

I was Blessed to call him “Dad”
Joshua Walker

For as long as I can remember, growing up in our house, a plaque would hang on the wall that read, “As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord – Joshua 24:15.” My mom and dad, whether through sports, school, or relationships, emphasized that we were to lead by example. Our dad held us to a high standard, and the only real expectation that he had for us to was for us to remain faithful to the Lord.

I often think of what Paul wrote in 1 Cor 11:1, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ,” when I think about my dad. My dad wasn’t perfect, nor did he mandate perfection from anyone in our family. One thing that stood out about my dad from my childhood was that, when he made mistakes, he accepted responsibility for his mistakes. He did whatever was necessary to make it right. That’s why he was so quick to forgive when we would make mistakes if we desired to resolve those mistakes properly.

I remember a time in high school when my dad and I were butting heads over something that I cannot remember now. I was looking to gain more independence and, if I’m honest with myself, was probably not making the wisest of choices. I do know that my dad was trying to impart wisdom upon his stubborn teenage son, and probably frustrated that I wasn’t listening. He grounded me from my car, but offered an olive branch. If I owned up to my mistake, I could make it right and get the keys back. Obstinate as I was, I refused to admit wrong. I thought that I could simply wait for it to become an inconvenience to my parents, get my driving privileges back, and the matter would be settled. I vastly underestimated my dad’s dedication to teach me this crucial lesson. For the next week he would drive me to the places I was obligated to go, even if it meant going out of his way, or making it more of a hassle on himself. When I still didn’t budge, the rigmarole of the situation proved to be a punishment on him as well. My dad decided that he was not going to endure this annoyance any longer. That is when he decided that he was going to make his 18-year-old son, a senior in high school with a reputation to uphold, ride the bus to school. I was not allowed to ride with friends to school, because I was required to get on the bus every morning and confront the looks of confusion and terror on faces of so many freshmen. My dad had made his point. After a week of this humiliation, I owned up to my mistake and sought forgiveness from my parents. I was given the keys to the car straightaway and was driving again.

We all make mistakes (Rom 3:23). However, it is not the mistakes that define us, but rather the way we conduct ourselves after we make these mistakes. It is the difference on how we view the apostle Peter versus Judas, according to Luke 22:54-62 and Matthew 27:1-10, respectively. It was why the audience’s reaction to the message of Peter in Acts 2 is met with joy and praise (Acts 2:41), and the response to the sermon Stephen preached in Acts 7 is considered such as sad, heart-breaking tragedy (Acts 7:54-60). It is why I look back on the events I recalled with my dad and me with love and thankfulness instead of anger and contempt.

I could write much more about the wisdom and love imparted upon me and my siblings by my dad, and it still would not touch the hem of the garment. The standard my dad set for us was high, but he had the same expectations of himself. He was fair, forgiving, and faithful. I am blessed to call him dad.