



STATE OF BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD

REPORT

2025

WWW.MANHOODJOURNEY.ORG

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INTRODUCTION



DR. KEN CANFIELD

FOUNDER
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for Fathering

Manhood Journey has been listening to fathers for more than a decade now. Their findings, published in this *State of Biblical Fatherhood*, give us a picture of fathers who identify as Christians and are involved in their church.

The research is based on a thoughtful, exploratory survey with over 6,000 responses. This report will prompt readers to wrestle with the question: “What is the Church doing to engage, equip, and empower fathers for excellence in their fathering role?”

Manhood Journey believes the biblical foundations of fatherhood must be taken seriously, and those foundations should be the source code in empowering fathers. If you’re a leader who is seeking to do a better job of providing resources to the fathers in your congregation and care, I recommend you read this report as an initial or additional step in understanding and optimizing the role of biblical fathering in your congregation.

Men who are active listeners and observers of their children stand out as effective fathers. Providentially, Manhood Journey has been listening to fathers and observing what the Church must do to sync the biblical foundations of fathering with the Church’s available resources in ways that will help dads flourish.

To any academic readers, *State of Biblical Fatherhood* is an important piece of a broader picture of fathering in America. Over time, a more scientific analysis of the data will be undertaken. Even so, the veracity and scope of their pioneering survey deserves a thorough read.

I believe this report will have a positive impact on Church leaders as they seek to encourage, engage and equip fathers with practical resources to help them become the dads their children need and deserve.

Respectfully,
Ken Canfield PhD.
Founder, National Center for Fathering

WHO WE ARE

OUR ORGANIZATION

Manhood Journey is a biblical fatherhood ministry that exists to equip dads to be disciple-makers. In 2020, we launched the Godly Father Assessment. This tool helps men evaluate where they stand as biblical fathers. Since then, more than 6,000 fathers have completed this assessment. This has provided us with unique insights into the current state of biblical fatherhood.

THE AUTHORS



Josh Kubler is the Director of Church Engagement for Manhood Journey. He's also one of the founding pastors of Redeemer Baptist Church in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Josh and his wife Katie live in Nesbit, Mississippi, with their five children.



Kent Evans is the founder and Executive Director of Manhood Journey. He and his wife April have been married for more than three decades. Kent is the father of five sons, an author of several books, and a frequent conference speaker.

TO THE DAD

As you read this document, you may find yourself identifying with many of our respondents. You're not alone in your struggles, but you don't have to stay there either. Inside you'll find encouragement and practical steps to help you fulfill your calling as a father.

TO THE PASTOR OR CHURCH LEADER

This document is a crucial tool for understanding the struggles and needs of the fathers in your congregation. These data-driven insights and biblical principles will help you develop effective discipleship programs that engage, equip, and empower men in their role as spiritual leaders at home.

The fatherhood crisis is fueling many of the challenges churches face—though the connection often goes unseen.

When fathers are disengaged, their children suffer. Teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and mental health struggles all rise dramatically in the absence of a present, purposeful dad. Church programs like youth group, Bible drills, and others play valuable roles, but they were never meant to take the place of a father's presence. An engaged father is the primary catalyst for his child's flourishing – emotionally, academically, and above all, spiritually.

If the church is serious about investing in the next generation and restoring a high and holy view of fatherhood, believers in the pulpit and the pew must first understand the current state of biblical fatherhood. They must recognize the unique challenges facing Christian fathers today and take intentional steps to equip them to meet these challenges with grace, courage, and conviction.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following data was collected from over 6,000 respondents to Manhood Journey's Godly Father Assessment.

CHRISTIAN FATHERS STRUGGLE IN THE ESSENTIAL DISCIPLINES OF BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER.

42% reported reading their Bible only occasionally



83% said they do not regularly pray together with their families.



MOST CHRISTIAN FATHERS DON'T HAVE CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS.

Nearly 80% said they don't have anyone in their life with whom they can be transparent or accountable.



FATHERS STRUGGLE TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN THE WORD OF GOD.

More than 75% of Christian dads said they do not regularly or intentionally read or discuss the Bible with their children.



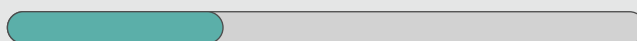
FATHERS ARE NOT MODELING CONSISTENT SERVICE IN THE CHURCH.

Nearly 40% of Christ-following fathers reported they don't serve a local church in any capacity.



MANY CHRISTIAN FATHERS HAVE NOT MADE BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP OF THEIR FINANCES A PRIORITY.

33% said they rarely or never give financially to their church.



THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF FATHERHOOD

Fatherhood is essential to the fabric of our society.

Statistics and research measurements consistently reinforce this truth. Behavioral issues, economic outcomes, education, and mental health are just a few of the areas where a father's presence is reflected in the outcome of his children.¹ Engaged fathers change the trajectory of their children's lives.² But genuine biblical fatherhood aims toward even higher goals. Christian dads are called to move beyond simply improving a child's upbringing in this life and pointing them toward eternity. A proper understanding of biblical fatherhood has the potential to change not only our lives as fathers, but also the faith journeys of our children. This has the power to transform local churches.



The church has long acknowledged the importance of a father's role in the home. The Bible abounds with references and commands regarding a father and his family. It begins with the establishment of the created order in Genesis, is bolstered throughout the Old Testament in passages such as Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78:5-8, and is further affirmed in New Testament texts like Ephesians 6:4. Also, across the pages of Scripture, we find a God who calls himself "Father," providing additional significance to our role as earthly fathers. More than 160 times in the four gospels, Jesus refers to Almighty God as "Father."

It is a Christian father's joy and privilege to disciple his children as he loves, leads, and serves his family. But how do Christian fathers feel they are doing when it comes to fulfilling this calling? And how are they being equipped by others to find success on their journey? In this document, we'll seek to answer these monumental questions. The answers carry significant implications for Christian men, Christian families, and their churches.

¹ "Statistics Tell The Story: Fathers Matter" <https://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistic>

² "A Father's Impact on Child Development" <https://www.allforkids.org/news/blog/a-fathers-impact-on-child-development/>

WHAT IS BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD?

You may be a father trying to lead his family well or a pastor with a passion to help dads in your congregation grow. Even if you're reading this for another reason, consider this key truth regarding biblical fatherhood: **Being an engaged father is not the same as being a biblically faithful father.** Many fathers love and care for their children and are engaged in their lives. This is good. Yet, they may not be considered biblically faithful fathers. An engaged father may seek to help his child succeed or be a good citizen. A biblically faithful father strives to help his children find their way to Jesus Christ. Engaged fathers aren't always biblically faithful, but biblically faithful fathers must be engaged.

ENGAGED FATHER	FAITHFUL FATHER
Cares for the physical welfare of his children	Invests in the spiritual welfare of his children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
Invests time teaching his children things they need to know	Teaches his children God's ways and His will (Proverbs 22:6)
Models hard work and honesty	Models trust and dependence on God (Proverbs 3:5)
Quick to correct when his children fail	Quick to forgive his children and to repent when he fails (Colossians 3:12-13)
Works hard to ensure his children have the best	Prays hard his children will know that Christ is best (Philippians 1:8-11)

Biblically faithful fathers proclaim and display the gospel.

Above all else, biblically faithful fathers proclaim and display the gospel, praying that God's truth takes root in the hearts of their children and leads them to faith in Christ (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

THE CURRENT STATE OF BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD

At Manhood Journey, we've established a list of seven key characteristics that define biblically faithful fathers. While this list isn't exhaustive, it provides a beneficial starting point for evaluating fatherhood through the lens of God's Word. A father who cultivates these traits in his life not only leads his own family well, but he also helps other fathers to do the same.

A BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHER:

- 01 **TRUSTS GOD**
(Proverbs 3:5-6)
- 02 **KNOWS SCRIPTURE**
(Psalm 119:105)
- 03 **PRAYS FERVENTLY**
(Philippians 4:6-7)
- 04 **BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS**
(Proverbs 27:17)
- 05 **SERVES OTHERS**
(Galatians 5:13)
- 06 **STEWARDS RESOURCES**
(2 Corinthians 9:6-7)
- 07 **MAKES DISCIPLES**
(Matthew 28:18-20)



In 2020, Manhood Journey launched the Godly Father Assessment,³ a survey available on our web site that helps dads assess where they stand as biblically faithful fathers. To date, more than 6,000 men have answered questions about their level of trust in God, their Bible reading habits, their prayer lives, and more. This data offers unique insight into the current state of biblical fatherhood. The results also confirm a number of concerns and should inform the church's approach when it comes to engaging and equipping fathers for the God-ordained task to which they've been called.

³ "The Godly Father Assessment" <https://manhoodjourney.org/how-to-be-a-good-dad-quiz/>



**7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS**

01
**TRUSTING
GOD**

01 TRUSTING GOD

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.*

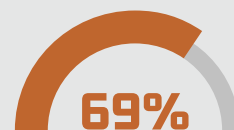
PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust in God is the first characteristic of a faithful father. Fathers navigate increasingly treacherous cultural waters. If you're a father or work with fathers, you know this to be true: Dads face a continuous battle for their attention and affection. In addition, fear and anxiety try to crowd out peace and confidence. According to one recent study, 69% of pastors believe that a sense of fear about the future is growing in their churches.⁴

Our survey respondents echoed these realities. One in four men who took the assessment confessed they weren't sure how to follow God's specific guidance for their family. More than 16% said they usually feel anxiety or fear about the future. This data suggests a general lack of confidence in God's good and sovereign reign. In other words, many struggle to believe in their hearts that God controls every aspect of their lives.

When a dad is unsure about God's goodness, he often passes that uncertainty down. Dads who don't fully trust God are more likely to sow seeds of confusion and doubt in their families.

Only 14% of fathers said they frequently take steps of faith when they feel the Lord leading. Nearly the same number said they almost always have peace knowing God is in control.



of pastors believe that a sense of fear about the future is growing in their churches.



