

Revitalizing the Role of Fathers in the Family Based on the Principles of the Christian Faith

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ABSTRACT

The role of fathers in Christian families is increasingly eroded by economic pressure, work demands, and technological development, so fathers are often physically present yet emotionally and spiritually absent. This study aims to describe the meaning, biblical foundations, and forms of revitalizing the father's role based on Christian faith principles. It uses descriptive qualitative library research, with Deuteronomy 6:6–7, Proverbs 22:6, and Ephesians 6:4 as primary sources, and theological literature and journal articles as secondary sources. The data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that the father's role is rooted in a divine mandate as faith educator, living example, protector and guide, priest, and spiritual director of the family. Revitalization is realized through renewed paradigms, active involvement in spiritual education such as family prayer and Bible reading, and close relationships with children. All these roles are effective only when fathers first become doers of the Word.

Keywords: revitalization, father, Family, faith, leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

The family is the first divine institution established by God as the foundation of human life (Sunarko, 2021). In God's design, the family is not merely a place for biological and social growth but also the primary setting for the formation of faith and spiritual character. Within the context of the Christian faith, the family is regarded as a "little church," where the values of faith, love, and obedience to God are taught and practiced in everyday life (Prasetya et al., 2024). Therefore, spiritual life within the family is of great importance. It shapes a generation that fears the Lord and bears witness to Christ in the world.

Within the structure of the Christian family, the father plays a central role. From the beginning of creation, God assigned man the responsibility of caring for what He had entrusted to him (Genesis 2:15). The father's role is not merely a position of authority but a divine calling to lead with love, responsibility, and spiritual integrity. In reality, however, many fathers have lost sight of their paternal role or neglected their responsibilities in raising their children. Various factors contribute to this problem, including work demands, shifts in cultural values,

technological influences, and an imbalanced theological understanding, all of which have eroded fathers' active involvement in family life (Prasetya et al., 2024). A father is called not only to provide for his family's physical and material needs but also to carry out God's vision and mission within the family, leading its members to participate in God's purposes in the world.

In contemporary society, the crisis of fatherhood has become increasingly complex (Sahra & Tesniyadi, 2025). Children who lack a father's guidance and spiritual nurturing tend to seek role models in their external environments, which may not align with Christian values. Over time, this situation can lead to a crisis of spiritual identity and a decline in children's moral development (Shifa & Suherman, 2024). When children lack a father who exemplifies faith, their understanding of God as Father may become unclear. Research has shown that the relationship between children and their fathers influences how children perceive God. A father who is present, loving, and guided by faith helps children understand the true nature of God's love. Conversely, a father who is passive, harsh, or spiritually disengaged may make it difficult for children to trust God as a loving and understanding Father.

The spiritual crisis within Christian families has become an increasingly evident concern amid rapid social change and ongoing developments in contemporary society. This crisis is reflected in the declining quality of spiritual life at home and the lack of a consistent example of faith from the head of the household, particularly the father. In many churches, fathers appear to play a limited role in nurturing their children's spiritual lives. They are often less involved in cultivating their children's faith, leading family prayers, or teaching biblical values through everyday life. Fathers hold a crucial position within Christian families, yet work commitments and technological developments have reduced their involvement in the spiritual life of the household. Consequently, meaningful spiritual relationships between parents and children may fail to develop adequately. Therefore, the role of fathers needs to be revitalized so that Christian families can grow spiritually in accordance with biblical principles. The background to this thesis is outlined as follows:

The role of fathers in contemporary society has indeed become increasingly complex and challenging (Irawan, 2024). Economic systems demand high productivity, while the principles of parenting emphasize parental presence and quality time. Fathers find themselves caught in a dilemma: should they spend more time with their children or work harder to secure their children's future? (Astrellita & Abidin, 2024). Economic pressures compel them to work harder to meet their families' material needs, including education, healthcare, and an adequate standard of living. These pressures lead many fathers to focus primarily on their role as breadwinners. As a result, mothers are left to shoulder most of the responsibilities for childcare and education. Consequently, children lose the opportunity to learn from a father who should serve as their spiritual leader and role model within the Christian family.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Sugiyono (2019), "the purpose of qualitative research is to understand and explore the main phenomena of the object under investigation in order to gain an in-depth understanding and discover unique aspects." This approach was chosen because the study aims to explore and explain the meaning of revitalizing the role of fathers in Christian families rather than measuring variables statistically. The descriptive method is used to systematically and factually present the concepts, biblical foundations, and various forms of revitalizing the role of fathers based on the principles of the Christian faith. The type of research employed is library research. All data are obtained through a review of relevant

