



Dad Attitude

Embracing Embarrassing Boldness

June 21, 2026

Today we're examining our *fathers' best qualities to fortify the foundation of our courage*. Cuz human hearts see *boldness* as a recipe for *anxiety* since they yearn for *earthly approval*. Yet somehow – **our best dads have developed a reputation for their comfort with non-conformity**. So, if we want to *strengthen our resistance* to the *despair* of this world, maybe we should study the *mindset* of *good dads*. Cuz until we see the *spiritual advantage* of *adopting their attitude*, we'll default to the *world's deadly ways*, to *avoid their behavior*. So, **does your Dad still embarrass you?**



And I *don't* mean your *earthly* dad – I mean your *heavenly* Father. Cuz we *already* know the answer for the one you got *down here*; *that's a given!* In fact, it's *not* a *choice* – the *minute* we have kids, us dads *automatically* strap on *phone holsters*, start watching *historical documentaries*, and get *excited* to sneak away at your *birthday* dinner to see if the staff will *sing!*



It just *happens* – not cuz we're *trying* to make our *kids cringe*, but because we can't *control* how our *perspectives change*. And, *technically*, *that's* the *kids' fault*. Cuz after *decades* of *trying* to win the *love and respect* of the *world*, **when a man has a child – his pursuit of approval switches to a new source: his kids**. And there's *nothing* more *validating* than *fresh humans* hearing all your *best bits* for the *first time*.



See!?! Men have always been *simple* creatures – and *that* kind of *positive reinforcement* is called *classical conditioning!* And in the same way we use it to train *dogs* – kids naturally use it to train *dads!* And things like **dad bods, dad jokes, and dad shoes are all just symptoms of the change**. *Dad bods* mean our *appearance* has *adapted* to our new *audience*; *Dad jokes* mean our *approval* has been *aimed* at a new *authority*; and *Dad shoes* mean our *approach* has been *empowered* with a new *audacity!*



Which *altogether* means, *those* classically embarrassing *dad qualities* aren't signs of *giving up* – **dad attitudes are a sign you've been set free!** Cuz *good* dads become *embarrassing* dads when the *love* of their *kids* becomes *more important than* the *approval* of this *world*. And **that's the same attitude that builds Christian courage!** Cuz when *God* becomes the *only Audience* we give *authority* – we *instantly* gain the same *audacity* to *ignore earthly approval* – cuz we're *only* concerned with *God's opinion!*



[Which is why it's one of the most *repeated warnings* in *God's Word!*] Fear of *man* will prove to be a *snare*, but whoever trusts in *the LORD* is kept safe. – Proverbs 29:25 NIV

Fearing *humans* is a *snare* cuz **insecurity is crippling!** Not *just* because being perpetually *paralyzed* is *dangerous* – but because it *prevents* us from making the *necessary progress* we *need* to be *freed!*

And yet, *that threat* is entirely in *our hands* – cuz we get to choose *who* to aim our efforts at. And ***insecurity is a sign the wrong audience has authority over our audacity!*** But, the *only* people with *that* power are the ones we authorize – cuz we authorize *others* when we want *their* approval. In *other* words, ***whoever you hold in high regard – holds your remote control!*** Cuz they can use their approval to *turn up* your fear, *pause* your obedience, or even *mute* your beliefs. So, *in the end* it's not *only* a *lack of faith* that separates us from God; it's often *too much faith* in the *wrong* place!

[Remember this **convicting** part of *Jesus' story*?] Many even among the leaders *believed* in [Jesus]. But because of the *Pharisees* they would not *openly* acknowledge their faith ... for they loved human praise more than praise from God. – John 12:42-43 NIV

What a shame! They *knew* the truth, but *God's approval* still *wasn't* worth being *embarrassed!* But while that seems so *clear* from the *outside*, a lot of *us* don't recognize the *same* shame guiding *our* lives, from the *inside*. So, we're gonna take a note from all the *good dads* we're honoring today and learn how ***the courage to be cringy is a critical part of the Christian quest!***



And it starts with *dad bods*. Now, to be *clear*, I'm *not* saying *dad bods* are a *spiritual goal* – your body is a *temple*, please eat your vegetables – I'm just saying ***a change in appearance often represents a change in audience.*** Cuz when *dads* have *kids*, their priorities *shift* from ***“How do I look?”*** to ***“How do I keep my tiny masters happy?”*** And sometimes, building *forts*, playing *sports*, and never-ending *piggy-back rides* take a *physical toll!* And that's *okay!* Cuz, *dad bods* aren't *always* signs of *neglect* – they can be products of their *new purpose!* And in the same way we *all adapt* to a new *environment*, *dads adjust* their *aim* to focus on *function* over *form*. Cuz ***good dads see their bodies as instruments to serve, not advertisements to be served.***

And *spiritual* maturity grows the *same* way – ***your life stops being an advertisement for you and starts becoming an instrument for God.*** Cuz when *God's* our only *Audience*, approval ***isn't about how we look, but who we're looking after.*** And we see *that* perfect *picture* in the character of *Christ*: He was *so committed* to serving *God* by saving *us* that He *couldn't* spare a single *minute* to worry about the *superficial* approval of *others*. So,

He had no *beauty* or *majesty* to attract us to Him, nothing in His *appearance* that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by mankind ... But [for ***God's approval alone***] He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities – Isaiah 53:2-3, 5 NIV

[Which is the attitude *Paul* says to emulate:] Therefore, I urge *you*, brothers and sisters, *in view of God's mercy*, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to *God*— this is *your* true and *proper* worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be *transformed* by [changing your aim for] the renewing of your mind. – Romans 12:1-2 NIV

