



From A

FATHERLESS FATHER

To His Sons

By Andre D. Harrison

Andre D. Harrison

From A Fatherless Father To His Sons Sample

Andre D. Harrison

From A Fatherless Father To His Sons

Copyright © 2012 Andre D. Harrison

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other – without written permission, except for brief quotations in books and critical reviews. For more information send request to P.O. Box 30389, Staten Island, NY 10303

Cover Design, Cover Photo, Interior Photo by
Katrina Charles of T.C. Designs www.tcdesignzonline.com

Edited by Tiffani J. Knowles of NEWD Magazine www.newdmagazine.com

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy
Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)

Copyright © 2001 by Crossway,
a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

All rights reserved.
ESV Text Edition: 2007

ISBN: 0615633706
ISBN-13: 978-0615633701

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book first to God. He truly has brought me through a lot and given me the strength to press on. Second, to my sons Isaiah, Nathaniel and Gabriel. You three keep me on my toes and are my encouragement to be the best example of a man I can be. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

And to future children I may have, this book is also dedicated to you.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Chapter 1 - Grow Up

Chapter 2 - Look the Part and Be the Part

Chapter 3 - Learning Beyond Experience

Chapter 4 - Faith in the God of Men

Chapter 5 - A Strong Will and a Soft Heart

Chapter 6 - Act on Your Word

Chapter 7 - Appreciating the WoMan

Chapter 8 - Sex was Invented by God

Chapter 9 – They're Your Children Not Your Inconvenience

Chapter 10 - Leaving a Legacy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my mother, Gloria Harrison, for the sacrifices she made to raise me in the best way she could.

To my grandmother, Ina Harrison, the most beautiful woman in the world, who gave immeasurable support to my mother in raising me.

To my siblings, Alicia and Anton Harrison, for their support. And a special mention to Stacey Rivera and my brother Quinton Lowther.

To my editor Tiffani Knowles who was a much needed nag and an encourager for me to finish the book.

To the mother of my children Magalena Rodriguez, without her I would not be a father, thank you for giving me the three most amazing gifts a man can ever have.

To Gloria Rodriguez, her encouragement has been a springboard for me.

To Blinda Blair who made me believe that this was all possible from before the first word in the book was written, thank you.

To all the men mentioned in this book, thank you for being there for me.

To Pastor Hilda Ortiz for offering her fine-tooth comb services in reading this book.

To the National Fatherhood Initiative whose resources have been a help to me as I improve my role as a father in my kids' lives.

To my sons who have kept me on my toes and striving to be a better man. I love you so much.

I would also like to thank my biological father Irving Rivera. Even though he wasn't present in my youth, he is here now and we are building a strong relationship today.

Lastly, to my family and friends who have stuck by me to encourage me to finish this book. Your encouragement kept me going and I thank all of you. You all are greatly appreciated.

Introduction

As I sit on my bed writing, my nine-year-old son lies next to me watching *Fairly Odd Parents* on Nick Toons. In this moment, I can't help but reflect on what it is to be a man and what it takes to get there.

When I was nine, I never would have imagined that I would be lying in bed with one of my sons watching them watch television while I attempt to write a book. Yet and still, I am here. Thinking.

Even though I am a 31-year-old father, how do I know I have reached manhood yet? Am I even clear on what a man truly is?

As a father of three sons, I have the esteemed pleasure and pressure of rearing boys to become men. To teach them what is acceptable and unacceptable for a man. Pleasure, because I find it an honor that God sought fit to bless and entrust me with such a responsibility. Growing up, I did not have a father to show me how to become a man. Pressure, because I am the primary example to my sons of what a man should be.

I admit I am not perfect. I have a host of flaws. In fact, one of my greatest fears is that one day they'll look at me and think that I've failed as a man. Regardless of that fear, I write this -- mostly because I recognize that my sons deserve a father to show them how to be a man. They deserve a father who will leave with them the legacy of manhood.

Having an absentee father, I had to learn many lessons by trial and error. And despite having great men like my Uncle Jake, my Uncle Dwight, my Godfather Ralph, and my brother's father Alvin, I felt a constant void of not knowing who my father was, what my father was and why he wasn't there. The men I did know growing up had their own responsibilities, so their quality time with me was sporadic. I understood and, regardless, I knew their love for me.

