Introduction: What is an influence? In what ways do father’s exert influence over their children? Is there a difference between control and influence? What kind of influence has your father had on you?

Text: Pro 22:6  Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

- Nobody can guarantee the outcome of a child’s life.
  - Each have their own will.
  - Each have a sinful nature.
  - Each make their own choices.

I. Definition: influence – power to sway or effect a person’s thinking and subsequent actions or choices. The power of persuasion.

- We can however influence our children to live a certain way.
  - Influence is the power of persuasion
  - the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone
  - To effect toward an outcome
  - To have impact.
  - To sway
  - To promote a certain course or direction
  - To shape or mold through contact, power or will
  - To guide

II. 3 Characteristics of a Godly Father

1.- LOVE THE LORD

Mat 22:36-39 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

- Joh 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.
- Heb 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
  - Both parents regular attenders 33% of children will be regular 41% irreg (26% non-att)
  - Father irregular attender, Mother regular = 3% regular 59% irreg (38% non-att)
  - Father non-att, Mother regular = 2% regular 37% irreg (61% non-att)
  - Father regular, Mother non-att = 30% regular 41% irreg (29% non-att)
  - ***A father’s influence is HUGE !!!

- PRAY FOR YOURSELF - Exhibit your dependence on your father for your children!
  1 Chron. 16:11 – “Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually.”
  You don’t have all the answers to their questions … you can’t solve all their problems. You don’t have all the wisdom, love and patience to be the father you ought to be. Without God’s help, you can never be the father God wants you to be. You need help! You can’t do it by yourself …

- BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL – When you sin be quick to confess and repent (don’t try to hide it) DESCRIBE FAMILY COUNSEL MEETINGS!
Proverbs 22:6 - “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

You are a role model for your children … like it or not … good or bad … they will, to one degree or another, model their lives after you. You have inherited some of your father’s characteristics … your children are inheriting some of yours.

Whether you know it or not (or mean to or not), you are influencing the lives of your children, and your children’s children.

You ARE a role model … a good father will be a GOOD role model.

2. -LOVE YOUR WIFE

Your children watch how you treat their mother. They WATCH … and they are LEARNING and FORMING their concept of marriage from YOU. You are creating a PATTERN, a BLUEPRINT for marriage that your children will probably imitate.

If they see you show disrespect for your wife … your son will carry that into his marriage.
If you verbally or mentally or physically abuse your wife … your daughter will expect that in her marriage.
If you treat their mother like she isn’t worth very much … you are degrading the home, the family, and marriage … which they will carry into their future homes, families & marriages.
If you quarrel then both of you should confess your shortcomings to your children – kiss & make up & assure your children of your continued commitment to each other and to them!
NEVER, NEVER, NEVER USE THE “D” (Divorce) word!

BUT …
If they visibly see you show love and respect to their mother … your son will learn how to be a good husband and father himself.
If you honor your wife … your daughter will never be satisfied with a man who dishonors her.
If you cherish their mother as a valuable part of not only your life, but their life … they will carry that model with them for the rest of their lives.
Ephesians 5:28 – “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself,” HOW TO BE A GOOD FATHER … Love your wife!

3. - LOVE YOUR CHILDREN

- DON’T EXPECT “PERFECT” CHILDREN

Just like there are no perfect fathers … there are no perfect children … AMEN?

Fathers, don’t EXPECT your children to be perfect. Don’t expect them to meet all of your expectations … to fulfill all of your goals for them … to be what you want them to be.

Too many fathers try to live out their own lives through their children. They want their sons to be the football stars that they could never be. They want their daughters to marry into money &
success that they never achieved.

Every child is different ... they are not a clone of you (Thank God!). It’s natural for a child to make mistakes ... spill their milk ... accidentally break things ... do poorly on a test ... get angry ...

They’re not perfect ... like YOU were when you were a kid! ACCEPT your children for who they are ... whether they are clumsy or athletic ... scatterbrained or brainy ... shy or a motor-mouth ... goofy or sophisticated ...

Instead of constantly criticizing their imperfections, acknowledge their imperfections ... and love them. They aren’t perfect ... they will never be perfect ... don’t expect them to be perfect.

Col. 3:21 – “Fathers, don’t embitter your children (make your children resentful), or they will become discouraged.” HOW TO BE A GOOD FATHER ... Don’t expect perfect children.

- ENJOY YOUR CHILDREN

Psalm 127:3 – “Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; The fruit of the womb is a reward.”

Children are given to us to ENJOY ... not to be a burden ... not to avoid ... not to ignore ... BUT TO ENJOY! In order to ENJOY them, you’ve got to be with them ... have fun with them ... share your life with them.

None of this: “The QUALITY of time is more important than the QUANTITY of time.” The QUANTITY of time you spend with them tells them how important they are to you ... whether they are just an afterthought ... or an inconvenience ... or a disruption in your busy schedule. Don’t just give them your leftovers.

Enjoy being a father ... and make sure that they enjoy having you as their father. Spend some time on the floor with them, giving them horsy rides ... take them to fun places, doing fun things ... laugh ... play ... give them some memories of Dad being FUN to be around.

HOW TO BE A GOOD FATHER ... Enjoy your children.