literature rather than fieldwork. The primary data source is the Bible, particularly Deuteronomy 6:6–7, Proverbs 22:6, and Ephesians 6:4, which provide the theological foundation for the discussion. Secondary data sources include books on theology and Christian education, biblical commentaries, and scholarly journal articles addressing fatherhood, parenting styles, and faith formation within the family. These sources provide theoretical and empirical support for the research findings.

Data are collected through documentation, which involves reading, recording, and classifying information from the selected sources according to the research themes. The data are analyzed using a qualitative analysis model consisting of three stages. The first stage is data reduction, which involves selecting information relevant to the research focus. The second stage is data presentation, in which the selected information is organized into a systematic thematic description. The third stage is conclusion drawing, which involves interpreting the relationships between biblical data and scholarly findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Revitalization from a Christian Perspective

The concept of revitalization from a Christian perspective is consistent in meaning with definitions offered by sociologists, namely, an effort to restore or revive functions that have deteriorated or are no longer operating as they should. Fundamentally, revitalization is a strategy aimed at restoring aspects that have declined, weakened, or even lost their original functions (John J. Macionis, 2003). From a Christian perspective, revitalization is not merely a sociological concept that has been adopted but an integral part of biblical theology, which emphasizes the continual renewal of life in accordance with God's truth (Foster, 1998). The Bible consistently portrays God as the One who not only creates but also sustains and actively renews the lives of His people when they experience spiritual decline (Packer, 2005). This revitalization is possible because God is the living God, who continues to work throughout human history through the power of the Holy Spirit as the primary agent of inward renewal (Fee, 1996). In the context of the family, revitalizing the role of fathers is a deliberate effort to restore the function of the head of the household in accordance with a theocentric design. This process encompasses three profound dimensions of transformation.

First, Paradigm Transformation (Metanoia). Revitalization requires fathers to renew their minds (Romans 12:2) concerning their identity and life priorities. Amid the economic pressures of modern society, fathers are often confined to the role of sole breadwinners. Revitalization shifts this paradigm toward an understanding of fathers as stewards of God's entrusted responsibilities (*stewardship*), accountable for the spiritual well-being of their family members (David W. Jones & God, 2012). Without this change in perspective, revitalization efforts will amount to little more than technical improvements without substantial character transformation.

Second, Transformation of Authority and Priestly Responsibility. Theologically, revitalization means reactivating the father's role as the spiritual leader of the household, serving in a priestly capacity. Voddie Baucham emphasizes that fathers are called to be the primary educators in the faith, not merely delegating spiritual responsibilities to the church or school but actively leading family worship and prayer (Voddie Baucham, 2007). Revitalization in this dimension involves restoring the father's spiritual authority, which may have diminished because of disobedience or neglect, so that he can once again serve as a protector and spiritual guide for his wife and children (W. Grudem, 1994b).

Third, Relational Transformation as a Reflection of Christ's Love. From a Christian perspective, revitalization aims to restore relational closeness that reflects the relationship between Christ and His church. Rigid or conflict-ridden relationships between fathers and children must be renewed through love, forgiveness, and exemplary conduct (Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, 2014). As J. I. Packer emphasizes, knowing God rightly should produce practical obedience expressed through love. Therefore, the revitalization of a father's role is demonstrated by his ability to reflect the love of the Heavenly Father in everyday interactions (Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, 2014).

The Nature of the Father's Role in the Christian Family

The nature of the father's role in the Christian family cannot be separated from the biblical theological foundation that identifies the family as a divine institution, with the father serving as its spiritual leader. From this perspective, the father is not merely a product of social or cultural construction but is entrusted with a sacred calling that reflects the character of God as Father (W. Grudem, 1994b). The father's presence carries profound spiritual significance, namely, bringing the values of the Kingdom of God into the home through everyday life (Kasmianti et al., 2021).