[Cuz, when *God's* the only audience whose approval I want] I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge *myself*. – 1 Corinthians 4:3 NIV

Get it? Paul's not saying to stop caring, He's saying to care more – just be sure the world's superficial appearances never outweigh God's supernatural approval! **That's Dad Bod faith – not reckless or irresponsible – just free from the constant image management that earthly approval demands.**



And once your audience changes, your voice will too – which brings us to dad jokes. Cuz **dad jokes are a sign your new audience is also your new authority!** Y'see, when we choose to accept the judgment of adult opinions, **we only want to submit our best material for approval** – cuz we're afraid our real identity might get rejected. But dad jokes exist cuz kids care more about connecting than criticizing! And that gives us the freedom to openly admit we're not above low-hanging fruit! **And that allows us to submit our true selves for a more rewarding seal of approval!** Cuz, when our kid's opinion becomes our authority, the risk gets lower but the rewards get higher! Telling kids jokes is like going to the batting cages – you get to take swings at spreading joy without worrying about striking out! But, it's still satisfying when you connect and knock one out of the park!

And boy could we all use a dose of that dad attitude! Cuz replacing earthly authority sure would reduce worry to let us swing for the fences. No wonder Christians are told to do just that: **make God's opinion your only authority!**

For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. – 2 Corinthians 10:18 NIV

So we make it our goal to please Him ... For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 NIV

[But that's great news! Cuz] The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. – 1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

And the heart behind dad jokes is a great model of the heart approved by our heavenly Father – **simple joy shared authentically.** Cuz God may be our Judge, but He wants us to know He cares more about connecting than criticizing so we'll feel free to do what good dads do with corny jokes – **tune out what the world has to say and openly share who you really are!**

But remember **it's a process!** Kids give dads a captive audience with easy approval just by being born – but **God gives us a captive audience with easy approval when He becomes our Dad!** And it takes time for us to adjust to our adoption and accept a new authority. So, He loves to provide daily opportunities for us to experience how seeking His approval frees us from worrying about the world.

[Cuz one kills the other] Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? ... If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. – Galatians 1:10 NIV

That's why I always made my kids start a Seahawks chant at games. Not join one – start one. And they dreaded it – cuz **following crowds is pre-approved but leading them risks rejection!** But I wanted them to experience the feeling of freedom when you replace worldly worry with fatherly trust. Cuz it trains us to learn **trusted authorities require real relationships.** And moreover, it exposes how weak worldly worry is – by showing how fast people follow a mere glimpse of the real deal!

That's the thing about *earthly* authorities – **they gotta keep you worried about their approval, so you won't risk questioning them.** But when *God's* opinion becomes the *only* one that *matters* – we become bold enough to look *behind* the curtain and *expose* the world's weakness! And your *courage* doesn't *just* set you free, like a good *dad joke*, **your freedom in God affects everyone who overhears!** Cuz *sometimes* people just need to see someone go *first* – to *cheer* first, *laugh* first or *believe* first!



And Dad Joke faith means trusting God so completely, that you can share yourself honestly, and disarm the world's false anxiety. And once your *body* becomes an *instrument* and you finally find your *voice* – the next step is obvious: you gotta *step up* to the mic! The *rubber* has to meet the *road*!



Which brings us to *dad shoes*. **Dad shoes are embarrassing because they're all function and no fashion.** They're the *hallmark* of giving yourself *permission* to pursue your new priorities without the *distraction* and *discomfort* of earthly opinions. They're the *uniform* for someone who *only* wants to fulfill their *purpose* – *not* people's *expectations*. Cuz **clarity in our authority gives us the audacity to walk comfortably.** And in the same way dads can *ignore* fashion *faux pas* to better *pursue* their *parental* purposes, God reminds us that *no worldly worry* can *touch* us when we follow *His lead*:



Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have *summoned* you by name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned – Isaiah 43:1-2 NIV

Who here likes *Adam Sandler*? Yeah – my *wife* especially! And she even thinks he's *good looking*! Really? Even though *he* dresses like *this*?! I mean, that last one is at the *Oscars*! How is that *okay*? Well, it's that *dad shoes attitude*. Years ago, while *mainstream* opinions kept *some* celebrities *insecure* about *their* appearance, *his* audience gave *him* the approval to put the *real* him *in control*. And **once the real you has approval from your real audience, life moves real fast!** Cuz when you're done *letting* others *trip you up*, all you have to do is *worry* about *yourself*; so *you get to do you*!

And again, the same principles apply to our *spiritual* walk. **Living for God's approval gives us the audacity to get moving – by any means necessary!** Whether it's a *verse* on your *profile*, a *fish* on your *bumper*, or *cross* on your *necklace* – our new identity allows us to stop *looking* for *others'* approval and start *equipping* for *our journey*! And how you *look* to the *world* doesn't matter anymore

For we walk by *faith*, not by *sight*. – 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJ

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses **[there's your encouraging audience]**, let us *throw off* everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles **[there's the worldly worries]**. And let us **[change our aim and our shoes to]** run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **[to win God's approval]** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the **[only true Authority,]** pioneer and perfecter of faith. – Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

So, don't be embarrassed *by your Dad*, be embarrassing *like your dad*! Cuz it just means *your love* has overpowered *earth's approval*! And if the world *mocks* your walk with *Christ* the way they do with *dads* and *kids*, *great*! It just means *you've* become *bold* enough to *laugh*, *cheer*, and *live your best life*!