➢ LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN (QUALITY TIME IS REQUIRED)

Give them your undivided attention ... not with one eye on the TV and the other eye on them. When they have a problem ... when they are worried ... when they are sad ... when they are lonely ... they don’t need cartoons, or a video game, or their best friends Dad ... they need YOU!

Get involved with your children, and know what’s going on in their everyday life. Listen to them ... even when they’re not saying anything, they are speaking volumes. Be the kind of father that they can come to and say anything that’s on their mind ... without being criticized for it.

If you listen to them when they’re small and their problems are small ... and then they’ll come to you when they’re bigger, and their problems are bigger.

Proverbs 1:5 – “A wise man will hear and increase in learning ...”
PROVIDE FOR YOUR CHILDREN

1 Tim. 5:8 – “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Even the LOST provide for their families ... BUT ... you can’t be a GOOD FATHER and not provide for your children.

DO NOT TRY TO GIVE THEM EVERYTHING THEY WANT ... that’s 1 of the WORST things you can do. We are living in a generation of children whose parents have robbed their children of the blessing of WANTING, WORKING & WAITING for material things. We have spoiled our children by giving them INSTANT SATISFACTION ... and they will carry on this tradition by charging whatever they want and accumulating enormous credit card debt.

Too many fathers think they can BUY OFF their children with THINGS ... and thus relieve themselves of the guilt for not being the kind of father they ought to be ... that they can BUY their way out of Biblical fatherhood.

My father didn’t make much money when I was growing up ... we had to prime the pump to get our water, walk 100’ to the outhouse, and took a bath in a wash tub in the kitchen in hot water heated on a wood stove. We never went to a barbershop mama cut our hair with the scissors. We didn’t have a telephone for years as a kid and then it was a party line! (No cell phones!)

Did my Dad PROVIDE for me? You bet he did! He provided me with everything I needed, and taught me the blessing of WANTING, WORKING, and WAITING for material things. PROVIDING for your children by giving them TOO MUCH, is just as bad as NOT PROVIDING for them by giving them TOO LITTLE.

HOW TO BE A GOOD FATHER

7 Be’s

Be Involved: Be involved from the moment of your children’s birth. You are a parent, not a figurehead. Be there for important events. Be available when they need support. Be strong for them when they are afraid. Be careful to consider your children when you prioritize your life events. Be a listener!

Be Principled: You are being watched by your children. They assume you are the model they should follow. You must have personal values that will guide them in the right direction. Be honest. Be moral. Be sure you have rules and limits.

Be Consistent: Do what you say and say what you’ll do. When you have limits there will be rewards and consequences. Be reliable. Be a rock. Don’t confuse your children. Explain to your children the reasons when you vary from the norm. Explain the situations that may cause to relax or tighten the rules/limits.

Be Loving: Be gentle. Be kind. Be understanding. Be protective. Give hugs and pats on the back. Occasionally give them your complete attention. Sympathize when appropriate but show your concerns about improper behavior. That is also love.

Be Fun: Be a jester, but don’t force it. Surprise your children with occasional treats and adventures. Smile. Do crazy things like balancing a broom on your nose. Play catch. Pretend with them. Have tea. Tease them in a kind, not demeaning way. Know and be kind to their friends.

Be Balanced: Possibly the glue that makes all the other ‘BE’s work is to be balanced. Be involved but not too involved. Be principled but don’t be preachy. Be consistent but not inflexible. Be loving but don’t be a pushover. Be fun but be respected. Know your own limits. You cannot be consistent if you don’t have principles.

Be Passionate: Being passionate about being a dad comes natural to some men - but not to all. If you don’t have a natural passion for fatherhood, then be passionate about reviewing this list of characteristics and thinking about how you can apply them. A father that has to work at being a dad can be a bigger hero for his children than those for which fathering comes easily.

TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN

Ephesians 6:4 – “And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the
discipline and instruction of the Lord."

**We must teach and train our children to respect authority in the home** ... or they won’t respect authority at school or in the world. We need to teach our children that there are BOUNDARIES ... rules & regulations ... a line that they will not cross.

**Your children are going to test you.** They are going to see how much they can get away with. They are going to see if you mean what you say ... if you’re going to take a stand, or if it’s just an idle threat.

AND ... every time you back down from Godly instruction, you will have to draw the line further & further away from God’s standard. If you’re not careful, after awhile, THEY will have become the authority ... and you will become the one in submission to them.

Train your children to respect authority. Earn their respect ... be consistent ... discipline them with love ... or they will never respect the authority of God in their life.

HOW TO BE A GOOD FATHER ... train your children.

➢ **PREPARE YOUR CHILDREN** – Let them know that they are being prepared for life AND eternity!

Proverbs 23:24 - “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who begets a wise son will be glad in him.”

You are preparing your children to leave home ... PLEASE! Someday, they’ll take what they’ve learned from you, and begin to apply it out in the real world. You’ve only got approximately 18 years to get them ready.

Preparing them for life away from you is only part of the picture. If you haven’t spent your time preparing them for eternity, you have failed as a father. God didn’t give you your children just to prepare a doctor, a teacher, or a plumber. God gave your children to Christian fathers to prepare them for eternity.

You can’t choose which eternal path for them but you can have a powerful influence on which path they choose!