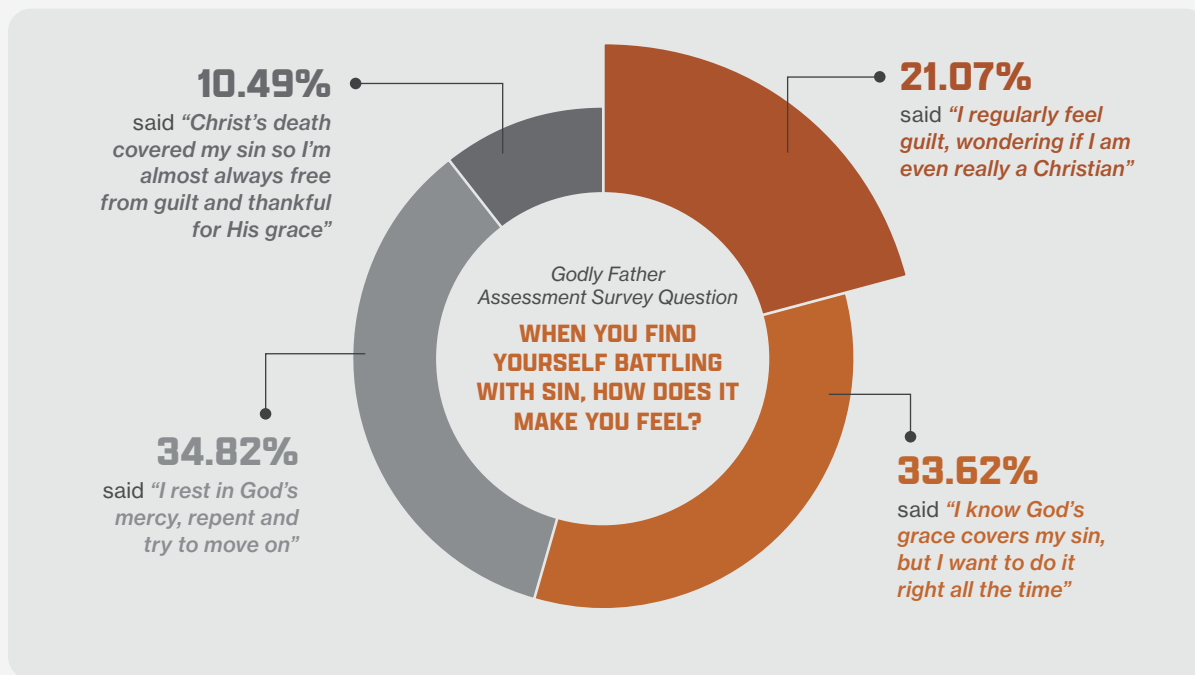
1 IN 4 MEN

who took the assessment confessed they weren't sure how to follow God's specific guidance for their family.

More than
16%

of men who took the assessment said they usually feel anxiety or fear about the future.

⁴ "Fear Prevalent in Pews, According to Protestant Pastors" <https://research.lifeway.com/2023/08/08/fear-prevalent-in-pews-according-to-protestant-pastors/>



When asked about how they respond when things in life don't go their way, 37% of the men surveyed admitted to feeling frustrated or angry with God. **When asked how they feel when they find themselves battling sin, 21% of fathers confessed that they regularly feel guilt and wonder if they should even be considered Christians.**

According to a 2020 survey by Lifeway Research, only 36% of evangelical adults found hope in their faith during times of adversity.⁵ All of these statistics indicate that Christian fathers are struggling to trust God.

***Commit your way to the Lord;
 trust in him, and he will act.
 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
 and your justice as the noonday.***

PSALM 37:5-6



TRUSTING GOD AS YOUR TRUE NORTH

One way we invest in fathers is through our Father On Purpose podcast. Listen to this episode to learn why trusting God is so essential for fathers.

LISTEN NOW

⁵ "Americans Most Want to Avoid Fear and Anxiety, Gain Freedom and Safety" <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/08/05/americans-most-want-to-avoid-fear-and-anxiety-gain-freedom-and-safety/>



7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS



02

KNOWING SCRIPTURE

KNOWING SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

Fathers desperately need the Word of God because, among other reasons, they are incomplete without it. And in terms of faithfully fulfilling their role in their families, the Word of God is their most essential tool for raising children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

However, when asked about their Bible study habits, more than 42% of Christian fathers said that they only occasionally read God's Word. When considering the memorization of Scripture, nearly half (47%) said they can "probably recite a few verses," while only about 8% said they followed a plan for Scripture memory.

Of course, following a Scripture memory plan certainly isn't a requirement for a faithful father. However, when combined with a general lack of biblical literacy and a diminished desire to study the Word, Christian fathers who are not faithfully striving to hide the Word of God in their hearts (Psalm 119:11) will find it harder to identify and obey God's plan for their lives.

Likewise, it should come as no surprise that fathers struggle with trusting God when they are unfamiliar with his Word. They are bypassing the very source of the hope they need so desperately (Psalm 119:147). This is further confirmed by a Barna study on Spiritual Maturity,⁶ which found "Bible knowledge" ranked last in terms of respondents' maturity among seven characteristics of faith.

The concern only grows when it comes to nurturing the spiritual development of their children. When asked about how they help their family grow by applying the Bible daily to their lives, 34% of assessment respondents said they answer their children's questions about the Bible, but don't have a plan beyond that. Another 44% stated that they share what God is teaching them, but don't have a regular time for Bible discussion. **In other words, more than 78% of Christian fathers are not intentionally and regularly reading and discussing the Word of God with their children.**

More than

78%

of Christian fathers are not intentionally and regularly reading and discussing the Word of God with their children.

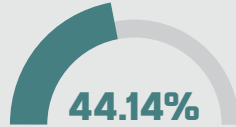
⁶ "Christians Say They Do Best At Relationships, Worst In Bible Knowledge" <https://www.barna.com/research/christians-say-they-do-best-at-relationships-worst-in-bible-knowledge/>

Godly Father Assessment Survey Question

HOW ARE YOU HELPING YOUR FAMILY GROW AND
APPLY THE BIBLE TO DAILY LIFE?



Said *"I answer my kid's questions about the Bible, but don't have a plan beyond that"*



Said *"I tell them what God is teaching me, but we don't have a regular time for Bible discussion"*



Said *"I regularly lead our family in Bible study or devotional time"*



Said *"I lead our family in a consistent time of discussing the Scriptures and have coached other dads on how to do this"*



10 FAMILY BIBLE STUDIES
YOU CAN START TODAY

Not sure where to start when it comes to leading your family in the Word? Check out these helpful recommendations!

READ NOW

In large part, Christian fathers acknowledge that they are failing either to study the Word for themselves or to teach it to their children. This certainly has implications for the family, but the damage done in the home also will affect the church. If fathers are failing to live out the Word, children also aren't being encouraged to remember the works and words of God. The younger generation will repeat the cycle because fathers are not purposefully instilling and persistently modeling an intentional pursuit of God's truth. This poses a significant challenge to churches that are in danger of losing two generations of solid leadership.

*He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;*

PSALM 78:5-7



**7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS**

03
**PRAYING
FERVENTLY**

03 PRAYING FERVENTLY

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Prayer is an essential spiritual discipline of the godly father. The very act of prayer is an acknowledgement that we cannot accomplish anything of eternal significance on our own. Fathers need prayer because they can't parent faithfully without God's help! They must pray for their children's souls, safety, and sanctification. They also should recognize the importance of modeling prayer for their children, even as they invite their sons and daughters to join them in this sacred privilege.

However, less than half of Christian fathers who responded to our assessment pray on a consistent, daily basis. Instead, they only pray when there's a problem or when a specific need arises. Furthermore, **less than 17% of fathers said that their families pray together regularly.** Other responses included a mix of praying before meals, around bedtime, and as needs arose.

Godly Father Assessment Survey Question

WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY'S PRAYER LIFE LOOK LIKE?



Dads told us they see plenty of room for growth in the area of praying for their families. Nearly half of all respondents said they only pray for their family members if they're asked or if they see a particular need in their lives. In addition, just over 50% confessed that they only pray when they get into trouble or when a specific issue surfaces. Unfortunately, many fathers are failing to cultivate the discipline and joy of prayer.

Distraction was the leading barrier to consistent prayer

A major hindrance to consistent prayer is a world filled with distractions. As we mentioned previously, dads' attention and affections are pulled in myriad directions. As a result, good things often take the place of the best things. Crossway Publishing recently collected thousands of responses from Christians regarding their prayer life.⁷ Distraction was the leading barrier to consistent prayer, with 57% of respondents listing it as their primary hindrance. Busyness and indifference both followed at 15%, while 13% said they were lost for words when it came to praying.

Christians acknowledge prayer as an important discipline that offers great reward as it is cultivated. Yet, many Christian fathers indicate that their own prayer lives are severely deficient. This could suggest a lack of dependence, humility, and commitment when it comes to growing stronger in their faith.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

COLOSSIANS 4:2



BECOME A PRAYING FATHER

One of our most accessed YouVersion Reading Plans helps dads pray more regularly and effectively.

GET THE PLAN

⁷ "How is Your Prayer Life?" <https://www.crossway.org/articles/infographic-how-is-your-prayer-life/>



7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS



04

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

*Iron sharpens iron,
and one man sharpens another.*

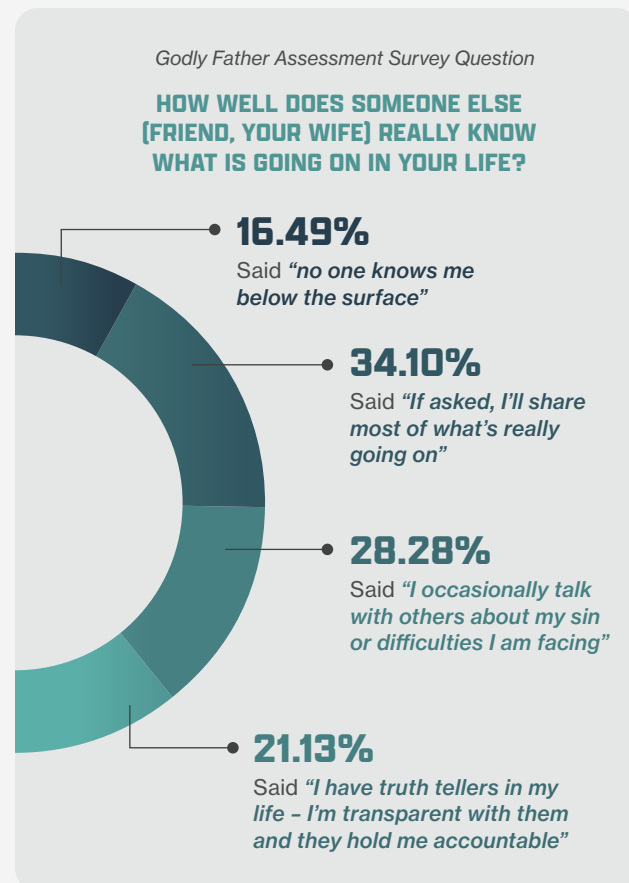
PROVERBS 27:17

God did not create men to experience life alone. Faithful fathers understand that a godly wife is a joy (Proverbs 12:4), and children are a privilege from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5). Aside from one's walk with God, these are the most important relationships a father can foster in his life.

