

## ***Championship Fathering* by Carey Casey**

### **Discussion Guide**

#### **Foreword**

How has each of the following contributed to Tony Dungy's view of fatherhood? What three people have most influenced you as a father? How?

- Tony's father
- Clyde Christiansen
- Carey Casey

Tony says, "People follow the leadership they get, whether it's positive or negative." What do you think is the connection between the following problems and the leadership today's kids tend to get from their fathers?

- violence in cities
- overpopulated prisons
- out-of-wedlock births
- gangs as a source for man-to-man bonding

Why has Tony been learning to send text messages? What are two things you could learn that might bring you and your children closer?

#### **Introduction**

Did your father ever "school you up"? If so, how did he go about it? If not, do you wish he had? Why or why not?

If you're a father-to-be, what do you expect to be the hardest and easiest things about being a dad? If you're already a dad, how did fatherhood turn out to be different from the way you thought it would be? What would you tell a father-to-be about each of the following?

- the way you *really* felt after one month of fatherhood

- what it *really* costs to raise a child
- what diapers *really* smell like
- whether you *really* want to have any more children
- what it *really* feels like to be called “Daddy”

Which of the following comes closest to your reaction when you hear the phrase *Championship Fathering*? Why?

- “That’s too hard for me.”
- “I’d be satisfied with *Survival Fathering*.”
- “It’s not supposed to be a contest.”
- “I’ll withhold judgment until I’ve read the book.”
- “I’m not sure I can do it, but it sounds worth doing.”
- other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Chapter 1: From One Dad to Another**

Carey writes, “I thought back over my life as his son, remembering times when I did get angry with him. But it wasn’t because he’d provoked me; it was because I knew he was right and wasn’t quite ready to agree with him.” Can you remember a time like that in your own life? If so, what happened? How can remembering that kind of incident affect the way you deal with your own children?

What did Carey learn from each of the following? What single principle would you like to remember about each one?

- Reggie White’s wrestling matches with Carey’s children
- the time Carey’s father said, “Dooooon’t provoooke your children to anger!”
- the time Carey wanted to quit the football team
- the way his dad reacted when the grandchildren were around
- starting to work at the National Center for Fathering

Which of the following seems most important to you right now? Why?

- loving
- coaching
- modeling
- understanding your heritage
- leaving a legacy

## **Chapter 2: Championship Fathering: What Is It?**

If your son or daughter rated you as an “average” father, what would your reaction be? Why?

- *That’s higher than I would have rated myself.*
- *Are you kidding? I’m outstanding!*
- *I guess that’s okay.*
- *Why, that ungrateful little . . .*
- other \_\_\_\_\_

“Dads involved in Championship Fathering know the fundamentals: loving, coaching, and modeling. They apply those fundamentals to their kids and keep practicing them throughout the seasons of life. These dads also know they’re part of a team and make encouraging connections with other team members.” Which part of this definition do you have the most questions about? Which part do you think you’ll learn the most about by reading and discussing this book? Why?

“Championship Fathers want to be difference-makers.” In which of the following areas would you like to make the biggest difference? Why?

- what my child would write in a “What My Father Means to Me” essay
- my child’s character
- my child’s ability to compete in the marketplace
- my child’s relationship with God
- the role of fathers in our society
- other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 3: Getting Involved with Your Kids**

How would you define “quality time,” “quantity time,” “investing time,” and “spending time”? After reading Carey’s discussion of these terms, what do you think is the most important thing to remember about time and kids?

Which of the following do you think would make the biggest improvement in your child’s life? How would you rank the actions from most effective to least? Which can you imagine doing during the next six months? Which do you think your child might remember most fondly ten years from now?

- going to your child’s sports events, as Carey’s dad did
- eating crackers in bed, as Carey did with Chance
- writing agendas for the conversations you have with your child
- taking walks together, as the Casey family does
- going to a water park with your child even though you feel old
- protecting your child from a bad career decision, as Carey’s dad did
- being a WatchDOG at your child’s school

Which of the following keep you from being more involved in your child’s life? How could the group help you (prayer, advice, transportation, etc.) as you try to overcome those obstacles?

- working long hours
- leaving involvement to your wife
- having a physical disability
- feeling too old or tired
- geographical distance
- conflict with your child
- lack of money
- other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 4: Love 101**

Which of the following would you find awkward? Why?

- saying, “I love you” to your best friend
- writing, “Love, Dad” at the end of a note to your child
- saying, “I love God” to a coworker
- saying, “I love you” to your teenage son
- saying, “I love you” to your teenage daughter

- saying, “I love you” to your wife

Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Why?

