ex-wife is still their mother. Treat her with respect. Keep in contact during your visits when possible and keep her mind at peace.
- *Even though you are not a husband, you are still a dad.* Children still need a loving relationship with a father in whom they can confide. Don’t take their negativity personally. If they resist visits, even though it hurts, make it clear they always have a place in your heart and home. One day they will see things differently.

<sup>1</sup>www.singlepouse.com  
<sup>2</sup>www.wheresdaddy.org

For more tips, visit [www.fatherhoodabout.com](http://www.fatherhoodabout.com)