However, it is important to note that male friendships and community are also blessings that yield encouragement, conviction, and fruit in a father's life. Older men and other mentors can speak truth into a man's life and help him steer clear of the pitfalls that derail so many lives. Yet, men's social circles appear to be dwindling. According to research released by the American Survey Center, more than a quarter (28%) of men under 30 reported that they hadn't spoken with anyone about an important personal matter in the previous six months.⁸ While men often build silos around themselves, that isolation they think protects them actually becomes detrimental to their spiritual, emotional, and physical health.⁹

Fathers who responded to our assessment confirmed some of these realities. When asked to describe their relationships, less than 13% said that they have a circle of deeply connected friends who intentionally challenge them to grow spiritually. Nearly 38% said they have a number of acquaintances, but no one that they consider genuinely close.

When posed with the question "How well does someone else (friend or wife) really know what is going on in your life," **only 21% of Christian fathers said they have people in their life with whom they can be transparent and who can hold them accountable.** Meanwhile, 16% said that no one truly knows them below the surface. While one in four men said that they occasionally talk about their sin or difficulties with someone else, 34% said they only share if they're directly asked.



⁸ "Men's Social Circles are Shrinking" <https://www.americansurveycenter.org/why-mens-social-circles-are-shrinking/>

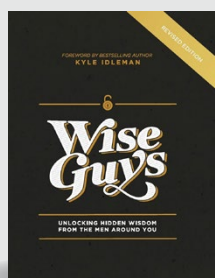
⁹ "How Social Isolation, Loneliness Can Shorten Life" <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2023/10/how-social-isolation-loneliness-can-shorten-your-life/>



THE ANGER FREE DAD

A digital course to help fathers eliminate anger from their lives.

[CHECK OUT COURSE](#)



WISE GUYS: UNLOCKING HIDDEN WISDOM FROM THE MEN AROUND YOU

This book will help you learn how to find godly friends and mentors who make a difference in your life.

[READ NOW](#)

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of these responses is what they reveal about marriages. Most Christian dads indicate their relationship with their wives is not emotionally or spiritually intimate enough to include genuine confession and accountability.

We've already discussed aspects of a father's relationship with his children, but another response is worth noting here. We asked Christian fathers how they handle it when their wife or children make them angry, and more than 31% of them confessed that they blow up more often than they'd like. Only 11% said that they patiently work through the issue and use it as an opportunity to grow closer.



**NEARLY
1 IN 3 MEN**

**confessed they
blow up more often
than they'd like.**

As followers of Christ, we know the essential nature of meaningful relationships. Unfortunately, the vast majority of Christian fathers say they are struggling to find, build, and strengthen those relationships. Who will give them the encouragement and the tools needed to reverse this trend?

*Bear one another's burdens,
and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

GALATIANS 6:2



**7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS**



05

**SERVING
OTHERS**

05 SERVING OTHERS

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

A proper understanding of how Christ has served us results in a genuine willingness to serve others sacrificially, humbly, willingly, joyfully, and lovingly. When we truly appreciate this, we look for opportunities to serve as a means of reflecting and honoring Jesus. So how intentionally are fathers looking for the chance to serve others?

When asked about serving their wife and children, more than 30% of men said that they make most of their decisions with the interests of their wife and kids in mind. Another 34% said they actively look for opportunities to serve their wife and children. But more than 10% said they usually do whatever they feel like doing.

There's a stark contrast when it comes to serving the church. Approximately 38% of Christian fathers say they do not serve the church in any capacity. Another 17% say they've served only when asked. Only 27% say they serve in areas they feel called and gifted, while 17% are leading others and encouraging them to use their gifts.

In regard to sharing the Gospel, **more than 31% say talking to others about their faith is not even on their radar**, while 21% have gone to some outreach events. Another 25% have invited others to church or other Christian events, but only 22% intentionally seek opportunities to share Christ with those around them.

More than 31% say talking to others about their faith is not even on their radar.

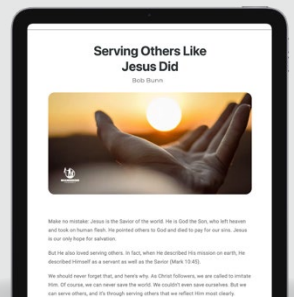
Approximately
38%
of Christian fathers
say they do not
serve the church
in any capacity

Christian fathers should be the first to serve others as they seek to model the attitude of their own heavenly Father.

While it's difficult to draw strong correlations between serving families and serving churches, these results could indicate that the encouraging numbers associated with serving in the home may reflect an assumed benefit rather than genuine desire to serve out of a heart of joy. Christian fathers should be the first to serve others as they seek to model the attitude of their own heavenly Father.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace

1 PETER 4:10



SERVE OTHERS LIKE JESUS DID

Find encouragement and inspiration in this brief article on how Jesus served others.

CHECK IT OUT



7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS



06

STEWARDED RESOURCES

STEWARDING RESOURCES

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

MATTHEW 6:19–21

Unsurprisingly, faithful investments of finances and time often can be a struggle for fathers. Financial stewardship has always been an important issue in the church and the culture at

33%

of fathers rarely or never give financially to their church.

large. A 2018 study conducted by the Barna Group found that 22% of Christians said that their ultimate financial goal was to take care of their family, while only 10% claimed it was to serve God with their money.¹⁰ According to our assessment responses, **33% of fathers rarely or never give financially to their church**, while roughly only a quarter of dads give regularly. Another 38% have built giving to the church into their budget.

When asked about their view of money, nearly 21% of respondents say they honor God by tithing at least 10%, while nearly 40% recognize that all of their money comes from God and look to Him to direct them. Following the truth presented in Psalm 24:1, they acknowledge that the earth belongs to the Lord, along with everything in it. As such, they look to the Lord to determine the recipients and the amounts of their gifts. One third of those surveyed believe it's good to give “some” money to the church or other causes.

Beyond money, time may represent humanity's most valuable resource. While more money can be earned, time cannot be recaptured once it is lost. Still, many men find stewarding time just as challenging as stewarding financial resources.

Godly Father Assessment Survey Question

WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU SPEND TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY?



Said “I squeeze family time in when I can, but it's hard to find some every day”



Said “I make time every weekend for quality time with the fam”



Said “I plan family time as a top priority, but it often gets squeezed out”



Said “I block off time for my family and will often turn down other commitments so I can give as much time to my family as possible”

¹⁰ “What Motivates Christians to Give” <https://www.barna.com/research/motivations-for-generosity/>

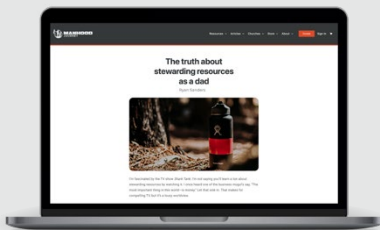
When asked to describe how they spend time with their family, 31% of dads say they block out time for their family in their schedules. As a result, they will often turn down other commitments for the sake of their family. Two in ten respondents (21%) said they squeeze family time in when they can, but it's hard to do on a daily basis. Only a quarter of surveyed dads said they make time every weekend for their family. Another 25% say they plan family time as a top priority, but that it often gets squeezed out by other obligations or commitments.

So why is time with family being squeezed out? According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American father (aged 25-54) spends more than four hours per day on leisure and sports activity and only one hour per day caring for and helping their children.¹¹ In other words, dads are distracted, and this affects their ability to manage time wisely.

Nearly half of Christian fathers struggle with time management

Nearly half of Christian fathers in our assessment described their time management as “rushed.” This certainly should raise concerns for a dad and for those who work with men. Fathers who are rushed are less likely to read the Bible regularly, pray, invest spiritually

in their children, and serve in the church. It's possible that the feeling of being rushed in a variety of areas hinders active obedience in significant spiritual areas. What is clear is that nearly half of Christian fathers struggle with time management, which ultimately has a negative impact on their lives both spiritually and relationally. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of negative outcomes within their families.



THE TRUTH ABOUT STEWARDING RESOURCES AS A DAD

Need help assessing how you're stewarding your resources? This article is for you.

CHECK IT OUT



¹¹ “American Time Use Survey” https://www.bls.gov/tus/tables/a7_1115.htm



**7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHERS**

07
**MAKING
DISCIPLES**

07 MAKING DISCIPLES

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9

Healthy Christians understand the biblical mandate to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). Faithful Christian fathers should understand the privilege and responsibility of discipling their own families as well as pouring into others. **A man's first discipleship priority should focus on those living under his own roof.**

A man's first discipleship priority should focus on those living under his own roof.

