**Dad’s Present**

With Father’s Day around the bend, it’s worth reflecting on the present that Dad’s presence is in developing emotionally healthy kids.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, almost 25% of kids in the United States grow up in fatherless homes. One out of four boys and girls lack a day-to-day model of a loving man whose primary role is to nurture, protect, and provide for them.

But what about the majority of kids? What influence do dads have on kids and family?

According to the National Center for Fathering, research indicates that children who grow up with dad present are more likely to experience economic stability because dads generally work fulltime. The same kids are more likely to stay clear of drugs and alcohol since they have less need to block out pain or look for quick fun. They are more likely to be emotionally stable and secure in their identity and relationships, and not prone to becoming sexually active or marrying before finishing high school. Moreover, boys and girls whose dad is at home are more likely to finish high school rather than drop out.

All these benefits put children on the road to personal wellbeing and help them make good choices even after they leave the nest.

Are you a dad? If so, did you know your presence has powerful redeeming influence on your kids? Are you a dad who is separated from your children just now? What choices do you have to connect and support your sons or daughters? It may take some effort, but the payoff is rewarding.

We sometimes say that God is father to the fatherless, at least in spiritual terms. Perhaps now we realize that His Spirit in us, present with our children, is God’s awesome plan for our kids to know Him for significant gain.

*Dear God, Thank you for the nurturing role you gave dads. Help us to nurture our kids to become responsible, godly citizens who love you, people, and your world. May your Spirit strengthen us to make wise choices as we raise our kids to your honor and glory. Amen.*