I learned a lot from these men, but even still, I longed for a father to sit me down and explain to me what it meant to be a man. I longed for a father to teach me socially-acceptable behavior for a man. I longed for a father to show me how to interact with girls and teach me what appropriate conduct was when it came to being in a relationship with a woman. I longed for a father to talk to me about sex. I look back and ponder my past. Many of the mistakes I made could have been avoided simply by me having an active and consistent father, or father figure - for that matter.

It wasn't until I was 30 that the day I had longed for finally came. I came face to face with my biological father. I was nervous and anxious all at the same time. It was an amazing experience to see the other side of who I was. Questions of why flew through my mind but I kept the questions to myself. As excited as I was to meet him, I made sure not meet him with expectations of having a father-son relationship. My heart was actually guarded. Twenty-eight years had passed without him in my life, and I didn't want to set myself up for disappointment. I didn't need another man that was part-time in my life. If he couldn't be there to reestablish a relationship with us full-time, then just meeting him would suffice.

To be honest, both my twin sister and I felt slighted growing up without our father. Though our father wasn't present in our childhood, we were able to evade many of the big pitfalls that ensnare the young and fatherless. I am proud of us. Today, we are both striving to be positive role models for our own children and for the youth in our communities.

Presently, my father and I are building a strong relationship based on realistic expectations of one another. My sons now have the opportunity to know their grandfather and, for that, I am extremely grateful. The past is where it should be, behind us.

For years, men have been absent from witnessing the full development of their children -- be it because of occupation, hobbies, other personal interests, or lack of physical presence. As a result, mothers have had to take up this mantle -- unnaturally, of course.

The honest truth is a woman cannot teach a boy to become a man better than a man can teach a boy to become a man. Similarly, a man cannot teach a girl to be a woman better than another woman can.

The role of the man in the home has been made to diminish. Men are confused about what role they **should** play in their homes. Today's man, like me, has been taught by a woman to be a man. Many of these women harbor mixed motives -- be it sometimes sub-consciously.

She wants to raise a man that isn't like the one who hurt her in the past. If she was physically abused by a man, then she may overpower her son, making him feel that a woman is boss. If her mate was lazy, she may be overly

insistent about her son doing chores and hard labor, wearing him out. It goes even further than past hurts. She may want to raise a son who fits her internal vision of who a perfect man is. Because the woman's idea of a perfect man is based on internal fantasies, she will either be too hard on the boy or too soft on the boy. In many ways, this plan backfires. The boy may become handicapped and may never reach his true potential in his manhood. Often times, this boy may set out to do exactly the opposite of his mother's requests in an attempt to resist the pressure to measure up to a mother's idea of manhood.

Sadly, many men who have endured a childhood like this have buckled under the pressure when they reach manhood. The cycle may repeat itself and he, in turn, becomes another absentee father. Their ignorance is not their fault. The fault lies with their absentee father. Some men would rather run than stand up and face the responsibilities that come with being a parent. In most cases, it was what their father did.

There is encouraging news despite the odds, however. A remnant. A few good men who have answered the call to be the best fathers they can be. I am among them. Men like myself stand firm in their commitment to being a consistent father in the lives of their children. I personally know men who have grown up with absentee fathers who are now amazing fathers. Their commitment shines brilliantly.

They are men just like me who were forced to learn how to become a man by trial and error, this book is for you.

It is also for boys who are currently searching for their manhood without the help of their fathers. Use this book as a guide. Whether your father left you as a child, works all the time, or passed away, use this to assist you on your journey.

If you are a father who wants to teach your sons how to be a man, this book can also be of help to you. It may not cover everything you need to know as a man, but it will most certainly put you on the right track.

Keep polishing your skills. Make your search for manhood a lifetime one and never forget to look to the Creator of Man to learn how to be a real man.

Finally, this book is for my three sons. Make this your manual for growing into your manhood. Many of these lessons I have already taught you. Some I have yet to teach you.

Enjoy this book.