Seeing a child follow Christ should be one of the greatest joys in a father's life. But a 2009 Lifeway Research study revealed that only 9% of evangelical parents defined parental success as seeing their child coming to faith in Christ.¹² Of course faithful discipleship is a lifelong process that encompasses more than salvation alone. When fathers responding to The Godly Father Assessment were

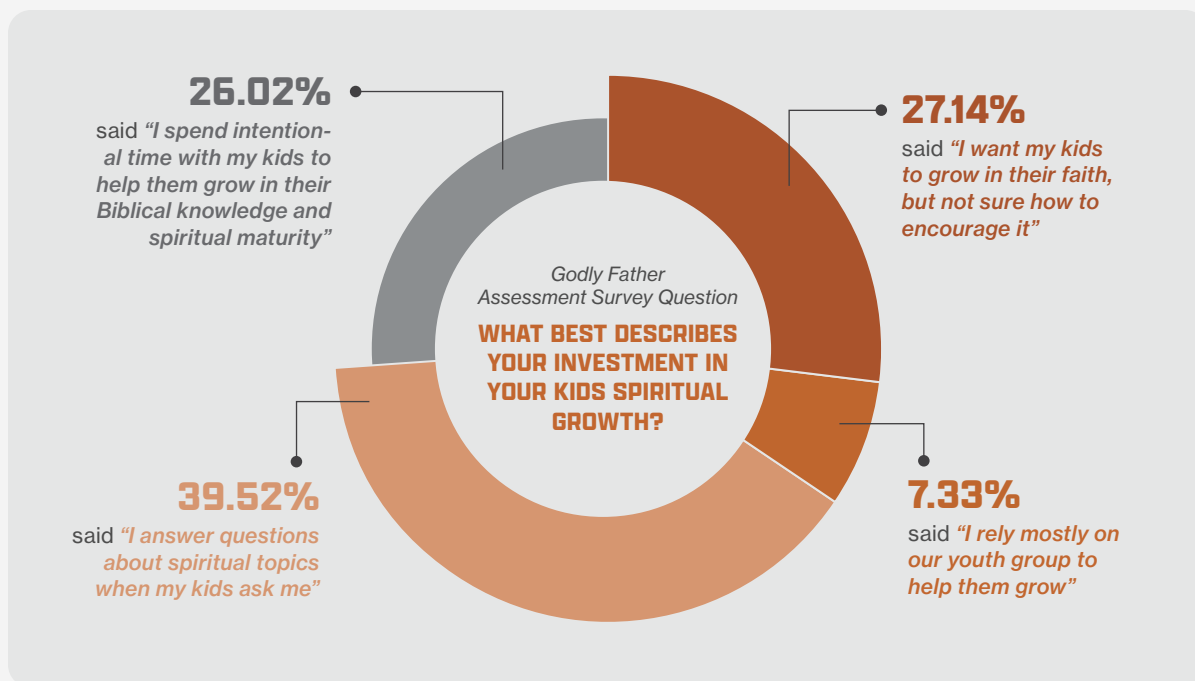
asked about investing in their children's spiritual growth, only 26% said they spend intentional time nurturing their kids' growth toward spiritual maturity and knowledge of the Bible. There is a definite lack of confidence and clarity for fathers in this area, and the church has an opportunity to encourage and equip them to be more engaged as disciple-makers.

Paul urged the Corinthian church to imitate him as a spiritual father (1 Corinthians 4:14-16). Unfortunately, most Christian fathers today would not encourage their children to do the same. When asked about modeling godly behavior before their children, less than 35% of those surveyed said that their instructions and actions typically match, and that they're quick to apologize when they don't. When paired with the data available on biblical literacy and prayer, it's clear that Christian fathers are not equipped or intentional about modeling these disciplines and teaching their children to do the same.

**LESS THAN
35%**

**of those surveyed
said that their
instructions and
actions typically
match.**

¹² "Lifeway Research Looks at Role of Faith in Parenting" <https://research.lifeway.com/2009/03/24/lifeway-research-looks-at-role-of-faith-in-parenting/>



How do Christian fathers do when it comes to discipling other dads? Perhaps unsurprisingly, **30% said they are in no position to help others** as they are still learning themselves. In fact, less than 15% said that they were actively mentoring or coaching other fathers.

Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

TITUS 2:6-8



MANHOOD JOURNEY BIBLE STUDIES

Explore the truths of Scripture with a small group of dads and their sons.

[LEARN MORE](#)

ADDITIONAL CONCERN: FATHERS AND THE CHURCH

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

ACTS 2:42-47

The gathering of the body of Christ within local congregations has been common practice since the inauguration of the church in Acts 2. Local church engagement is important for a number of reasons, not the least of which are the ministries of encouragement and accountability. Furthermore, the church offers Christians the opportunity to serve out of their gifting as members of Christ's body.

**Unfortunately,
church attendance
has been on the
decline for decades.**

Unfortunately, church attendance has been on the decline for decades. According to a recent Gallup poll, 44% of self-identified Protestant Christians reported that they attended services every week or almost every week. This is four percentage points lower than the same reporting from 20 years ago.¹³



**NEARLY 9
OUT OF EVERY
10 CHILDREN**

who attended multiple
church gatherings each
week with their family
continue in the faith
as adults.

Church membership has seen even steeper declines, as 64% of Protestants say they are members of a local church, a number which is 9% lower than the same category in the year 2000. Only 46% of men claimed to be members of a religious congregation, down from 64% in 2000.¹⁴

To emphasize why this is important for fathers, the American Survey Center released findings in 2022 revealing that **nearly nine out of every 10 children who attended multiple church gatherings each week with their family continue in the faith as adults.**¹⁵ This speaks volumes about the importance of local church engagement. A family's consistent and intentional investment in the local church has eternal significance for their children.

¹³ "Church Attendance Has Declined in Most US Religious Groups" <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642548/church-attendance-declined-religious-groups.aspx>

¹⁴ "US Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time" <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>

¹⁵ "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America" https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/generation-z-future-of-faith/#_edn2

While it's crucial for fathers to attend a church, modeling commitment and service in a local congregation is even more important.

As previously noted, our Godly Father Assessment revealed some concerns for Christian fathers regarding the depth of their engagement in church. When asked about serving at their church, more than 38% of respondents stated that they don't serve in any capacity at their local church, while 17% only have served when specifically asked. As any pastor can attest, there's a significant difference between someone who attends church services and someone who serves as a member of the church. The apostle Paul devoted the second half

of 1 Corinthians 12 to this very idea. While it's crucial for fathers to attend a church, modeling commitment and service in that local congregation is even more important.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

HEBREWS 10:24-25



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

So what should we do with this information? We live in a culture where thousands of books, blog posts, and podcasts are focused on helping men become better fathers. But those resources are only useful if we're aiming for better dads. Churches must aim at a different target. We want to train up biblically faithful fathers.

Churches must intentionally invest in fathers and provide the tools they need to help them faithfully lead their families.

A recent study by the Barna Group revealed some fascinating statistics.¹⁶ When asked “Who is most responsible for a child’s spiritual formation and development,” 99% of pastors responded that the family ranked first, and 92% ranked the church second. However, when asked “What are the priorities of your church for spiritual formation of children,” 72% said Sunday school or children’s classes, while **only 20% responded with training to equip parents for spiritual conversations and family discipleship.**

Simply put, **churches must intentionally invest in fathers and provide the tools they need to help them faithfully lead their families.** As the church, we should not settle for better dads. We should strive for biblical fathers. How does this happen?

We propose a three-step process:

STEP 1: ENGAGE FATHERS

For decades, fatherhood has been downplayed and diminished. Fathers have found themselves the victim of negative stereotypes and the butt of countless jokes. So, we should not be surprised at the current state of biblical fatherhood since men have been showered with a constant stream of mockery and criticism.

While men certainly need to be challenged, fathers must first be engaged. Instead of the annual address on Father’s Day, fatherhood should become a primary focus of discipleship within the life of the local church. **When we invite fathers to the table, explain their value, identify them with Christ, and encourage them from the Word, we have the opportunity to mobilize them for one of the most important missions they have: discipling their families in Christ.**

¹⁶ “Who Is Responsible for Children’s Faith Formation?” <https://www.barna.com/research/children-faith-formation/>

STEP 2: EQUIP FATHERS

In order to fulfill this task, fathers need to be equipped with the necessary resources. Many dads have never had a model of a biblically faithful father in their own life. They may have seen one from a distance or heard the pastor discuss some aspects of biblical manhood from the pulpit, but they're unsure how to go about it. We must help them understand that biblically faithful fathering doesn't require a theology degree, ministry experience, or countless hours of prep. Instead, churches need to shepherd their fathers toward faithfulness.

In providing tools, training, and resources aimed at fathers, churches will equip fathers to be missionaries in their own homes, preparing them to shepherd their families toward faithfulness as well. The seven key characteristics listed above are a great place to start. **Equipping fathers to Trust God, Know Scripture, Pray Fervently, Build Relationships, Serve Others, Steward Finances, and Make Disciples will challenge them to model and teach the same elements of faithfulness to their children.**

STEP 3: EMPOWER FATHERS

Once engaged and equipped, Christian fathers must remember that they have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish their unique calling. The responsibility to disciple their children does not rest with a children's minister, youth pastor, Sunday school teacher, or even their mother. While each of these individuals plays an important role in the spiritual development of children, none of them can replace the powerful influence of a father.

The local church has the unique opportunity to empower and commission its fathers for the work of ministry in their homes. **Men should be challenged to read and discuss the Bible with their families, to pray over them and teach them to pray, to lead them to serve the church through their own example, and to follow Christ above all else.**

When local churches intentionally engage, equip, and empower fathers in their congregations, they will reap the immense benefits that come as a result.

Biblically faithful fathers make a difference not only in their homes, but also in their churches and communities.



HOW MANHOOD JOURNEY CAN HELP

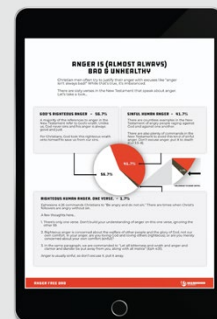
At Manhood Journey, we believe that there's no better way to equip fathers than through the local church. Our desire is to serve your church by providing resources, training, and networking as you strive to fulfill this essential task.

01 DIGITAL COURSES

Manhood Journey offers four video-based courses churches can utilize in multiple formats. These courses cover topics such as **fatherhood basics** (The Connected Father, Faithful Fatherhood); **anger**, which dads tell us is a key problem (Anger Free Dad); and **how to be godly husbands** (Honorable Husbands).

The courses help dads recognize the challenges inherent in fatherhood and provide biblical strategies to address each of those challenges. A great starting place for any ministry to fathers, The Connected Father serves as a foundational tool in equipping dads to be disciple-makers in their homes.

Regarding our Anger Free Dad course, one pastor called it *"the best source of guidance and biblical explanation of anger I've ever seen."*





02 FATHER-SON BIBLE STUDIES

We offer a number of Bible studies that are designed to help dads engage their sons in the study of God's Word. They are available in two formats:

Small Group: These studies are created for small groups of men and their sons, as they study biblical manhood together and learn how to apply God's proper understanding of masculinity in a practical way.

One-on-One: These studies allow a man to meet directly with his son for a more intimate and personal examination of the topics. Clear, concise, and direct, these easy-to-use guides can be utilized by anyone to spark purposeful, biblical conversations between fathers and sons.

03 FATHERHOOD EVENTS

Manhood Journey has planned, participated, and partnered with others in numerous fatherhood-specific events. Whether it's a one-day fatherhood conference or a weekend fatherhood summit, events aimed at dads produce great fruit. Our team would be glad to come alongside your organization or church to help design a fatherhood event that is specifically tailored to your unique context and exact needs. Whether you need consultation on content and scheduling, curriculum for the event, or a speaker, our team stands ready to serve you as you seek to encourage dads in your congregation and community.