Essentially, fathers are called to serve as spiritual leaders who guide their families toward knowing the Lord. The Bible affirms this responsibility through the command to teach God's Word consistently (Deuteronomy 6:6–7) and to bring up children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). These passages establish that the father's role encompasses both educational and relational responsibilities in laying the foundation for children's faith (Voddie Baucham, 2007). In addition to being a leader and teacher, the father also serves as a living example (*exemplar*). From a psychopedagogical perspective, children acquire values not only through verbal instruction but, more importantly, through observing their fathers' integrity (Dobson, 2004). Therefore, discipline, love, and obedience to God must be consistently demonstrated in a father's daily life. Such exemplary conduct serves as a primary means of shaping children's character and spirituality (Amato, 2005).

Fathers are also responsible for creating an environment conducive to spiritual growth. This requires their full presence, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Such comprehensive parental involvement has been shown to contribute significantly to children's emotional maturity and social stability (Evans, 2012). Thus, the essence of the father's role lies in serving as a spiritual leader, educator, and transformative role model. Through his presence and involvement, the family becomes a living and enduring community of faith.

The Father as the Head of the Family

From a Christian perspective, the father's position as the head of the family is understood as a concept rooted in the divine order established by God. In this context, the term "head" does not simply refer to the holder of absolute authority but emphasizes the responsibility to lead through sacrificial love and exemplary conduct (W. Grudem, 1994b). The Bible teaches that a father's leadership should reflect Christ's leadership over the church (Ephesians 5:23). Consequently, this model of leadership must not be domineering or authoritarian but should exemplify servant leadership, directed entirely toward the spiritual and emotional well-being of every family member (Stott John, 2021).

As the head of the family, the father bears significant responsibility for decision-making, providing protection, and maintaining the overall stability of the household. However, this leadership must be exercised within the boundaries of love and justice, ensuring that authority is used to build up rather than oppress (David W.

Jones & God, 1992). In practical terms, this calling requires fathers to cultivate healthy and harmonious relationships with their wives and children. By fostering a safe and accepting environment, fathers establish themselves as figures worthy of respect and trust, actively guiding their families toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

The Father as a Spiritual Leader

In his capacity as a spiritual leader, the father plays a central role in guiding his family toward a life that is aligned with the will of God. This responsibility extends beyond the maintenance of formal religious practices; it includes the mandate to internalize God's Word, establish a consistent rhythm of prayer, and guide every family member toward authentic spiritual growth (Baucham Jr., n.d.). The Bible explicitly instructs fathers to bring up their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) and to transmit the values of truth continuously through the dynamics of everyday life (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). The effective implementation of this spiritual leadership is demonstrated through exemplary living (*embodied faith*). From an educational perspective, children absorb the essence of faith not merely through verbal instruction but also, and more importantly, by observing the integrity and spiritual consistency demonstrated by their fathers (Dobson, 1992). Therefore, personal intimacy with God and integrity of character are essential prerequisites for effective fatherly leadership. In this regard, a father's spiritual leadership cannot be separated from the work of the Holy Spirit, who enables believers to walk in the truth (Fee, 1996). A father who fulfills this role recognizes the limitations of his own abilities and continually depends on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in nurturing his family. Thus, spiritual leadership becomes a primary instrument in revitalizing faith within the home, with the father serving as an agent of renewal who guides his family toward a deeper relationship with God (Foster, 1998).

The Biblical Foundations of the Father's Role

The role of the father in the Christian family rests on a fundamental biblical foundation that affirms paternal responsibility for educating, guiding, and providing spiritual leadership for his children. This role is not merely a product of social construction or cultural influences but a divine mandate entrusted by God within the family institution He established (W. Grudem, 1994a). Consequently, a father's existence serves not only practical and functional purposes but also carries a theological dimension closely related to the transmission of faith and the character formation of future generations. The Bible consistently presents the family as a primary setting for faith education, in which the father plays a central role in fulfilling these responsibilities. This responsibility includes teaching God's Word, instilling moral values, and demonstrating integrity through exemplary conduct that reflects the character of God Himself (Barton, 2007).