- “Loving is responsible and deliberate beneficial action on behalf of another.”
- “Whether it’s loving as husbands or as fathers, we tend to think it’s going to be too hard to figure out. So we give up.”
- “I don’t think the problem is that men don’t have feelings. We’re just not used to identifying them or talking about them.”
- “We can’t love better than we’ve been loved.”
- “You can practice love when you don’t feel a thing!”

How would you feel if Carey Casey said the following to you? Why? “I was blessed to have a great dad. But I’m sure that if your dad could do it over again, and he had the information and the opportunities that he needed, he would be different. There are things in place now that weren’t in place then, so your dad didn’t give you that. I’m not your dad, but let me say what I believe your dad would say if he were here: *‘I’m proud of you.’*”

## **Chapter 5: How to Love Your Children**

What’s an example you’ve seen—in real life, on TV, or in the movies—of each of the following kinds of love (taken from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7)? Which example would you most like to follow in your relationship with your child this week?

- patient love
- kind love
- love that doesn’t envy
- love that doesn’t boast
- love that isn’t proud
- love that isn’t rude

- love that isn't self-seeking
- love that's not easily angered
- love that keeps no record of wrongs
- love that doesn't delight in evil
- love that rejoices with the truth
- protective love
- trusting love
- hopeful love
- persevering love

How do you think your child (or children) might complete this statement? "I wish my father would \_\_\_\_\_"? Why do you think that? If you aren't in the process of fulfilling this wish, what keeps you from doing so? If you are, what have you done so far?

If you'd said the following to your father when you were growing up, how might he have responded? If your child said the following to you, how would you respond?

- "Try to see where I'm coming from before blowing up in my face and later wanting my forgiveness."
- "Listen when I need you to. You don't have to have the right answers all the time; just be there for me."
- "Actually stop and listen . . . don't think about what you're going to say, but hear and understand what I'm saying."
- "Listen to me [without trying] to fix the problem or discipline me for it, but just listen."
- "Don't talk; don't argue; just listen."

## **Chapter 6: Loving Your Children's Mother**

If you were directing a movie based on Carey Casey's life, how would you make sure in the following scenes that the audience understood the impact of his father's marriage on him? What would the actor playing Carey do or say? Would you flash forward or back to any other scenes? What kind of music would you want in the background?

- Saturday mornings when Carey and his brother jumped on their parents' bed
- the walk to the store for groceries when the car had broken down
- the scene in the hospital after his mother's surgery

If you're not currently married to your child's mother, what did you think of Carey's advice? What advice about fathering would you give others in your situation?

What's the most romantic thing you've ever said to, done for, or given to your wife at the following times? Do you recommend it to other dads? Why or why not?

- her birthday
- Mother's Day
- Valentine's Day
- Christmas
- your wedding anniversary

## **Chapter 7: Coaching**

If fathering is like coaching, which of these sports is most like your family right now? Why?

- football
- bungee jumping
- boxing
- synchronized swimming
- shuffleboard
- other \_\_\_\_\_

How do these bits of wisdom from Carey's father compare with advice you've given your kids? When it comes to coaching, are you more like Carey's dad, Shifu the mentor in *Kung Fu Panda*, Vince Lombardi, or combative Bobby Knight?

- "I'm sure we all feel it's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice."
- "Be consistent in attitude."
- "Let's stop being overanxious."
- "Family should be honest with each other."
- "The wife contributes to the behavior of the husband, and the husband contributes to the behavior of the wife."
- "Don't argue with confused people."

How could you use each of the following as a "coachable moment"? How might the age of your child determine what you tried to teach? What would you want your child to remember from each experience?

- You drive past a cemetery while a graveside service is going on.
- A homeless man comes up to you and asks for a dollar.
- The line at Disney World looks like it's a mile long.
- Your child gives out 24 valentines and doesn't get any in return.
- You bring home an adorable kitten from the animal shelter.

## **Chapter 8: Coaching with Insight**

What did Carey's dad mean when he told his kids to "watch"? If you had to boil all your fatherly counsel down to one word, what would it be? Why?

How have you collected insights about your children? Based on what you know about them, what do you think they'd do in the following situations? (If your children are very young, feel free to guess—and explain your reasoning.)

- During the Easter program at church, Child A forgets his or her lines.
- Child B has to choose his or her first car—an old but barely used Cadillac, or a red Mustang that needs a new transmission.
- Child C is urged by a friend to shoplift a DVD.