Equipping, engaging, and empowering fathers in local congregations is crucial. At Manhood Journey, we would be honored to partner with your church in this important work. You can learn more at www.manhoodjourney.org/churches. Simply contact us to get started.

APPENDIX: THE DATA

MANHOOD JOURNEY'S GODLY FATHER ASSESSMENT

28

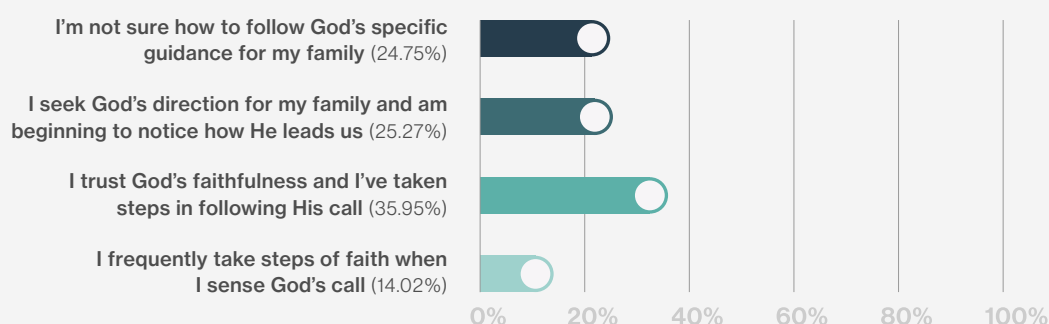
QUESTIONS

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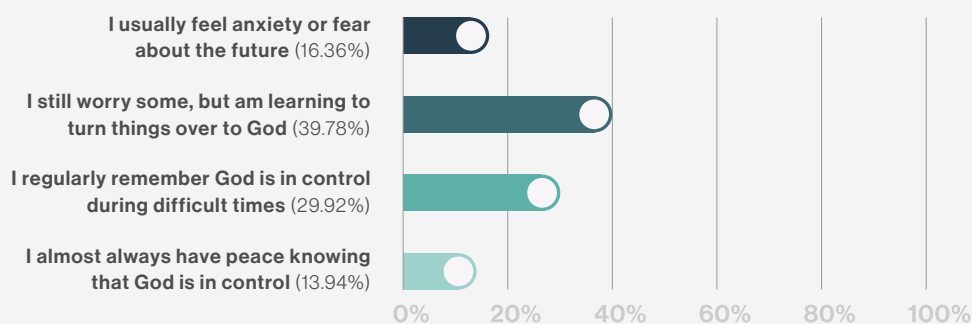
COMPLETED RESPONSES

SECTION 1: TRUSTING GOD

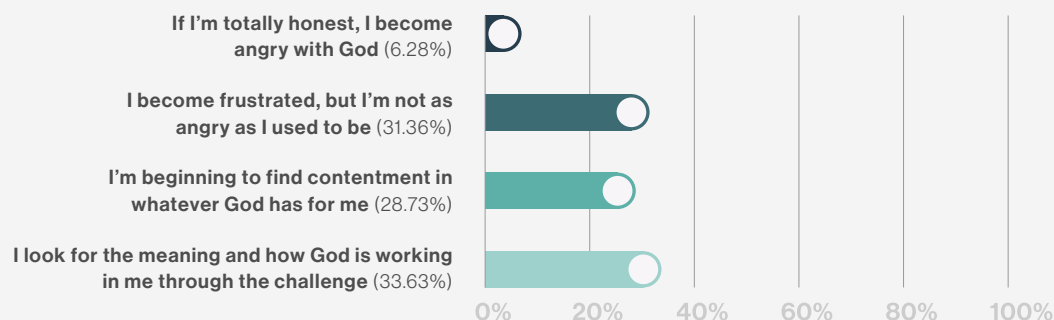
1. What statement best describes you regarding God's direction in your life?



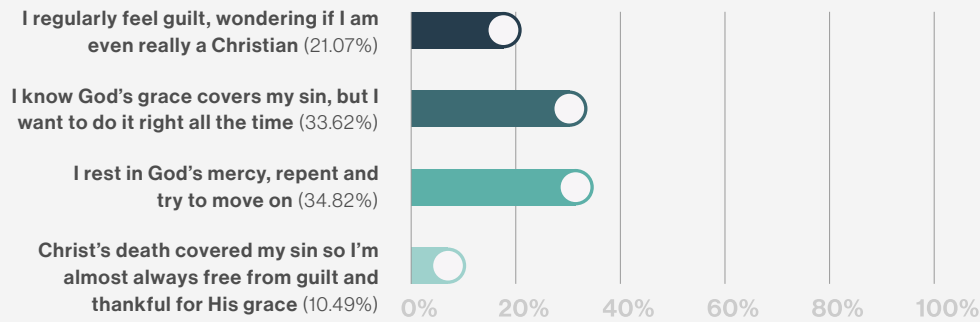
2. When you face uncertain or difficult times, which statement best describes your response:



3. How do you respond when things in your life don't go your way (chronic health trouble, unfair job loss, etc.)?

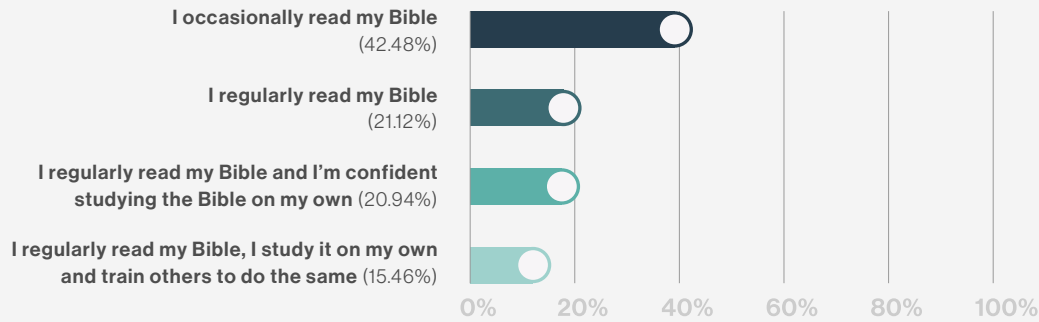


4. When you find yourself battling with sin, how does it make you feel?

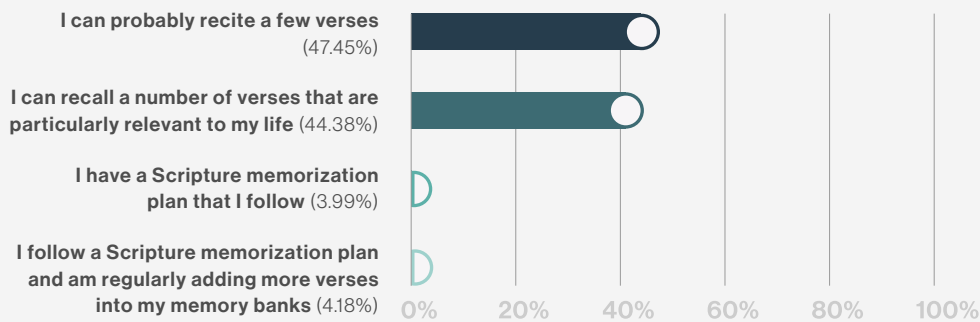


SECTION 2: KNOWING THE BIBLE

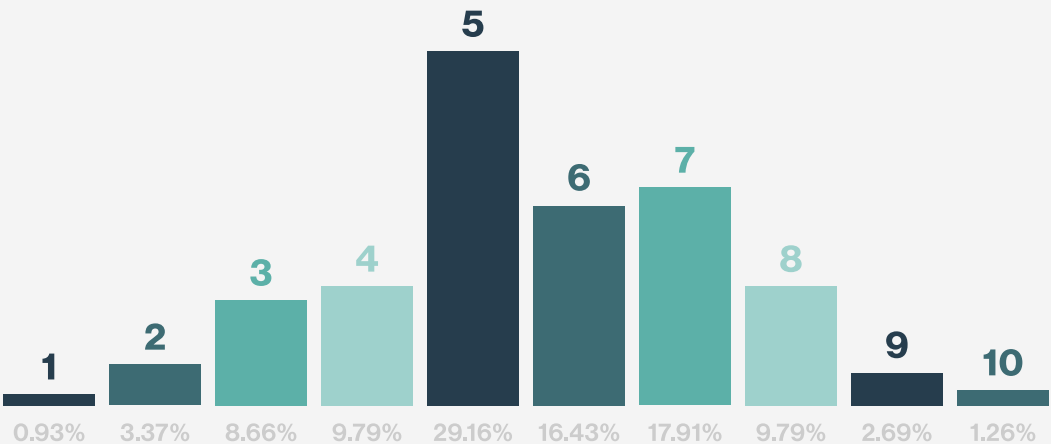
5. What statement best describes your Bible study habits?



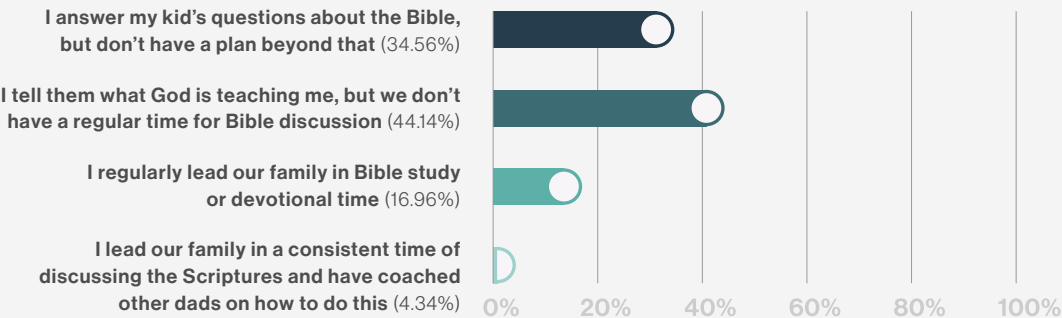
6. When it comes to scripture memorization, which statement best describes where you are right now?



7. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your knowledge of the Bible?

