

# Gaining Victory Over Life's Tragedies to Be a Good Father

Last fall, the *New York Post* reported on the declining numbers of men wanting children. "Between 2012 and 2018, the percentage of childless men ages 15 to 49 responding that they did not want children doubled from 9.9% to 20.2%," [the Post wrote](#).

The reason for this decline likely cannot be laid solely at the feet of today's males. Women and the demands of the feminist movement likely contribute to this disinterest in children, as well as the broken families and lack of male role models that today's childbearing-age men experienced growing up. And then there's just the general, chaotic state of the world, which plants doubt into almost every mind about the wisdom of bringing a child into such a mess.

For any male thinking these thoughts, I would encourage him to reconsider, pointing to author and ex-Communist Whittaker Chambers as an example.

Like many today, Chambers had a miserable childhood. His father was fairly non-communicative and struggled in his marriage to Chambers' mother, eventually deserting the family for some years, causing his wife and children to scrape together a hand-to-mouth existence. The hard life likely wore on Chambers' brother, who committed suicide as a young adult.

Chambers' life path led first toward the Communist Party, where he served as a spy, and then away from it, serving as a journalist while maintaining a small farm in the country with his own wife and children. Chambers' way out of the Communist Party is recorded in [Witness](#), a book which also offers some profound perspectives on the ups and downs of culture and life in general. He prefaced this book with a letter to his

children, in which he gives some hints at how he overcame a difficult childhood to become a good man, loving husband, and kind father.

The first thing Chambers did in this pursuit was tell his children about both the low and high points of his life. He did this not to show that he was a victim of difficult circumstances, but so that his children could learn from his own mistakes.

The second thing Chambers did was to model the right way of living. He took his children to church and sat with them during the service. He didn't simply send them out to do chores on the farm; he worked alongside his children. He taught his children to have fun, laughing together as a family and watching the wonders of nature firsthand, building "reverence and awe for life and the world" in their little lives.

The third thing Chambers did was shelter his children from the world. He and his wife purposely limited their children's media exposure, nurturing them with classic literature and other wholesome activities instead. Such sheltering, however, didn't mean his children were shielded from sorrow and the difficulties of life. Instead, they learned about the realities of life and death through the natural realm of their farm, enabling them to effectively deal with tragedy when they would inevitably encounter it.

"Crime, violence, infamy are not tragedy," Chambers wrote. "Tragedy occurs when a human soul awakes and seeks, in suffering and pain, to free itself from crime, violence, infamy, even at the cost of life. The struggle is the tragedy—not defeat or death. That is why the spectacle of tragedy has always filled men, not with despair, but with a sense of hope and exaltation."

In essence, Chambers was able to overcome the difficulties of

his childhood and the mistakes of his early adulthood because he chose to right the ship, avoiding playing the victim and choosing hope by following God and His ways instead. In doing so, he was able to set a different course for his children.

As we come to another Father's Day, why can't we do the same? Today's men don't have to reject children and family just because they had a bad experience growing up. Instead, they have a beautiful opportunity to right the ship, to seek the Lord—the perfect Father in Heaven—for His wisdom and example to be a kind, loving father, open to children and ready to raise them to be mighty warriors that thrive in spite of the sick culture that surrounds them.

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