- Your wife mentions to Child D that it's your birthday, which he or she had forgotten.
- Child E overhears two boys at school talking about "shooting all the teachers."

How does a good coach discipline his or her players? How does a poor coach do the same? As your kids' coach, for what infraction might you impose each of the following penalties?

- going without dessert
- calling the police and pressing charges
- not getting to play video games for a month
- losing a week's allowance
- having to write a 500-word essay on getting along with siblings

## **Chapter 9: Modeling**

What's the difference between modeling and molding? How might one work when the other doesn't?

How could you apply the 10 keys to effective modeling in the following circumstances?

1. "Aim for Consistency" when you lose your job
2. "Try for Patterns, Not Perfection" when work keeps you from attending your daughter's school events
3. "Take a Long-term View" when your son dyes his hair orange
4. "Don't Preach a Sermon, Be One" during a drought that kills your lawn
5. "When You Fail, Admit It" after getting a speeding ticket
6. "Make a Sacrifice They'll Remember" when your neighbor's house burns down
7. "Take Care What You Share" when you have a habit of buying lottery tickets
8. "Don't Make Promises You Can't Keep" when you're diagnosed with leukemia

9. “Use Everyday Events” when you have to drive your daughter around on her paper route
10. “Reinforce Actions with Words” when you discover your son viewing Internet porn

Which of the role models mentioned in this chapter do you most identify with? Why? Which one would you most like to imitate? Why?

- Carey Casey
- Carey’s father
- Solomon
- the father who carried his sons in a backpack
- the dad whose kids kept asking, “Are we there yet?”
- the father of the NFL player who had a drinking problem
- Albert Haynesworth
- Superman
- Brennan’s father
- Dr. Samuel Proctor

### **Chapter 10: Modeling Faith and Values**

Which of the following do you intend to tell your children about? Which do you want them to learn about on their own? Why? What progress have you made so far?

- driving a car
- sex
- becoming a follower of Jesus Christ
- using a credit card
- learning to pray
- respecting people of other races

As this chapter relates, a Swiss study found that no matter how faithfully a mother attended church, there was only a 2 percent chance of her children regularly attending church as adults if the father had not attended as well. How do you account for that? How do you feel about it?

In each of the following situations, do you think the father is trying to *control* or *influence* the child's faith and values? What do you think the result will be?

- A dad offers to pay his eight-year-old daughter a dollar for every Bible verse she memorizes.
- A dad won't let his 15-year-old son attend another church's youth group.
- A dad installs an Internet filter on his 12-year-old daughter's computer so that she can't use social networking sites.
- A dad tells his 16-year-old son that he can't date a non-Christian girl.
- A dad gives his six-year-old daughter a children's Bible.
- A dad announces that he and his 10-year-old son will start having devotions together three nights a week.
- A dad gives his four-year-old son a "time out" for biting his sister.

### **Chapter 11: A Vision for the World**

What might be the "father angle" behind each of the following headlines? If 6.5 million dads joined the Championship Fathering team, how might the headlines read a decade from now?

- "Teen Pregnancy Rate Jumps 22 Percent in Metro Area"
- "Gunman Shoots Pastor, 5 Others at Church"
- "Budget Cuts Put Foster Care in Jeopardy"
- "Medical Bills Bring Single Mom to Bankruptcy"
- "3-D Horror Film Breaks Box Office Record"
- "Child Dies in Drive-by Shooting"

Read Matthew 9:36-38. If Jesus looked at the following "crowds" today, how do you think He would react? How do you think He wants you to respond?

- the urban young people who don't graduate from high school
- the girls who have been sexually abused
- the kids who have nobody to play softball or soccer with them

- the gang members who keep going back to jail
- the children who wait in vain to be adopted

Why did Carey and other family members cry when they left Carey's father at the care center, on the same grounds where he'd displayed his strength so many years before? Do you agree that you should "live in such a way that your kids feel great about crying when you're gone"? Why or why not?

## **Epilogue**

Other than your biological father, is there anyone you could have called Dad, or would have liked to? What are three ways in which you could be that kind of person to someone else?

How has being a father been fulfilling for you so far? Which of the following "perks" of fatherhood do you value most? Why?

- getting hugs from your kids
- having children who "keep you honest"
- helping your kids start a relationship with God
- passing along your skills
- introducing your kids to your favorite TV shows or books
- getting to act like a kid again
- other \_\_\_\_\_

Working with a partner, complete the "Father's Day Review." If you're comfortable doing so, share the results with the group—especially your plans for the coming year.