Chapter 4 - Faith in the God of Men

- The Ultimate Example Of A Father's Love

Where is the best place a man can learn to be a father? By looking at the Father of fathers. God is the creator of all men. To wit, men were created in His image. Genesis 1:26-28 *"²⁶ Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"*

The primary example of a man for a child is his father and the primary example of a man for a grown man is God. It shouldn't be a far-fetched idea to look to God as an example of what a man should be. To seek the Creator for understanding about what a man is and how to become a man, is the wisest thing a man can do.

Every created thing is created for a purpose. OxyClean was created as a solution for cleaning clothing. ShamWow was created to be a strong but gentle alternative to regular kitchen towels. A man must also know his purpose.

LOVE

God has purposed to love His creation unconditionally. With that love, He has instilled purpose into every man. Some of those purposes are universal in that every man must fulfill them; and then there are some purposes that are a little more specific. Either way, the idea that God has purposed to love us is a trait that every man must adopt. Men should possess a God-like love for people and never be ashamed of it.

At the creation of man recorded in the book of Genesis, we read that God created man and that He was well pleased. God even walked with Adam in the garden and I can only imagine the dialogue between the Creator and His creation. In one of those conversations, God explained to Adam that he was able to eat of every fruit in the garden except for the fruit of one specific tree. If he did, then he would die. Staying true to his evil, jealous nature, Satan took the form of a serpent and persuaded Adam's wife, Eve, to eat the fruit off the tree. She then persuaded Adam to follow suit.

Here is where we see the love of God manifest. I didn't realize this until I was talking with a young man who felt God set man up. At our annual youth retreat in 2005, a young man was in the back of the chapel pacing back and forth with an angry look on his face while the other teens were engaged in prayer at the altar. I noticed him and asked him to join me outside. After we left the chapel, I asked him if he was okay and he responded that he wasn't. He began to tell me how God was playing with his creation.

“Pastor Andre, if God knew we were going to fall and go to hell then how can He love us and let that happen. God set us up to fall. He’s playing with us.”

I paused for a minute and then responded, “When you grow up, do you want children?”

The young man said yes.

“Would you set your son up to die?” I asked.

He responded with an emphatic, “Hell no!”

“Well, if God set up man to fall then God must have set up His Son to die, too,” I said. “No loving Father would ever do that.”

He looked at me with a smile and said, “Pastor Andre, I see it. God loves His Son and His creation.”

“Yes, and when mankind fell, God set a plan in place to redeem mankind by sending His Son Jesus to pay the price for man’s shortcomings. That is true love.”

The young man started to cry and joined the other teens for prayer.

God established a plan to redeem the creation He loves so much. His love was the motivation for it. God’s love continued to be shown to His people several times in the pages of history.

In the time that the Jews were under Egyptian rule, God called a man to set them free from the hands of Pharaoh and to establish their own nation. During their

time in the wilderness, God gave Moses a love letter in the form of the law. Many people do not consider rules and regulations an act of love, but any good parent establishes them to keep the ones they love safe from harm.

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments not to control a nation, but to establish order and institute boundaries to keep the people He loved safe. Every action has its consequences. No one is exempt from those consequences. God's motive behind His law is to show that He cares about His people.

Throughout the Bible, we see God's love for His creation and it peaked when Jesus died on the cross. God loved the world He created so much that He sent His only Son to pay the consequences for His creation's sins. That is true love. The ultimate example of love.

There is an old story about a man by the name of John Griffith who lived in Oklahoma in 1929. He lost all he had in the stock market crash. He moved to Mississippi where he took a job as bridge operator for a railroad trestle. In 1937, he was involved in a horrible accident. One day his 8-year-old son, Greg, spent the day with his Dad at work.

The boy poked around the office and asked dozens of questions – just like little boys do. The bridge was over a river and, whenever a ship came, John had to open the bridge to allow the ships to pass. The day the boy was there with his father a ship was coming, so John opened up the draw bridge.

After a moment or two, he realized his son wasn't in the office and as he looked around, to his horror,

John saw his son climbing around on the gears of the draw bridge. He hurried outside to rescue his son but just then he heard a fast approaching passenger train, the Memphis Express, filled with 400 people. He yelled to his son but the noise of the now clearing ship and the oncoming train made it impossible for the boy to hear him. All of a sudden John Griffith realized his horrible dilemma. If he took the time to rescue his son the train would crash killing all aboard, but if he closed the bridge, the boy would be crushed in the gears.

