

Wake Up...Pay Attention!

We all get into “routines” of life. We have set ways of doing particular things and most of the time we do them without thought. For example: My wife gets up every morning at 5:45 and has a quiet time or a time to herself meditating. The coffee has been made the night before and set to be precisely brewed before 5:45. She lets the dog out, pours herself a cup of coffee and has her morning devotion till approximately 6:45. I hear the shower running and that is my cue to get up and get my coffee and get going into my routines. I shower, grab a quick breakfast snack and head up to my office at home. She comes and kisses me good bye and the day is off. With some exceptions, I would say that is a pretty consistent “routine” most days of the year.

Now, most every one that has picked up the Independent the past three years and read this column must have figured out by now that I am a Christian and that I believe one of the major issues facing men as fathers is our lack of commitment and devotion to being Godly Fathers. After all, He is “The Father.” Now in saying that, I am going to reference a passage that happens to be out of that book – the bible. It will bring this article into focus: “Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say” (Isaiah 28:7).

What happens in the Clark home every morning is a routine. But what has also happened is that our senses have grown dim with everything else going on around us. We get use to the sounds of the neighbors starting their cars and leaving early, a train rolling through town each morning, and the list goes on.

As fathers, we get used to certain lies and don’t even realize that they are there. Now it’s time to wake up! Pay attention! Be on the alert! Don’t be lulled into the hum of what the world says you are, what you have, and where you are as a father. We must wake up as fathers and become un-desensitized to the lies.

Let me give you another example. Come sit with me in an airplane just before we take off to Love Field on a routine business trip.

Here we go again, I thought as the flight attendant began her routine instructions. I grabbed the latest copy of the Amarillo Independent which I picked up at the newspaper rack and began flipping through the pages. The man to my right continued reading his book he brought, and the woman to my left was a first time flyer and paid close attention.

I glanced around the plane and noticed very few people listening to the flight attendant’s life saving instructions. Then it hit me. The frequent flyers paid little attention, not because we were being rude, but because we had heard it all before – way too many times. The safety procedures were routine information. The familiar hum of the flight attendant’s voice merged with the roar of the engine, so we ignored her.

But you better believe that if the pilot announced in mid-flight that a crash landing was imminent, all of us “been there, done that” passengers would all be reviewing those safety instruction cards in the seat pocket in front of us quicker than you could say “buckle your seat belts.”

Over the past years, I have reviewed the safety instructions that you most likely have heard before about being great dads. But I want you to hear differently today that you are in danger of a crash landing if you are not hearing the Father’s voice as you raise your children. We never know when life will hit turbulence. Scrambling for the life jacket and fumbling with the oxygen mask on the way down is not the answer. We can be prepared so that when the storms of life hit, when the engines fail, when the machine runs out of gas, we’ll be ready to land safely on the ground.

As you begin detecting lies in your thought life, look objectively at any thoughts and line them up with good fathering principles. Let’s look at a few: I don’t have to make that game with Casey because I am going to play golf with the guys. Really? Your priority with your children is to give them your TIME. I am sick of looking for a job, it really doesn’t matter anymore. Really? You are called as the father to provide and protect – that is your responsibility, not the governments. I don’t have time to tuck my kids in and pray with them – their mom can do that. Really? You are called to be the Spiritual Father not your wife. And the list continues.

You see guys, in order for us to be great dads; we need to be on the alert for what is taking us away from our kids. Is it too much golf? Is it watching our kids play soccer while talking on the cell phone, not having a clue who won or lost? Is it screaming and fighting with your wife in front of the kids, not demonstrating “how to love you children’s mom.” You see, we all get into routines and we become victims without even realizing we have “shelved” our kids. Don’t look up like me and find your kid in jail, a convicted felon with a weapons and burglary charge. I was a big shot in a lot of people’s eyes but not in the ones that counted – my sons.

So, my advice: Listen and hear His voice; *pay attention* and hear what He has to say.”