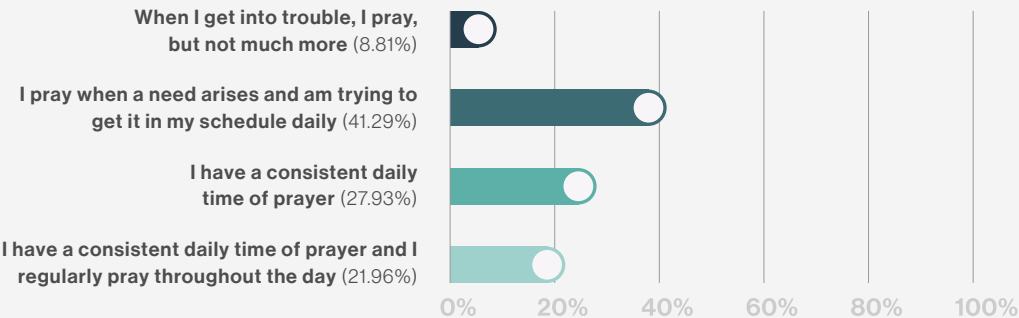


8. How are you helping your family grow and apply the Bible to daily life?

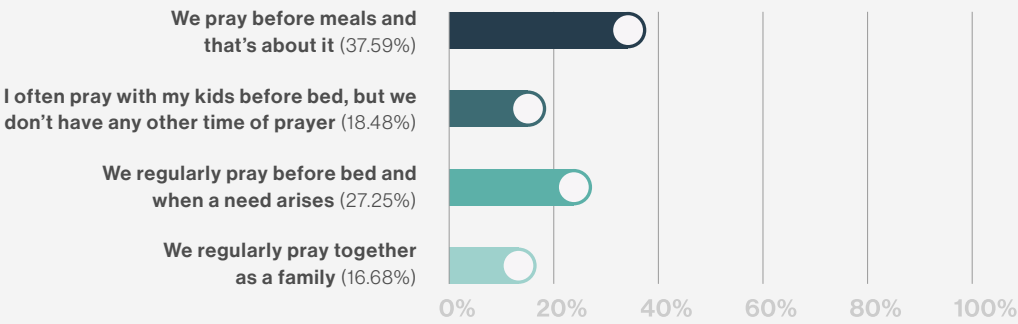


SECTION 3: PRAYING FERVENTLY

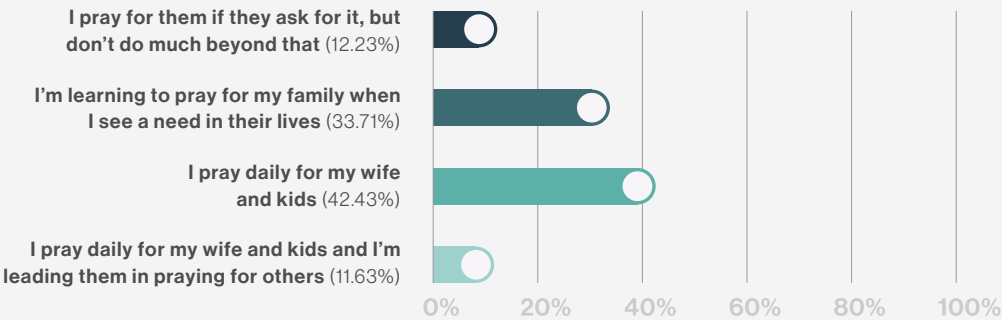
9. What best describes the amount of time you spend in prayer?



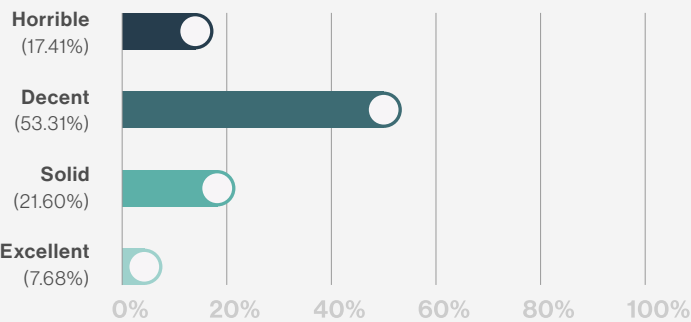
10. What does your family's prayer life look like?



11. How often do you pray for your wife and kids?

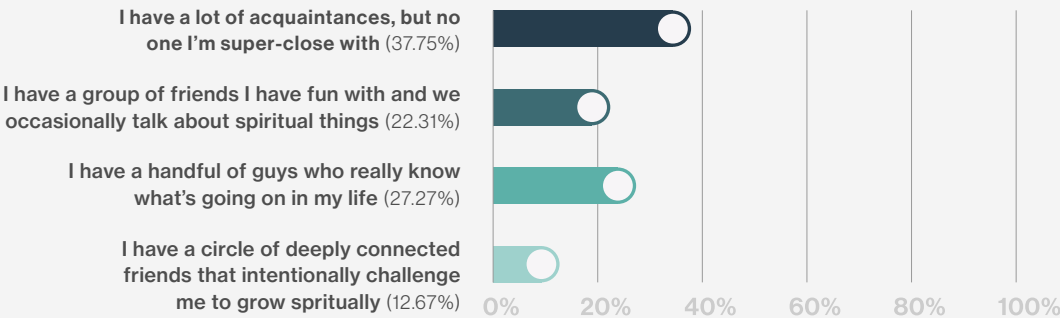


12. Which best represents how you feel when asked to describe your prayer life?

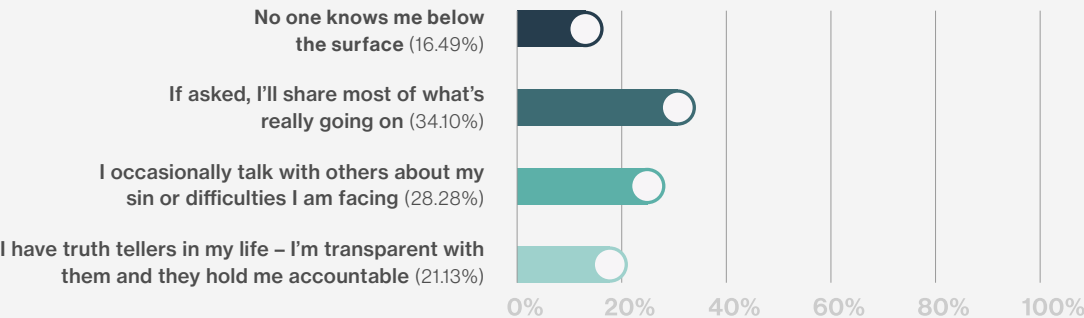


SECTION 4: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

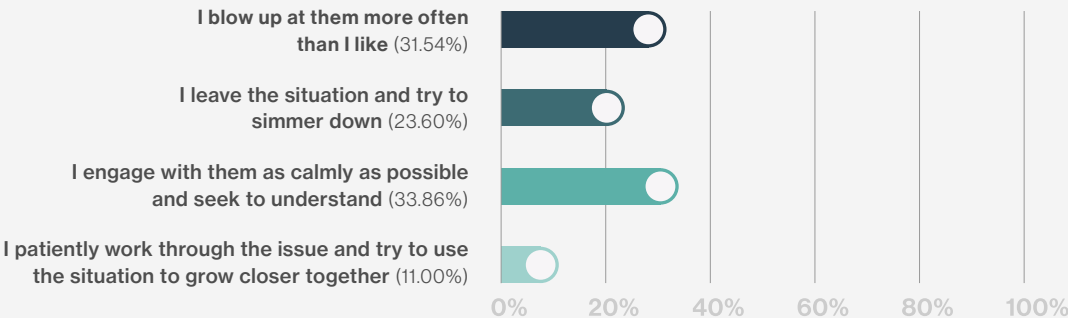
13. Which would best describe the relationships in your life?



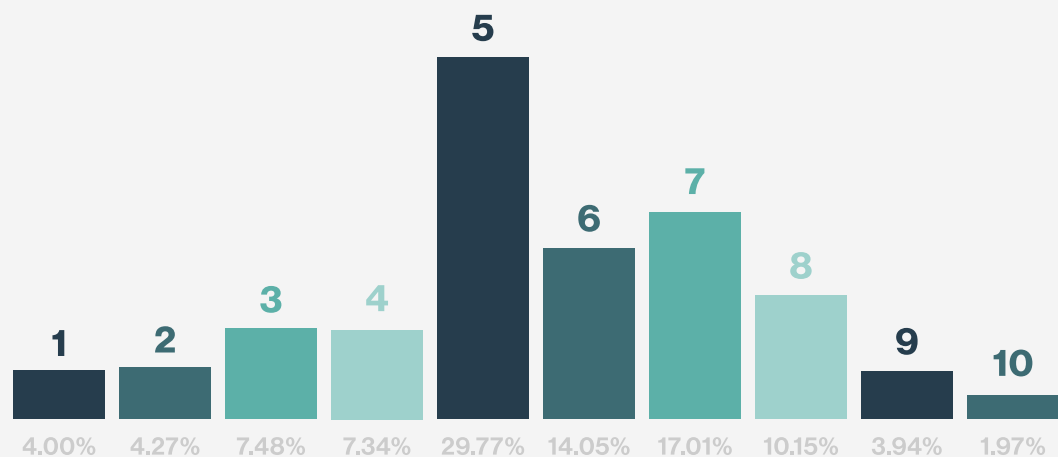
14. How well does someone else (friend, your wife) really know what is going on in your life?