John would sacrifice his son. He made the horrible decision, pulled the lever and closed the bridge. It is said, as the train went by, John could see the faces of the passengers, some reading, some even waving, all of them oblivious to the sacrifice that had just been made for them. (Taken from www.thesource4ym.com)

This mirrors God's love for us. God's example of a loving father is to be emulated. The true fact is that we will never possess the amount of love for our own children that God has for us; however, we can mimic what we learn from God.

- God's Idea And Role Of Manhood

The only place I can turn to is the Bible for this information. Many consider the Bible to be out of date, but despite the time in which the Scriptures were written, the principles found in the Bible can be used to bring clarity to the role of a man.

Every piece in a machine has its role to play and men are no different. Men need to understand how to play the role they have been given. Communities crumble because men choose not to take their rightful place in society. This causes an imbalance. Women then must pick up the role of a man to compensate for men's lack. This causes the scales to tip and, frankly, it's partly the man's fault.

To return things to a healthy balance, we must apply the principles found in the Bible. Even if you are not a Christian, the Bible will help you learn the role you ought to play in society.

Protector

God has put a protective instinct in every man. Men will protect and defend people and things that are closest to them. From family to friends to objects, a man will seek to ensure the safety of the people and things he loves.

Jesus also said that there is no greater love than one who gives their lives for a friend. [John 15:13] This is shown to us in the Bible when we read that husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loves His church and gave His life for her. [Ephesians 5:25]

Teacher

The first lesson a child learns is not in the classroom. It's in the home. Men have the charge to teach by word and by example. Children will watch and learn some of life's early lessons by watching

the adults living in the home. A man must exemplify the lessons he wishes to teach. Not just in the home, but in his community, too.

Men ought to pass on wisdom and knowledge to the generation behind him. In my experience, most men desire authority, but with that authority he must begin to teach righteously. He must teach lessons that will improve the overall society in which he lives.

Men were charged in the Bible to teach the children God's commandments and to sit and discuss them [Deuteronomy 6:7] We can also read in the Bible that if we train up a child in the way they should go, when they grow up, those lessons will not leave them [Proverbs 22:6]

Wise

Many men profess to be wise based on their experiences. Experience alone won't qualify you as a wise man. It's the understanding of your experiences. As I said in chapter 3, not learning from your experiences makes you as wise as a monkey.

Wisdom begins with God so every man ought to seek God for it. The book of Proverbs mentions wisdom in 51 verses and, in 67 verses, the word wise is mentioned. Reading Proverbs will help you understand that true wisdom is Godly wisdom.

"making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding" [Proverbs 2:2]

Slow To Wrath

Anger can be a very ugly thing. The mere fact is that at some point in every man's life he is faced with a situation that angers him, but a man should not allow that anger to overtake him. As a man, managing your anger is important. When something is done that angers you, make sure not to display your wrath, but reserve the wrath for the One who can judge righteously.

The Bible says that the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God [James 1:20] Let wrath stay in its rightful place, and that is with God. Every action has its consequences. Let us not be quick to be angry but instead listen and understand the offender.

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger [James 1:19]

Community-minded

Let me first differentiate between being community-minded and being politically-minded. A man who is community-minded seeks to improve his neighborhood rather than be seen, while the man who is political selfishly improves his neighborhood for personal gain.

Communities need more men that are willing to improve their neighborhoods. Just recently, an 18-month-old was shot in a building complex less than a mile from my home. Men should seek to start

positive movements in their communities to see that things like this don't happen. All throughout the Bible, we see examples of men who loved their communities -- from Moses, to Joshua, to David, to Daniel to Jesus.

Use this scripture as a guide for how men ought to uphold justice in their communities:

"⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it^[c] to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." [Romans 12:9-21]

That is just the tip of the iceberg. There is much a man can learn about being a man from reading the pages of Scripture. As I said, even if you do not consider yourself religious, many of the principles are universal and plainly -- just make sense.