Scientific findings are consistent with these biblical principles, indicating that a father's active involvement contributes significantly to children's moral development and emotional stability (Lamb, 2010). When a father fulfills his role appropriately, faith can be passed on from one generation to the next. Conversely, a father's failure to fulfill his responsibilities may have implications for the spiritual well-being of subsequent generations (Brueggemann, 1997). This indicates that the father's role has long-term implications that extend beyond the immediate family and influence the broader community of God's people. This understanding is further supported by research showing that the quality of the father-child relationship is an important factor in shaping children's identity and psychosocial stability.

Deuteronomy 6:6–7: Teaching Children Continuously

The teaching methodology presented in Deuteronomy 6:6–7 is rooted in the Hebrew term *shanan*, which literally means “to sharpen” or “to hone.” This meaning illustrates that the transmission of faith to children is not merely the passive delivery of knowledge but an ongoing process of formation carried out with earnestness and consistent repetition, allowing the values of faith to become firmly embedded in children’s lives. Just as a craftsman sharpens a sword until its edge becomes keen, faith education must be carried out carefully so that it penetrates the heart and is properly applied in everyday life.

In the context of revitalizing the father’s role, this principle positions the father as a spiritual “sharpening agent” in his children’s lives. His responsibility is to ensure that the values of God’s Word are deeply and firmly embedded in them so that they can withstand the influence of worldly values that are often superficial and misleading. This process of spiritual formation does not take place rigidly, as though in a classroom, but unfolds through everyday family life. Deuteronomy 6:6–7 indicates that faith instruction takes place throughout various daily activities, including sitting at home, traveling, lying down, and rising up. This emphasizes that faith education is not confined to formal worship services in church but takes place primarily through parental involvement, especially the father’s active participation in his children’s daily lives.

Consequently, children do not merely hear teachings about faith; they also observe how faith is put into practice through their father’s attitudes, decisions, and everyday conduct. When instruction in God’s Word is accompanied by genuine exemplary living, the values of faith become easier for children to understand and internalize (Baucham, 2007). Theologically, this command emphasizes that the effectiveness of faith education depends significantly on the prior internalization of God’s Word in the hearts of parents. The Word must first dwell in the father’s heart before he teaches it to his children (Block, 2008). The father is not merely a transmitter of instruction but a person who personally lives out the obedience he teaches. Consequently, his instruction becomes authentic and transformative because it is supported by a genuine testimony of faith expressed through his life.

This argument is reinforced by findings attributed to Michael E. Lamb, which indicate that active paternal involvement is positively associated with healthier cognitive, emotional, and social development in children (McGaugh, 1972). Paul R. Amato also emphasizes that the quality of the father-child relationship is a crucial determinant in the development of children’s self-identity and psychological well-being (Amato, 2005). Within the framework of Christian discipleship, Voddie Baucham Jr. reiterates that the family is not merely an extension of the church or school; rather, it is a primary setting for making disciples. Therefore, fathers bear primary responsibility for teaching God’s Word consistently (Voddie Baucham, 2007). The integration of God’s Word, exemplary living, and active involvement enables children’s faith to move beyond intellectual knowledge and become a firm foundation for life, through which they learn to recognize God’s hand at work in every circumstance.

Proverbs 22:6: Training Children in the Right Way

Proverbs 22:6 is a wisdom principle that emphasizes the importance of training children in the right way from an early age. The verse states, “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This statement indicates that the formation of children’s character and faith is a process that should begin early in life, emphasizing appropriate guidance in accordance with God’s will.

The essence of training a child “in the way he should go” involves a deep understanding of each child’s uniqueness and individual capacities. The Hebrew word translated as “train” is *chanak*, which can also mean “to initiate” or “to dedicate.” In ancient times, this term was reportedly used to describe a practice in which a midwife applied grape juice to a baby’s palate to stimulate the infant’s desire to nurse. In the context of education, the father’s role is to cultivate an appreciation for, and a desire to pursue, the truth of God’s Word so that children grow up with a natural longing to seek the Lord (Swindoll, 1994).

Theologically, “the right way” in Proverbs does not refer solely to moral behavior but also to a way of life aligned with God’s wisdom (Longman III, 2006). Therefore, the father’s role as an educator involves more than teaching rules or moral standards; it includes guiding children to live in the fear of the Lord, which is the foundation of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; Waltke, 2004). In this respect, child-rearing is holistic, encompassing spiritual, moral, and character development.

