***More Than a Conqueror***

**-Part 1**

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

*“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”* –Rom 8:37 (NKJV)

Our world is drastically different than it was twenty, even ten years ago. We live in a nation where words such as “single mom”, “single parent” and “blended family” are now common words in our vocabulary. However, the topic of “single father” does not seem to come up quite as often. One reason I believe that is so is because in many writings I’ve come across, the term “single dad” refers to a man who has **full** custody of his children. Not so. In my opinion (and I’m sure I’m not alone here) a single father is any man who is involved, or wants to be involved with his children- whether or not he is the primary care provider. I fall into the category of “noncustodial single dad” myself.

Single parenting is by far one of the most addressed issues when it comes to family structure in our country these days. Now, for lack of time and space, I simply cannot go into all of the dynamics, circumstances, and situations that spider web out of this. Rather, I’d like to address the certain topics and challenges that any single father may come across on a daily basis- and how to overcome these trials through our Lord Jesus Christ. Having a single dad who is engaged in a personal one on one relationship with the Lord is extremely vital for the spiritual and overall growth of his children. The “father factor” is greatly impacted when children grow up without their dad in the home full time and often negative statistics (such as teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and criminal behavior) are a result of this. I am thoroughly convinced that when a single father remains submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, these negative influences can and will be reduced, and what began as a generational curse- God can turn into a blessing. 1John 4:4 tells us, “*…greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*” (NASB) The bottom line is that as a single dad, we now have an even **greater** responsibility on our hands to bring our kids up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord- and we cannot (nor should not) attempt to do it alone.

I have been a single father for over six years now. I was never married to my daughter’s mom, and lived quite a worldly life prior to meeting her. When my daughter was about 8 months old I gave my life to Christ, was baptized a few months later, and became a member of my church soon after that. My life has never been the same since. Now, don’t get me wrong- I go through just as many trials and challenges as anyone else, but the difference now is that I am not handling it on my own and am equipped more than ever to handle such adversities. My overall goal in this series of writings is to inform and equip any single father (or anyone else reading this) in Jesus Christ and help guide them through the difficult times. We will address topics such as dealing with our kid’s mom in a Christ-like way; what happens when another man comes into the picture; and finances. It all boils down to our personal relationship with the Lord and where He truly stands in our life. Jesus tells us in John 15:5, “…for without Me you can do nothing.” (NKJV) In this first portion of the series, I am going to leave you with one main thought: *What does your quiet time with God look like each day?* Is it something that takes top priority in your daily life? Or, is time with Him something that you get around to when you can? The answer to this highly determines how equipped you are to handle the tough times when they arise. For now, I am going to suggest that no matter what, you make time to spend in God’s presence through the Word and prayer each and every day. Just like working out, if we want to get bigger, stronger, and faster in the gym, we must put the time in. The same goes for spiritual growth. If we want to know more about Christ and who He truly is, then it is even more imperative to spend time with Him! Read the Word and study what God is saying to you through it. Highlight and memorize verses if need be; and above all- bring everything before Him in prayer. (Phil 4: 6) Even if you are not used to praying regularly, don’t worry about it. Speak to the Lord about what’s on your heart and allow Him to begin to move in you. Our number one goal is to increase our relationship with Jesus, but the second should be how to become better fathers ourselves and lead our kids in Christ. God specifically placed this responsibility on us, as is stated in Eph 6:4, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (NASB) As is the case with most of my writings, I speak from personal experience. Once I surrendered myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, He not only made me a better father than I deserved, but He made me a better man than I ever thought possible. The same can go for you!

*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).