- Examples Of Manhood In The Bible

From Genesis to Revelation, we can read about the examples of men in history. Some of those examples we can follow and some we should not. Yes, even in the Bible you will see some of men's failures, causing tragic consequences.

Let's take the very first man for instance. In the book of Genesis we read about how Adam was given the task to name all the creatures on the earth and to tend to the Garden of Eden. God bestowed on Adam a great ***responsibility***.

After the naming of all the animals, God made woman from Adam's rib. He finally had a helper who was comparable to him to help him tend to the Garden. Now, let's go back to man's first moment of failure. The one boundary that was established for Adam was for him not to eat from the tree of good and evil and Adam crossed it. Please take note that the boundary was given to Adam, not Eve. Eve is not to blame for man's failure. It was Adam's fault because God told Adam not to eat of the tree even before Eve was created.

Also, in Genesis, we read about a man called Abraham. Here is a man who was so obedient to God that he was willing to sacrifice his promised son. God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son to test Abraham's

obedience. God promised Isaac to Abraham in his old age, and God finally delivered him, only to tell Abraham to give him back. But prior to that, Abraham failed in many areas.

Abraham lied to kings. Abraham had to part ways with his nephew because of family differences. Instead of trusting God, he allowed his wife to convince him to take his maid servant and impregnate her so that they could have a child. All these failures led Abraham to the point of obedience, to the point where he was willing to sacrifice his son.

Now let me make this perfectly clear, THAT WAS A ONE TIME OCCURENCE. God will not expect you to sacrifice your own children, just as God really didn't want Abraham to. He was testing Abraham and he passed. You do not ever have to worry about passing that test, because Abraham is the only man and will be the only man that has or will ever take that test. What God told Abraham to do is different from the story of the man from Oklahoma who chose to save the lives of the train passengers. The father made a choice to save them and wasn't commanded to sacrifice his son for them.

You can also read about Moses in the book of Exodus. He was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. Moses reluctantly heeded God's call and became a **leader** to a nation. Through him, many signs and wonders were performed to show the omnipotence of God. In result, Pharaoh had no choice but to release the Israelites.

Moses also heeded the advice of his elders. Moses became overwhelmed and accepted his father-in-law's advice to appoint leaders under him that would help with

the affairs of the people. In turn, organization and governmental structure became established, even to a people who did not yet possess a land.

Moses was also very emotional, causing him to fail. In his anger, he disobeyed God. In the book of Numbers, you can read about how God directed Moses to speak to a rock for water to spring out. Instead, because of his frustration with the people and his unbelief, Moses struck the rock with his rod and water came springing out. This resulted in Moses not being able to enter into the Promised Land when they finally reached it.

Let's go into the book of Judges as I tell you about Samson. Samson was known for taking down a lion with his bare hands and for killing a thousand men with a jaw bone of a donkey in defense of his people. Samson possessed great **strength**.

Samson's failure came by way of his lust for a woman. Samson trusted a harlot who was also a spy to the enemy of his people. After revealing to her the secret to his strength, the harlot told his enemies the secret and they were able to capture him.

Now let's look at the mighty King David. You can read about King David in 1 Samuel. King David was acknowledged as a man after God's own heart. David was a noted warrior but even above that David loved to **worship** God. David was one of the authors of the book of Psalms, a poetic book of worship and prayers found in the Bible. David was also an accomplished musician.

Even King David wasn't perfect. One night, King David spotted a woman bathing while he was walking on

his roof. He noticed that she was beautiful and sent his servants to inquire about her. He knew the woman was married and that her husband was in battle, the very battle where King David should have been. He slept with her anyway and when he found out she was pregnant, David set up her husband to die in battle.

There is only one man who did everything except fail and that was Jesus Christ.

- Jesus: The Ultimate Example Of Manhood

You cannot get any manlier than Jesus Christ. He was the ultimate example of what manhood is all about. Many people believe various things about Jesus, but the one thing that all can agree on was that He was a Great Man. His teachings changed the world forever. His example started a movement that has been matched by none. Jesus is the Man.

All throughout the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John), we can read up on the many things he did as a man. I can write a book on that alone, and I just might do that after this.