This verse also conveys the principle that education provided from an early age can have long-term effects on a child’s life. Bruce K. Waltke explains that Proverbs 22:6 emphasizes the importance of consistent training, through which children are shaped by repetition and purposeful discipline until the values being taught become firmly established within them (Waltke, 2004).

Ephesians 6:4: Raising Children Without Provoking Them to Anger

Parents, particularly fathers, are called to raise their children with love, as taught in Ephesians 6:4. Rather than provoking anger or rebellion in their children’s hearts, they should raise them through instruction and guidance rooted in the will of God. This approach emphasizes gentle, patient, and divinely guided parenting, enabling children to grow in spiritual discipline and develop their character without being driven by fear or resentment. This passage demonstrates that a father’s responsibility extends beyond educating his children to include careful consideration of the methods and approaches used in the educational process.

Theologically, the prohibition against provoking children to anger affirms that harsh, authoritarian, or unjust parenting can damage the relationship between fathers and children and hinder their spiritual growth (W. A. Grudem, 1999). John Stott explains that attitudes that provoke children to anger may arise from arbitrary treatment, unrealistic demands, or a lack of love and understanding (John Stott, 2021). Therefore, fathers are called to raise their children in ways that reflect the character of Christ, characterized by love, patience, and wisdom.

The second part of this verse emphasizes that child-rearing should be centered on the “instruction and discipline of the Lord.” This indicates that the primary goal of education within the Christian family is to shape children to live in accordance with God’s will (Fee, 1996). Andreas J. Köstenberger emphasizes that Christian education within the family should involve nurturing discipline and guiding instruction rather than mere punishment or control (David W. Jones & God, 1992). Thus, fathers serve as guides who lead their children toward righteous living through the Word of God.

From a scientific perspective, research also indicates that loving yet firm parenting, commonly referred to as *authoritative parenting*, positively influences children’s emotional and social development. Diana Baumrind found that children raised with a balance of discipline and affection tend to demonstrate better self-control and healthier social relationships (Baumrind, 1966). This finding aligns with the principle in Ephesians 6:4, which emphasizes the importance of balancing discipline with love in raising children. Research published in educational journals also indicates that parenting approaches that avoid causing emotional distress can contribute to greater psychological stability and improve the quality of family relationships (Shifa & Suherman, 2024). These findings

reinforce the continuing relevance and practical applicability of the biblical principles in Ephesians 6:4 to contemporary family life.

The Responsibilities of Fathers from a Christian Perspective

In the Christian family, a father plays a crucial role as a primary influence on his children's understanding of God's character. Psychologically and theologically, the father is often one of the first figures through whom children begin to develop their understanding of the Heavenly Father. When a father exhibits cruel or oppressive behavior, he may inadvertently distort his children's perception of God. A father's failure to reflect divine love can lead children to develop a mistaken understanding of the true nature of God. Such misconceptions can become deeply rooted and may require an extended process of inner healing through repentance and intensive instruction in God's Word (Swindoll, 1994).

Recognizing the profound impact of this representative role, the Bible instructs fathers to guide their children's spiritual growth according to sound biblical principles. Fathers are responsible for ensuring that their children receive instruction in the truth derived directly from God's revelation, namely, the Bible. This responsibility for spiritual instruction should not be entirely delegated to individuals who do not acknowledge God or to secular influences whose values conflict with the Christian faith. When children are left to absorb teachings from sources that reject the Christian faith, their spiritual identity may be threatened by moral relativism (David W. Jones & God, 1992).

Therefore, from a Christian perspective, a father's responsibilities encompass spiritual leadership, faith and character formation, the development of healthy relationships, and the comprehensive well-being of the family (David W. Jones & God, 2012). These responsibilities require commitment, integrity, and dependence on God so that, through the father's life and example, the family may grow into a living community of faith that is pleasing to God.

The Father as an Educator of Faith

From a Christian perspective, one of a father's primary responsibilities is to serve as an educator of faith for his children. This role positions the father as a principal agent of discipleship within the family, where faith is not merely taught theoretically but also practiced in everyday life (W. A. Grudem, 1999). The Bible emphasizes that parents must teach God's Word to their children continually (Deuteronomy 6:6–7), demonstrating that faith education is an ongoing process integrated into every aspect of life.

