

# Kathy Hillman: Fathers, 'Father' Buckner & the Heavenly Father

June 15, 2015

Choosing the perfect Father's Day gift presents challenges. He doesn't need another tie or coffee mug. His desk is too full for added pictures or "World's Greatest Dad" knick-knacks, and he won't spend gift cards on himself. What does he want or need?



Kathy HillmanA totally unscientific Internet survey and personal interviews with guys of all ages yield one overwhelming favorite. The gift of time and togetherness ranks first, whether grilling, taking in a ball game, shooting hoops, fishing, watching an action flick, or challenging the crew to cards or board games. Likely, it's the favorite present fathers, grandfathers and those who are like fathers can give their families, too.

My husband, John, looks back fondly on his dad teaching him to drive a tractor when his feet barely reached the clutch and the many hours they spent together working on the farm. When asked their most memorable times with their dad, our children mention football tailgating and the late-night breakfasts he cooked after Little League and Marshall's high school baseball games. Holly recalls John sitting through *Romy and Michele's*

*High School Reunion* because she wanted to see the movie.

I remember my grandfather Robinson taking me all by myself to Eldorado Drug for a strawberry ice cream cone and my grandfather Barton letting me “help” in his attic carpentry workshop in Marfa. Daddy didn’t need to ask twice at the prospect of riding shotgun to check on the cows. After he died, a friend’s father became like a dad. Bill Rountree attended every Woman’s Missionary Union event he could during my presidency. He even slipped in late and crashed a ladies-only tea party to see my presentation.



Kathy Hillman’s son Michael with his sons, Sawyer and Tucker, and friends. (Kathy Hillman Photo) This year, our son Michael will celebrate Father’s Day with Sawyer, Tucker and Chandler. Meanwhile, son-in-law Kevin will experience his first as a dad. Gilbert, Gabe, Tally and Mitchell moved in with Holly and Kevin the day after the holiday last June, and Kevin officially became a father on National Adoption Day in November.

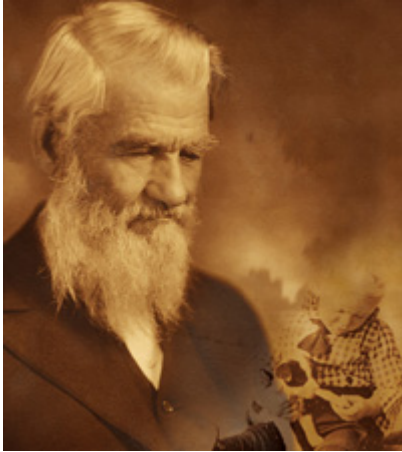
Through the years, many like Kevin have experienced fatherhood through adoption, and children like theirs have found loving fathers or men who were like fathers through Baptist child and family care institutions. BCFS, formerly Baptist Child and Family Services, Children at Heart Ministries,

South Texas Children's Home Ministries, and Buckner Children & Family Services support and care for countless children and families in Texas and around the world.



Kathy Hillman's son Michael, with her grandsons Sawyer and Tucker, holding her granddaughter Chandler. (Kathy Hillman Photo) R.C. Buckner and his wife, Vienna, established the first. Buckner Orphan's Home opened in Dallas in a rented cottage with three children in 1879. The three grew to hundreds, in addition to the Buckners' own six. Early on, the girls and boys affectionately called the Buckners "Aunt Vi" and "Father" Buckner because they understood the importance of time and togetherness.

In her book *Homeward Bound: The Heart and Heritage of Buckner*, Karen Bullock relates a story about Father Buckner his pastor, George W. Truett, often told. Buckner took into the orphanage a 10-year-old girl who lost her entire family in a fire that left her badly burned on one side of her face and body. When he returned from his frequent train trips, the boys and girls always waited for him, each wanting to be first to kiss him.



R.C. “Father” Buckner, from an illustration in the book *R.C. Buckner’s Life of Faith and Works* by J. B. Cranfill and J.L. Walker. (Image courtesy of John Hall of Buckner International) One day, Mary stood apart and cried. Buckner walked over and asked, “‘Mary, why didn’t you come to kiss me?’ Mary struggled with her tears ... and then replied, ‘O, Papa Buckner, I could not ask you to kiss me. I am so ugly, ... but if you will just love me like you love the other children, then you need not kiss me at all.’” Buckner took the little girl “onto his lap and tenderly kissed her little face over and over, telling her how precious she was to him.”

We are precious to our Heavenly Father, too. One of our 2-year-old Sunday school children’s favorite songs is “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” They never tire of reading and listening to the sing-along book. Scripture tells us in Mark 10:15 that Jesus “took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.” The Lord Almighty says, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters” (2 Corinthians 6:18).

What do our fathers want most this Dad’s Day? The gift of time and togetherness. What does our Heavenly Father want most this Father’s Day? The gift of time and togetherness. After all, the Lord’s Prayer begins, “Our Father, who art in heaven ....”

**Texas  
Baptist  
Voices**

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