***More Than a Conqueror***

**-Part 2**

***Overcoming the Everyday Challenges of Being a Single Father***

*“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”* –John 16:33 (NASB)

It’s no secret that single parents struggle. Parenting was designed to be a two person job. When one of those parents is taken out of the equation, the full load falls upon the other. As a full or noncustodial father, the fact of the matter is that when our kids are in our possession we are in charge of their well-being during that time. It does not matter what type of day you have had, how tired you may be, or perhaps you were not able to make it to an event you wanted to attend. Our kids need us there 100% when we have them. Time is too valuable and we are always battling a mountain of outside worldly influences ready to gain control of our kid’s lives. Although it may not be possible all of the time, we must make our best attempt to remain focused on the task at hand and give our kids our best whenever we can.

**The Challenges**

In addition to the task of being a one-parent team, I’ve come across many other challenges in both mine and other single dad’s lives that we experience regularly. A few of the challenges that occur regularly include: Dealing with our children’s mother in a Christ-like way, if she has a significant other, and of course- finances. How we handle each of these trials is not only important for our walk with God, but also for our kids. Whether we know it or not, they are watching us all of the time and the simple, subtle reactions we have to everyday life could possibly play a very big impact in how they handle adverse situations as they grow up. Yes, we all face difficult times- those are a part of life. I have had numerous disagreements and trials with my daughter’s mom. Sometimes I feel as if the custody arrangement is not fair, that she does not respect me as a father, and that there is actually being more hurt done to my daughter by keeping me at bay. I’ve been through some extremely emotional and spiritual roller coasters and even had times of complete breakdowns. Through it all, God has worked within me, leading me through trials- testing me and knowing my heart (Jer 20:12). When we let God into these moments and allow Him to move in us, He can…and will…help us through it. In fact, we cannot grow as disciples or fathers if we don’t pass through the fire once in a while!

*“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged…”* -2Tim2:24 NASB)

By far, one of the greatest ways we can model Jesus to our children is by how we treat their mothers. Whether we agree with her at times or not, as I mentioned above, our kids are always watching us- and the standard we set (good or bad) will become a benchmark for future relationships in their lives. However, when it’s all said and done, as followers of Jesus Christ we are called to a much higher standard (Phil 3:16) and are to honor the Lord with our words and actions. The rest we must entrust to Him. I do understand that some of you reading this may actually have your children all of the time, perhaps mom is not even in the picture for whatever reason. Regardless of the situation, the way we perceive and SPEAK about her greatly impacts our kids- and us. If our hearts are not filled with the love and thoughts of God, then our actions will follow. The outcome of this could even be disastrous, so watch out and make sure your son or daughter does not get caught in any crossfire! If you do screw up in this area, confess your mistake first to the Lord, then immediately to your children. The best game plan, though, is to be prepared before it ever even comes to this. Here are three quick tips to ensure a victory when all else could fail:

1. Pray FOR your children’s mother regularly. I’m sure some of you want to ring my neck right now, but take it from a guy who’s been on both sides of the tracks and know that this not only blesses her, but you AND your children as well. (See Matt 5:44 & 1Pet 3:9 for a couple examples)
2. Seek God earnestly and fervently through His Word and prayer. Basically, the more time you spend with God, the better prepared you will be for when the moments of testing come. (Jer 33:3, Matt 7:24-27)
3. “Resistance equals growth”- one of my favorite lines in my book. Basically, life’s resistance (difficulties, stress, etc) remain constant throughout life- we just become more ***conditioned*** to handle them. (See chapter 9 in my book for a more detailed description). Also, be sure to check out James 1:2-4, noting the part where James says that we will be “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

The life of a single parent is hard, no doubt about it- but remember we have a choice each and every day. We can choose to play the victim- or the victor. I am here to tell you today that victory is already yours if you are indeed a follower of Jesus Christ. Walk in confidence today that you have a High Priest that has already gone on before you and cleared the path, for it is in this truth that we become ***more than conquerors!***

*Matt Haviland is the founder of “*A Father’s Walk*” single dad ministry and the author of the book, “*A Father’s Walk: A Christian-Based Resources for Single Fathers*”. He currently lives in his hometown of Grand Rapids, MI and is a single dad to a beautiful 6 year old little girl himself. For more information on the ministry, please visit* [www.afatherswalk.org](http://www.afatherswalk.org).