As an educator of faith, the father is responsible for establishing a spiritual foundation for his children through instruction in God's Word, family prayer, and the cultivation of Christian values within the household (Barton, 2007). Voddie Baucham Jr. emphasizes that the family is the primary setting for faith formation; therefore, fathers should not transfer this responsibility entirely to the church or school (Voddie Baucham, 2007). Research published in the *Jurnal Jaffray* also indicates that active parental involvement in faith education significantly influences children's spiritual growth (Tamba, 2020).

As a Role Model

In addition to serving as an educator, the father also plays a vital role as a role model for his children. Within family life, exemplary conduct has a profound influence because children tend to imitate what they observe

rather than merely follow what they are taught (Stott John, 2021). Therefore, the father's personal integrity, consistency in faith, and everyday conduct are essential factors in shaping his children's character.

James C. Dobson emphasizes that children learn life values primarily by observing their parents, particularly their father (Dobson, 1992). Accordingly, fathers are called to reflect the character of Christ in their daily lives through love, patience, humility, and obedience to God. Research has also demonstrated that parental role modeling significantly influences children's moral development. Paul R. Amato found that the quality of parent-child relationships and parental behavior are important factors in shaping children's values and identity (Amato, 2005). The journal *Teologi Gracia Deo* likewise emphasizes that modeling faith within the family is a primary means of transmitting Christian values to the next generation (“Pendidikan Iman dalam Keluarga Kristen,” 2020).

As a Protector and Guide

The father's role as a protector and guide encompasses the responsibility to safeguard the family's well-being in physical, emotional, and spiritual terms. In the Bible, fathers are called to care for their families responsibly. This responsibility extends beyond meeting material needs to creating a safe and supportive environment for children's growth and development (Evans, 2012). As a guide, the father directs his children toward living in accordance with God's will, offers counsel, and helps them navigate the various challenges of life. Ephesians 6:4 emphasizes that fathers are to bring up their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord, highlighting the importance of guidance characterized by love and wisdom.

From a scholarly perspective, research by Michael E. Lamb indicates that a father's presence as a protective and guiding figure positively affects children's sense of security, self-confidence, and emotional stability (Lamb, 2010). In the Indonesian context, the *Jurnal Teologi Praktika* also emphasizes that the father's role as a spiritual guide significantly influences the development of children's spiritual maturity and character (“Peran Ayah dalam Pembentukan Spiritualitas Anak,” 2021). This demonstrates that a father who is actively, consistently, and meaningfully involved in guiding his children's spiritual lives is not merely meeting a family need but also contributing to the formation of a generation firmly rooted in the Christian faith and equipped to face life's challenges with sound values.

The Father's Role in Educating Children

The father's role in educating children is not merely an academic topic but a human calling to restore the presence of a father who is fully engaged, caring, and committed to shaping every aspect of his children's lives. From a humanistic perspective, the father is not viewed solely as a breadwinner but as a relational figure who provides meaning and nurtures values in his children.

In modern family life, fathers often experience what may be described as “functional absence”: they are physically present but emotionally and spiritually unavailable. Yet, various studies indicate that paternal involvement has a significant impact on children's moral, emotional, and academic development. A study published in the *Jurnal Psikologi* emphasizes that active paternal involvement can significantly improve children's social and emotional development, as well as their academic performance (Astrellita & Abidin, 2024). In other words, a father's presence is not merely supplementary but constitutes an essential foundation for holistic human development.

A humanistic approach views children as developing individuals who need warm, authentic, and meaningful relationships. Here, the father serves as a figure who provides security, a sense of identity, and direction in life. A father's involvement in parenting affects not only children's physical development but also their affective and cognitive development. Another study indicates that a father's active participation in his children's lives contributes to their overall emotional, social, and intellectual development (Suciawati et al., 2024). This underscores the father-child relationship as a formative space in which children's humanity is deeply nurtured.

The crisis of fatherhood within the family is often influenced by social constructs that define the father primarily as an economic provider. This paradigm needs to be revitalized. Fathers must reclaim their fundamental role as the family's first educators, teaching not only through words but also through the example of their lives. A study on children's character development emphasizes that fathers occupy a strategic position in shaping children's moral values and character through direct involvement in the educational process (Arifah, 2024). This revitalization involves more than restoring a traditional function; it requires cultivating a renewed awareness that fatherhood is a dynamic relational process. Fathers are called to be fully present—to listen, understand, guide, and love. Within a humanistic framework, this role positions the father as a facilitator of his children's growth rather than a controller, and as a companion on their life journey rather than merely an authority figure.