Jesus stood for what He was most passionate about - God and God's people. Even if you read the smallest morsel of any of the Gospels, you will see that He stood true to what He represented. As He walked teaching God's words and principles, He also was an example to all who saw Him. Jesus wasn't just talking, He was living.

Not even the devil himself could deter Jesus from His mission. Beyond being tempted in every way, Jesus was also betrayed by the people He loved and came to Earth

for. Despite that betrayal, Jesus still went to the cross, suffering the consequences for the wrongs He didn't commit so that we wouldn't have to undergo the same penalty. Jesus is all the things the greatest men in the world were, plus more. Reading about His life here on earth will help us understand the model of what a true man should be. Not just to himself, but to his spouse, children, family, and community.

- Men In The Church

When I was a child, I would occasionally attend church with my godmother in Brooklyn. The one thing that always stood out to me was the fact that there were more women in the church than there were men. This church was a soulful Baptist church where the women were professional clappers. They were able to make their two hands sound like a full percussion band. I would sit in fascination when I visited that church.

The only men I would see consistently whenever I did go to church with her were the men behind the pulpit. Maybe because it's Sunday and it's NFL season, I would think. Should that be an excuse for a man not to accompany his family, or better yet, lead his family to a church service? Not at all.

Men have the esteemed call to be the spiritual head of their families. When we look at church membership today, men are outnumbered by the women in almost every congregation, not just in America but around the world. God called the men to lead their families in the ways of God. The best example to a son on how to be a spiritual man is the example of his father. Women have had to pick

up a mantle left by the man as the spiritual head of the home.

The man should be leading the family to church, not the woman. We read in the early chapters of Deuteronomy in the Bible that God mentions to Moses to instruct the men to diligently teach their children and grandchildren about God's ways. To the women that will be reading this next statement, it's not that I'm being a sexist or a bigot, I am simply encouraging men to take their rightful place at the head of their families. Men, you are called to be the head of your home. You are not a ruler of your home, but a watchman and teacher of those in your home. It's not the woman's role to spiritually rear up your children. That is your job. Step up and Man up. Take your place in your home NOW.

- What Is Salvation

A man cannot guide his family spiritually if he isn't first equipped to walk in that path. Salvation isn't an extremely hard concept to grasp; in fact, it is fairly easy and what better way to explain it than letting the Word of God give the explanation!

For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead' (to bring Christ back to life again)." In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."

And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jews and Gentiles are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord who gives generously to all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

Romans 10:5-13 (NLT)

- Chapter Summary

Having faith in the God of men is an essential part of growing as a man. Remember that things that are created usually come with an operating manual. As for men, our operating manual is the Bible.

When I buy furniture that I have to assemble, I always read the manual to make sure that I build it properly. The same concept goes for men. For men to ensure that they are growing properly, seeking the creator of man and His manual is key to growing as a man.

And to top it all off, God sent His Son Jesus to be the ultimate example of a man. Even if you do not want to be a Christian, Jesus' examples and the principles found in the Bible will help you grow as a man. However, my hope is

that you do receive the joy and liberty that come with Salvation.

A message from my father to young fathers,

Second chances may apply to many things in life, but I assure you missing your children grow up is not one of them. I am one of those parents who regrets not being around while mine were growing to be the beautiful adults that they are today.

The feeling is a kind of guilty regret that will eat at your morality forever. You never can get over it. I advise all young fathers and fathers to not abandon your children because they will need you in their lives.

Don't put yourself in a position to wish for a second chance that will never ever happen.

I thank God that my children do not show absolute hatred toward me.

Irving Rivera

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andre D. Harrison is an advocate for youth and families with over 12 years of experience working with children, youth and families in religious, educational and social service settings. Andre has dedicated his life to helping others, even at his own expense. Andre desires to see broken relationships between father and child restored. His ultimate goal: to eradicate fatherlessness.

Andre has also served as a pastor to youth and family in Staten Island, NY. He desires to see youth find God at a young age and cultivate a genuine understanding about Jesus and His gift of salvation.

He is the father of three sons. He is very passionate about his children and has proven that he will not allow anything to come before his kids.

For more information on Andre D. Harrison, visit his website at www.andreharrison.org