

The BeDADitudes: 8 Ways to Be an Awesome Dad

by Dr. Gregory Popcak

Pope Francis has called Jesus' Beatitudes our "guide on the path of Christian life." Of course, as the Incarnation shows, God leads by example. In addition to being a call to Christian discipleship, the Beatitudes could be said to also reveal something about the ways God the Father relates to us, his children. Seen in this light, the Beatitudes present a unique opportunity for Christian men to become fathers after the Father's own heart.



That's why I wrote *The BeDADitudes: 8 Ways to Be an Awesome Dad*, which looks at how the eight Beatitudes can be understood to shed light on a uniquely Christian vision of masculinity, in general, and fatherhood, in particular.

Want to be an awesome dad? Here's a sample of how the eight Beatitudes can help you be the father God is calling you to be.

1. Blessed Are Dads Who Are Poor in Spirit
Seek to be a father after THE Father's own heart.

Being a dad is on-the-job training. No one has it figured out. Don't pretend YOU do. Go to God every day. Ask him to teach you to be the husband and father HE wants you to be, and the husband and father your wife and children NEED you to be.

2. Blessed Are the Dads Who Mourn
Be not afraid of feelings. Empathize with your family's tears, fears, and struggles.

In Scripture, "mourning" doesn't mean "be sad" so much as it means "cultivate a compassionate heart." It is not your job to fix or feel judged by your wife's or kids' feelings. It is your job to be present to your wife and kids, to understand why they feel as they do, to show that you care, and to help them work through their feelings in godly ways.

3. Blessed Are the Dads Who Are Meek
Meekness isn't weakness. Cultivate the humble strength of a listening heart.

A real leader listens first. The father who is authentically meek is not afraid to hear what his wife and

children really need from him and, when necessary, doesn't hesitate to get new skills to meet those needs.

4. Blessed Are the Dads Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Awesome dads are on a mission from God. Live for Him. Lead your family to Him.

Research shows that when dads take the lead in prayer, faith formation, and character training, kids are exponentially more likely to live the Catholic faith and values as adults. Be the father that leads your family to THE Father.

5. Blessed Are the Dads Who Are Merciful
Be a loving mentor in your home. Don't break hearts. Mold them.

Don't be "The Punisher." Be a mentor and teacher. Treat your children with respect. Don't just yell or impose consequences when they mess up. Instead, teach them how to meet their needs and express themselves in good and godly ways.

6. Blessed Are the Dads Who Are Pure in Heart
Cherish the treasure of your wife and children. Protect their dignity. Affirm their worth.

St. John Paul the Great taught that the opposite of love is use. Love makes people more people-y. Use makes people into things or tools. Of course, it's important to avoid pornography and lustful behavior, both of

which are tremendously objectifying, but purity of heart means avoiding all the ways we treat other people as objects. Don't treat your wife or kids as the "things" that exist to make YOUR life easier. Set the standard for loving service in your home.

7. Blessed Are the Dads Who Are Peacemakers
Keep your house in order. Prioritize your family. Protect the heart of your home.

St. Augustine said, "Peace is the tranquility of right order." Be the hands-on dad that makes sure your household is respectful, generous, and orderly.

8. Blessed Are the Dads Who Are Persecuted for the Sake of Righteousness.
The world will try to undermine your effort to be an awesome dad. Be one anyway.

When your friends, family-of-origin, co-workers, or employers try to make you sacrifice what's best for your family for what they want, choose your family and know that God the Father will honor your sacrifice.

To discover more great ideas for becoming a father after the Father's heart, check out *The BeDADitudes: 8 Ways to Be an Awesome Dad* (Ave Maria Press).

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