The Importance of Revitalizing the Father's Role

Within the dynamics of modern family life, the father's role has undergone significant changes. In the past, fathers were regarded as central figures responsible not only for meeting the family's economic needs but also for serving as its primary educators. Today, however, this role tends to be increasingly narrowed. Revitalizing the father's role is important because it concerns the quality of human relationships within the family, which ultimately affects children's character formation and future.

From a humanistic perspective, the family is the first environment in which children learn what it means to be human. As an integral member of the family, the father bears the responsibility of providing love, setting an example, and offering direction for his children's lives. When this role weakens, the relationships that should foster the development of the child's whole person become unbalanced. Therefore, revitalizing the father's role is not merely a social initiative but a fundamental need to restore the relational function of the family. Research indicates that active paternal involvement in children's lives is positively associated with their emotional, social, and cognitive development (Astrellita & Abidin, 2024). This confirms that a father's presence is not merely an additional benefit but an essential element in the process of holistic human development.

The declining involvement of fathers in childcare has become an increasingly evident reality in various social contexts. Modernization, work demands, and changing social constructs often lead fathers to focus primarily on their role as breadwinners, while emotional engagement and their children's education receive insufficient attention. In many cases, fathers are physically present but psychologically and spiritually absent. In his book *The Silence of Adam*, Larry Crabb describes how the “silence” of fathers—their emotional absence—can be understood as one of the root causes of problems in modern families (Crabb, 1995). This phenomenon creates relational distance between fathers and their children, depriving children of a figure who should serve as a source of identity, guidance, authority, and security.

Furthermore, research in family psychology indicates that changing gender roles and increasing economic pressures also contribute to declining paternal involvement in childcare (Lamb, 2010). Consequently,

the educational function of the family often becomes unbalanced, and children lose opportunities to experience healthy, meaningful relationships with both parents.

Forms of Revitalizing the Father's Role

The revitalization of the father's role within the family fundamentally involves restoring his full function in the process of children's growth and development. In modern society, the meaning of fatherhood has often become narrowly defined, with the primary responsibility focused solely on meeting economic needs. Consequently, fathers' involvement in education, particularly in shaping their children's character and faith, has become less than optimal. Yet, various studies indicate that a father's presence has a substantial influence on children's overall development. Michael E. Lamb emphasizes that paternal involvement contributes significantly to children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (McGaugh, 1972). Therefore, the revitalization of the father's role must be realized through meaningful involvement in everyday life, not merely by serving as an authority figure but by being present, providing guidance, and offering direction.

Active Involvement in Children's Spiritual Education

A father's involvement in his children's spiritual education is one of the most important expressions of the revitalization of his role. Spiritual education is not limited to the teaching of doctrine but also encompasses the formation of life values, morality, and the child's relationship with God. Fathers have a responsibility to instill the values of faith through everyday life. This can be accomplished through practices such as praying together, reading Scripture, and engaging in conversations that connect life experiences with spiritual values. A father's presence in this process has a profound impact because children learn not only through theoretical instruction but also through relational experiences. James C. Dobson emphasizes that the family is the primary setting for the formation of children's morality and faith, and that the role of parents in this process cannot be replaced by other institutions (Dobson, 1992). Furthermore, research by Boyatzis and Janicki indicates that parental communication about religious values directly influences children's spiritual development (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003). Therefore, a father's involvement in spiritual education is not merely supplementary but constitutes an essential foundation for shaping his children's life of faith.

Building Close Relationships with Children

A close relationship between father and child is a fundamental basis for effective education within the family. Without emotional closeness, children may find it difficult to embrace the values being taught because the relational foundation necessary for this process is lacking. Such closeness is cultivated through a father's tangible presence in his children's lives. Fathers need to make time to listen to their children, understand them, and participate in their activities. A warm relationship creates a sense of security, helping children feel valued and become more open in their communication. According to Paul Amato, the quality of parent-child relationships significantly affects children's psychological well-being (Amato, 2005). This is supported by research conducted by Sarkadi et al., which indicates that fathers' emotional involvement positively affects children's social and mental development (Sarkadi, 2007). Thus, building close relationships not only strengthens family bonds but also serves as a primary means of shaping children's personalities and emotional well-being.

