

Church – It's the People

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Thank you for the opportunity to share lessons I learned from Mom and Dad with you over the past several months. Speaking “man to man,” I don't know any better way to communicate wisdom about being the man God wants us to be than to share the lessons I have learned from the trusted advisors God put in my life. Chronologically, Mom and Dad got the first shot at molding the 8lb 4oz eating machine that was me in the beginning. There have been other faithful advisors God has used in my life to help me see what being His kind of man is all about. The next one of these great influences in my life that I would like to talk about is His church.

Christians use the word “church” many times in their life, maybe even daily. It would be interesting to see how many of us are actually using the word the way it is used in the Bible. Even more importantly, I wonder how many of us are *servicing* the church in the way God uniquely blessed each of us to be able to (Romans 12:3-8). From the time we are young, some of us learned the little hand folding game where you intertwine your fingers and they turn out to be the people. The way I learned the little rhyme, the outside of your hands were the church. Inside were the people. Now I'm more mature, but I still tell my children to get ready to “go to church” or I might mention having to “stop by the church” to pick something up. I don't believe our generation is sinning when we add some usages of the word to our vernacular. What I believe is crucial though, is that we communicate the critical place that the church holds in our lives to our family and really, to all people everywhere. Is the church making me into the man God wants? Are Christian men helping God's church to be what He wants it to be? **The church that Christ died for must be more than a perfunctory stop twice at the beginning of the week and once in the middle.** It should be with us all week long – because we *are* the church!

Thoughts of the church – be it the people or the mission – should weigh a lot heavier on our minds than “what happens in the next episode” or who wins the game. Yes, men, it should even be more important than perpetual extra hours at work to please the clients and bosses (I've got to do a lot of work here myself). Or am I confident that God will understand when I tell him

the raise was really worth the sacrifice? No, actually, I'm not (Romans 14:22,23).

When I moved 78 miles east of my birth place to go to college, I didn't realize I would get an education in Christianity along with an engineering degree. I grew up in the church and at a "Christian" school. The majority of my friends growing up went to school and church with me. What could I possibly learn at a state college about the church that I had not already experienced?

I think of three huge life lessons that endeared me to God's church while I was there:

- The world is enticing but evil (James 4:4).
- Christian's lives are to be interwoven with each other (Acts 20:35-38).
- God's church is for everyone (John 3:16,17).

Men must be about answering God's call to lead His church. I believe men should be answering God's call to lead their families *to* the church. I believe that, in large part, we are not. Unfortunately, there are precious few willing to give more than a token amount of effort in the work of the body for which Jesus died. Those few are often exhausted and overextended and less effective than they ought to be because of it. It is time for men to lead. (It's past time really.)

When we stand with our family at the throne of God one day, will we smile knowing we are finished with the battle and ready for the reward? Or will we fall down in tears and moans knowing Eternity is about to begin and that our family is not ready? When men begin to lead their families correctly they will be ready to lead God's church the way He instructed (I Timothy 3:4,5). Suggestion: Have that talk you've been meaning to have tonight. Start the daily Bible study that's been waiting for years for the "right time." The look of approval and gratitude from our families will be worth it alone. **How much more worth it will it be to feel and know that look from God each day of our lives?**