15. How do you handle it when your children or wife makes you angry?

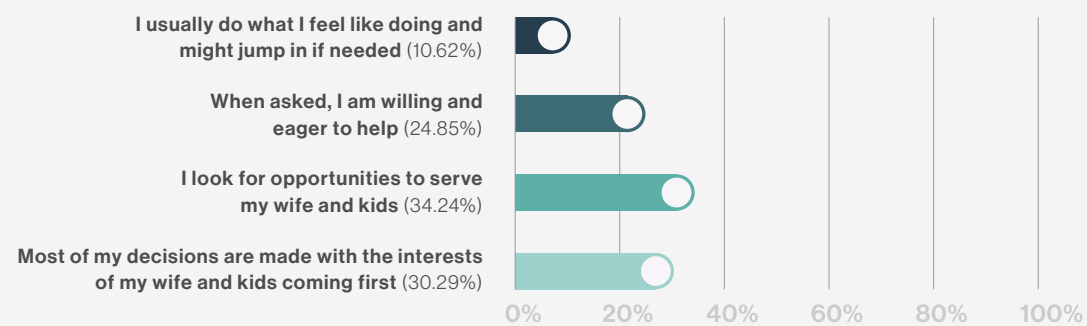


16. On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate how well you are doing as a husband right now?

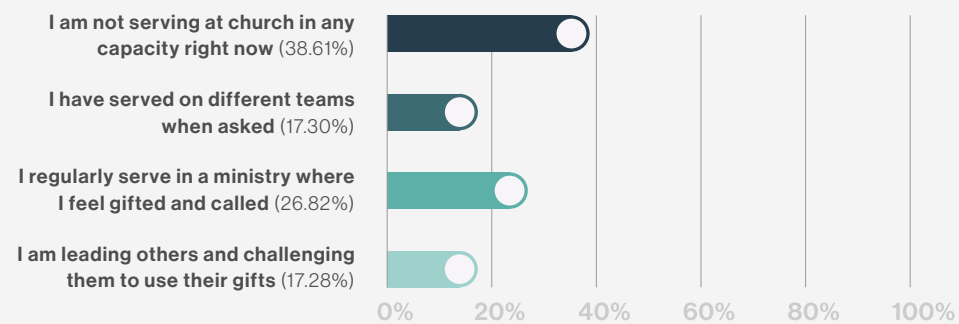


SECTION 5: SERVING OTHERS

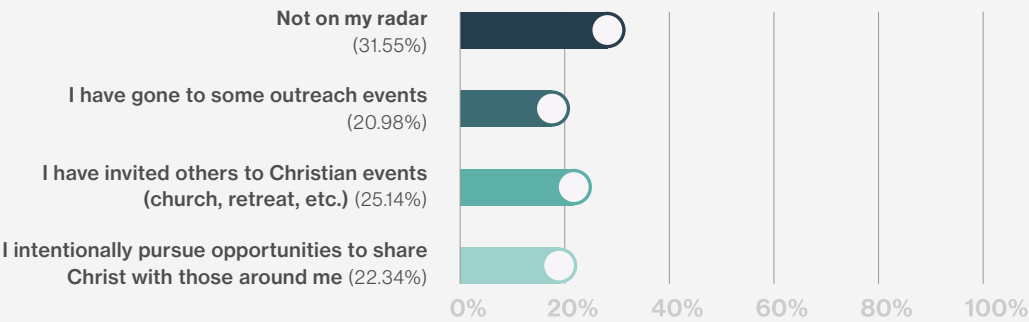
17. When you’re at home, how regularly do you serve your wife and kids?



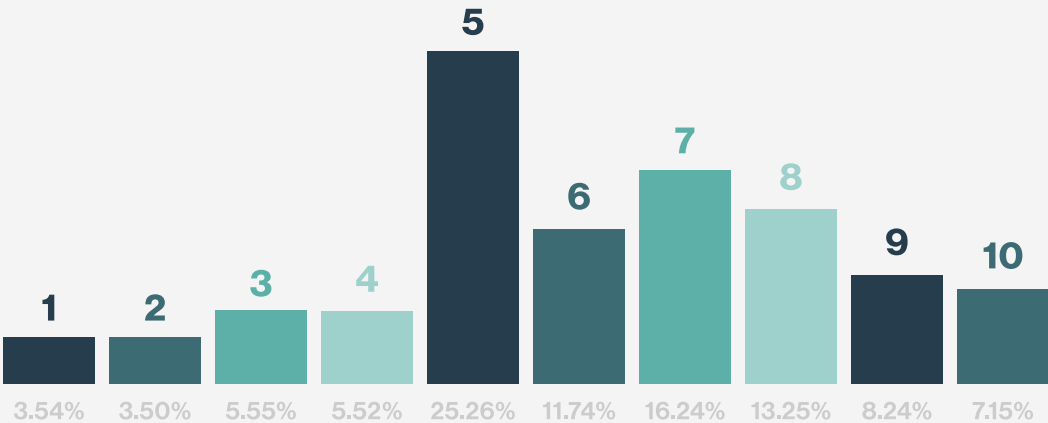
18. Which statement best describes how you serve at your church?



19. How often are you involved in sharing the gospel with others?

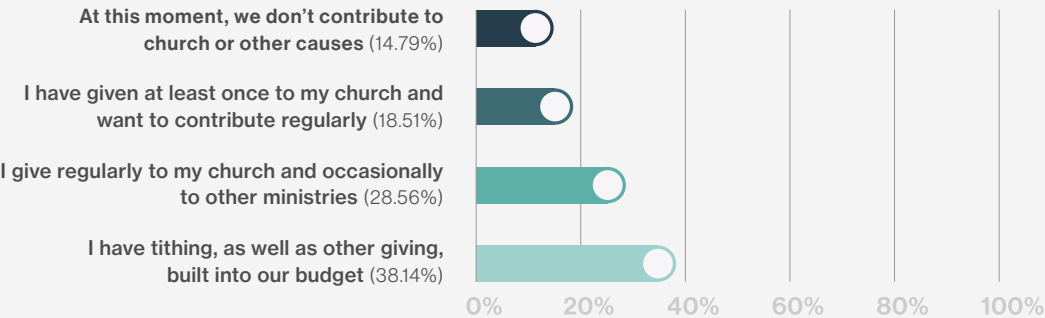


20. If we asked your wife to rate you from 1–10 on a “Servant’s Heart” scale, what would she say (feel free to hand her your phone for this one!)?

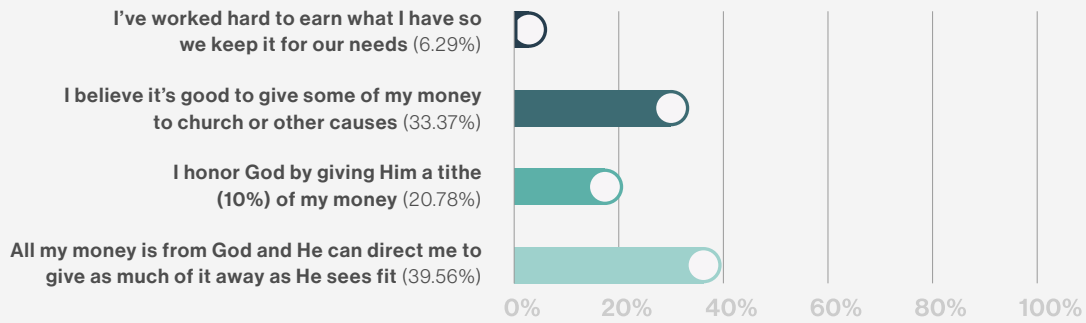


SECTION 6: STEWARDING RESOURCES

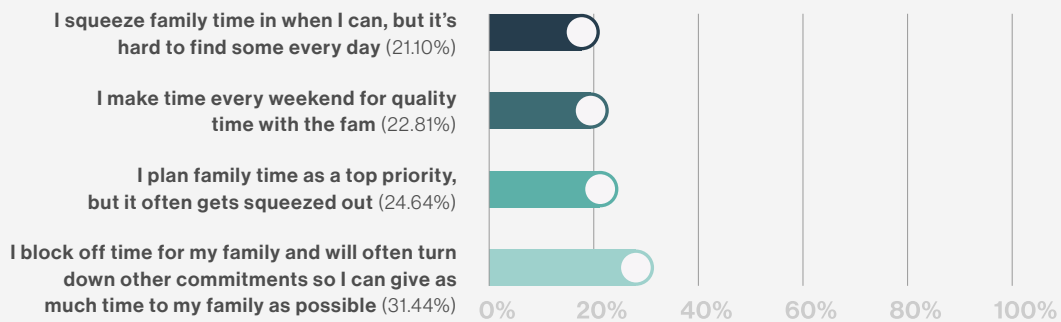
21. What statement best describes your financial giving situation?



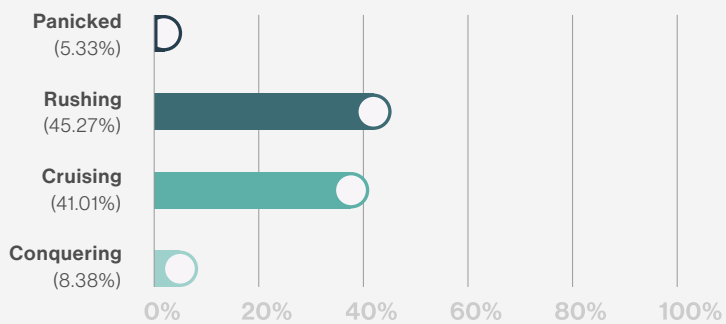
22. What statement best describes your view of money?



23. Which best describes how you spend time with your family?

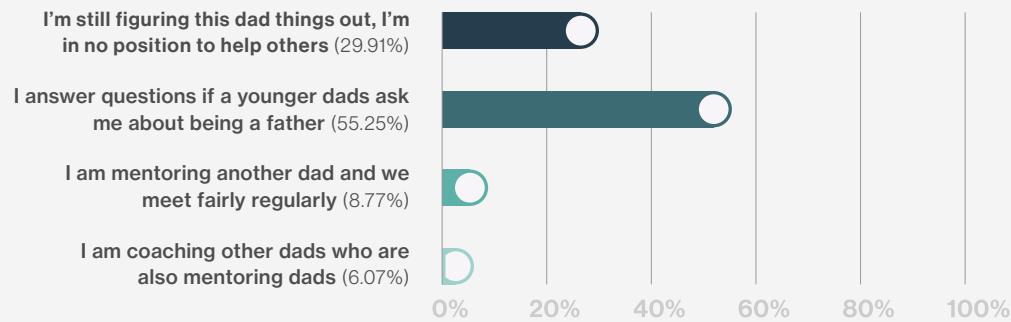


24. Which best describes how well you manage your time?

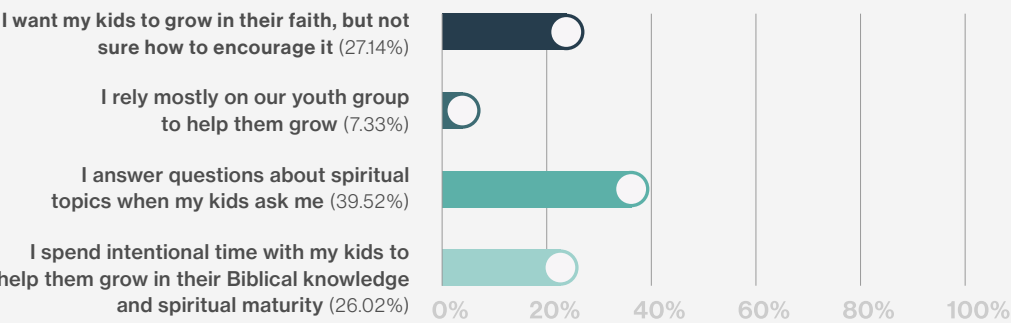


SECTION 7: MAKING DISCIPLES

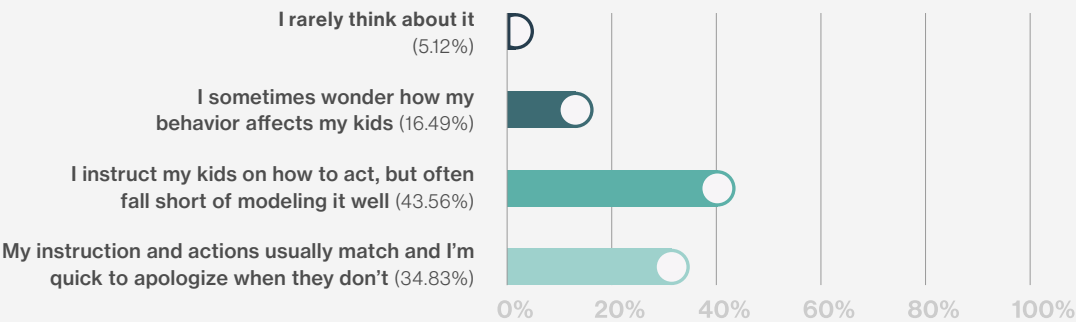
25. How are you helping other dads grow as godly fathers?