The Father's Role as the Primary Educator in the Family

The father's role as the primary educator emphasizes that children's education does not take place exclusively in formal institutions but begins, above all, within the family. Fathers are responsible for guiding their children in understanding life, developing their character, and determining the direction of their future. In this regard, fathers serve not only as teachers but also as mentors who help their children develop their potential to the fullest. Larry Crabb emphasizes that a father's emotional and spiritual presence is essential in shaping a child's identity (Crabb, 1995).

The Father as the Spiritual Leader of the Family

From a Christian perspective, the father serves as the spiritual leader of the family, bearing responsibility for the spiritual life and faith of its members. This role includes providing guidance, teaching, and setting an example in spiritual matters. As the family's spiritual leader, the father should foster a healthy spiritual environment through family worship, prayer together, and the spiritual nurture of his children. Such leadership is not authoritarian but is grounded in love and responsibility. Voddie T. Baucham emphasizes that a father is called to lead his family in the truth of God's Word and to take responsibility for their spiritual growth (Baucham, 2007).

The Father as a Spiritual Guide for His Children

In addition to serving as the spiritual leader of the family, the father also plays a role as a spiritual guide for his children. This role involves his ability to lead them in understanding the values of faith and applying them in everyday life. Fathers help their children face various life challenges by providing guidance grounded in the values of truth. In this process, fathers do not merely provide answers but also help their children learn to think critically and make wise decisions. According to research by King and Boyatzis, parental involvement in children's spiritual development significantly influences the formation of their identity and sense of meaning in life (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003). Therefore, the father's role as a spiritual guide is essential in helping children develop a strong foundation of faith and a clear sense of direction in life.

The Father as a Doer of God's Word in the Family

The father is responsible not only for teaching God's Word but also for providing a living example through his lifestyle. Personal example has a significant impact on children's education because children tend to imitate what they observe more readily than they follow verbal advice alone. Therefore, fathers should demonstrate a way of life that reflects Christian values, including love, patience, honesty, forgiveness, and responsibility in their daily routines. When fathers live according to God's Word, their children witness a concrete illustration of how the Christian faith is applied in everyday life.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of being doers of the Word rather than hearers only. As stated in James 1:22, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only..." This verse underscores that the Christian faith must be lived out through practical actions in daily life. Within the family, fathers are called to embody the values of God's Word through their attitudes and actions toward their wives and children. Such exemplary conduct becomes a powerful teaching tool that helps children understand faith in practical terms. Richard J. Foster emphasizes that genuine spiritual life is expressed not only through religious activities but also through everyday practices that reflect the character of Christ (Foster, 2009). Thus, Christian spirituality does not end with biblical knowledge but is demonstrated through concrete actions within the family. Children who observe their fathers

living with love, spiritual discipline, and integrity will be better able to understand the deeper meaning of the Christian faith.

CONCLUSION

The father's role is rooted in a clear divine mandate. Deuteronomy 6:6–7 emphasizes the continuous teaching of faith in everyday life, Proverbs 22:6 underscores the importance of educating children from an early age in the right way, and Ephesians 6:4 calls for child-rearing characterized by love and without provoking children to anger. On this biblical foundation, the father's responsibilities include serving as an educator of faith, a role model, a protector and guide, and the spiritual leader and guide of his family. All these roles can be effective only when the father first lives according to God's Word and becomes a doer of the Word (James 1:22), because children learn about faith primarily through their father's integrity and consistency of life.

The revitalization of the father's role is demonstrated through active involvement in children's spiritual education, including praying together, reading the Bible, and engaging in conversations that connect life experiences with the values of faith, as well as through the development of close and warm relationships with children. The various studies cited indicate that paternal involvement is positively associated with children's emotional, social, moral, and spiritual development, thereby aligning with biblical principles. Therefore, revitalizing the father's role is not merely an effort to restore a traditional function but a fundamental necessity for enabling the family to grow as a living community of faith and to pass that faith on to the next generation.

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