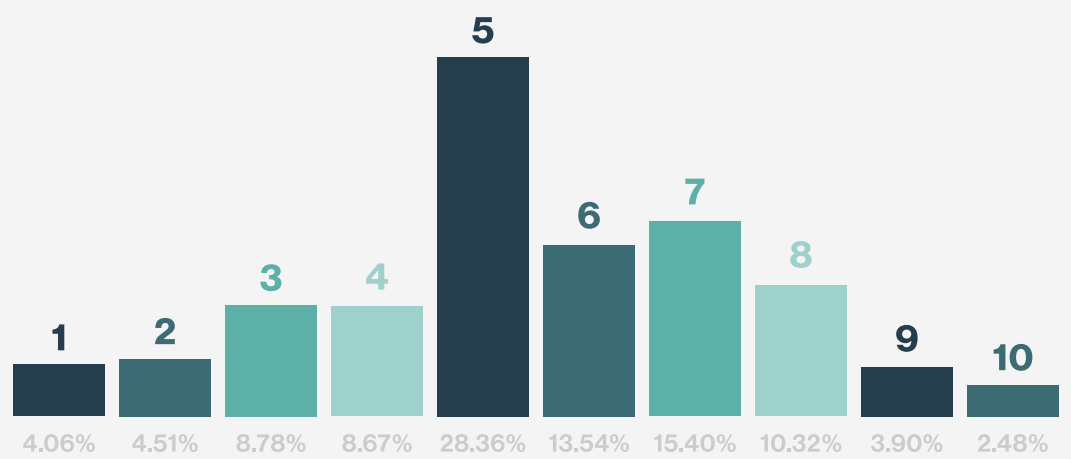
26. What best describes your investment in your kids spiritual growth?



27. How well are you intentionally modeling godly behavior for your kids?



28. One a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in knowing what it takes to disciple your kids?



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

These are some of the excellent organizations we work with that have helped bring this report to you.





PASTOR TOOLS

Below are several resources to help you share the findings from this report.



READY MADE SLIDES

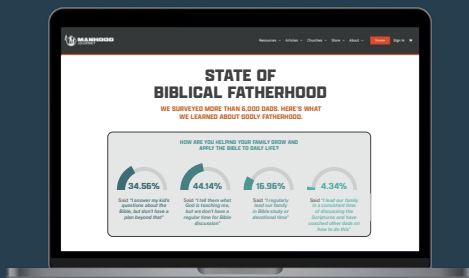
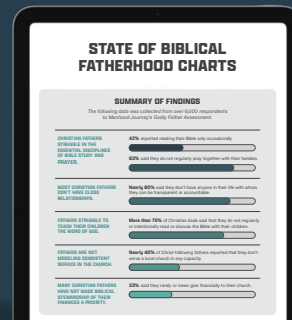
We've built a handful of slides to help you bring this information to life for your group, team or congregation.

[GET THE SLIDES](#)

GRAPHICS AND CHARTS

Some of the top charts and graphics from this report have been carved out and saved in easy-to-use images formats.

[BROWSE THE GRAPHICS](#)



BLOG ARTICLES

We've taken the insights and ideas in this document and crafted blog posts you can read, link to and share.

[READ THE BLOGS](#)

STATE OF BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD

WE SURVEYED MORE THAN 6,000 DADS. HERE'S WHAT
WE LEARNED ABOUT GODLY FATHERHOOD.

A BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL FATHER:

- 01 **TRUSTS GOD**
(Proverbs 3:5-6)
- 02 **KNOWS SCRIPTURE**
(Psalm 119:105)
- 03 **PRAYS FERVENTLY**
(Philippians 4:6-7)
- 04 **BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS**
(Proverbs 27:17)
- 05 **SERVES OTHERS**
(Galatians 5:13)
- 06 **STEWARDS RESOURCES**
(2 Corinthians 9:6-7)
- 07 **MAKES DISCIPLES**
(Matthew 28:18-20)



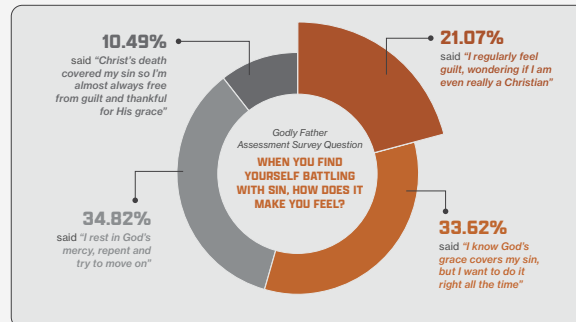
1 IN 4 MEN

who took the assessment
confessed they weren't sure
how to follow God's specific
guidance for their family.

More than

16%

of men who took the
assessment said they
usually feel anxiety or
fear about the future.

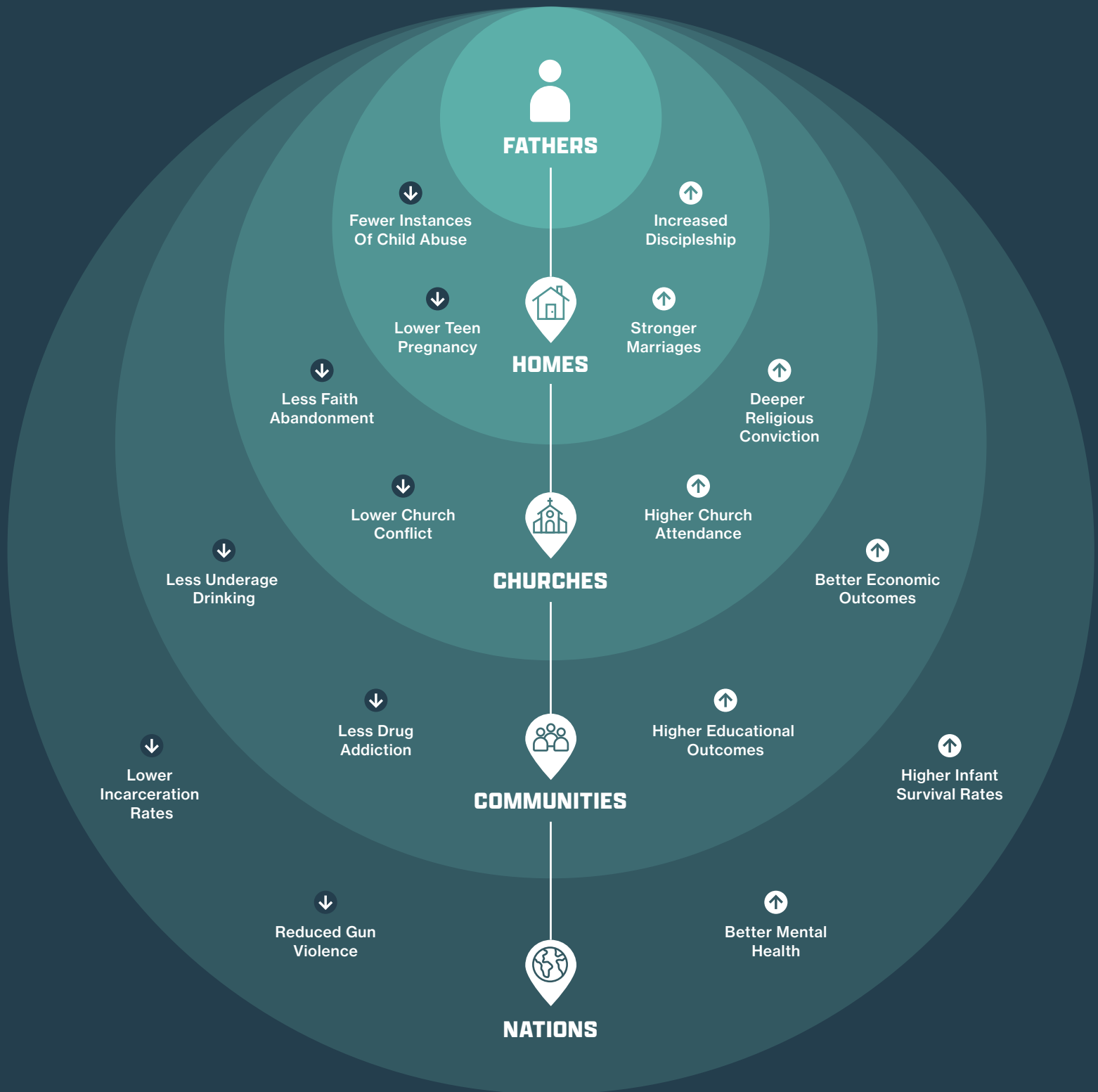


GET THE STATE OF BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD INFOGRAPHIC

We selected key data points, insights and charts
from this report and formatted them in this dynamic
and beautiful one-page infographic.

SNAG THE INFOGRAPHIC

BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD'S RIPPLE EFFECT



HELPING DADS BECOME DISCIPLE MAKERS



DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.



MANHOOD
JOURNEY



HELPING DADS BECOME DISCIPLE MAKERS.

WWW.MANHOODJOURNEY.ORG