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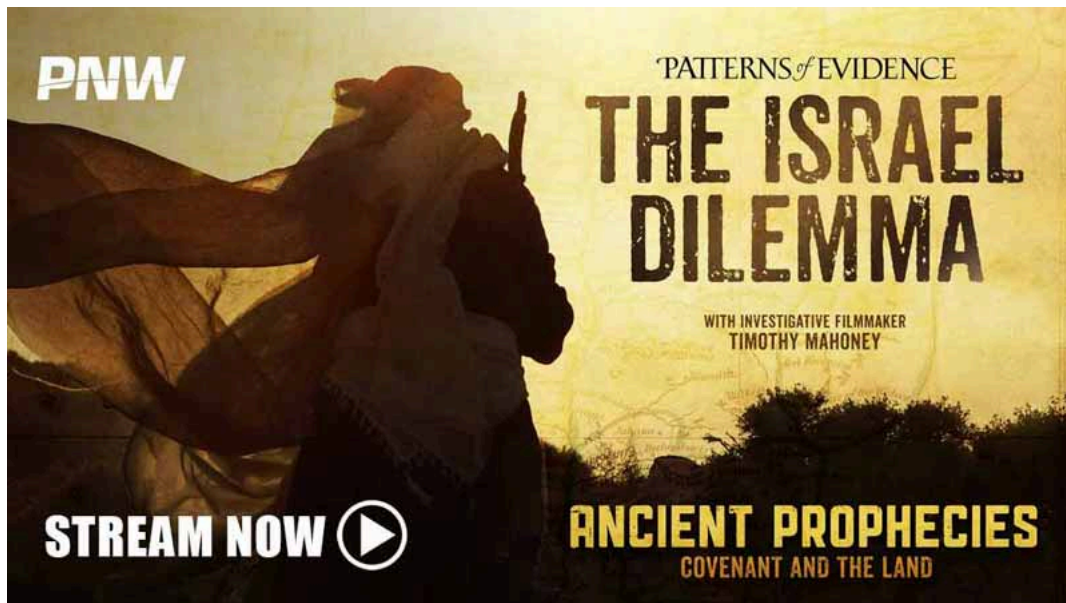
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ARTICLE

God's Design Matters: Study Finds Fathers' Role Critical In Children's Health

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BY DAN HART/WASHINGTON STAND FEBRUARY 13, 2026

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The results of a new study on the role that fathers play in the health of their children has surprised researchers, revealing that the amount of attentiveness that a father pays to his infant affects the child's future heart and metabolic health, while finding no such correlation with mothers. The study reinforces a massive body of evidence pointing to how critical both a father and a mother are to the healthy development of their children.

The journal Health Psychology recently published the results of a long-term study of 292 families, which observed the behavior of fathers as they had three-way interactions with their 10-month old children and their spouses. As summarized by The New York Times, the researchers "found that fathers who were less attentive to their 10-month-olds were likely to have trouble co-parenting, instead withdrawing or competing with mothers for the children's attention. And at age 7, the children of those fathers were more likely to have markers of poor heart or metabolic health, such as inflammation and high blood sugar."

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The study, conducted by researchers from Penn State University, noted that the results likely point in favor of the "father vulnerability hypothesis," which posits that fathers tend to react with high emotion when there are strains in their relationships with their wives, which can have a negative impact on the whole family.

Therefore, the father's role "may thus uniquely position him as a channel for relational stress, ultimately shaping child health," they wrote. Comparatively, the research found that fathers who interacted more sensitively with their babies had better co-parenting outcomes, which lead to their children having better long-term health.

PNW (https://www.prophecynewswatch.com) another layer of social science data clearly showing that both a mother and a father play vital roles in healthy outcomes. Decades, study after study has shown that children who are raised by their married biological parents "live longer, healthier lives both physically and psychologically, do better in school, are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, are less likely to live in poverty, are less likely to be in trouble with the law, are less likely to drink or do drugs, are less likely to be violent or sexually active, are less likely to be victims of sexual or physical violence, are more likely to have a successful marriage when they are older," and more.



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But as cultural observers like Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Dr. Albert Mohler emphasize, the secular American culture has conveniently ignored the unmistakable social science evidence right before its eyes and has embraced a host of lifestyles that eschew married mothers and fathers to the detriment of children.

"We've had the subversion -- in just about every arena of life and the culture -- the subversion of fatherhood," he told Tony Perkins during Monday's "Washington Watch." "So it's fascinating that something like this appears as it does. ... The bottom line is, children at various stages who have their biological -- and that's important here -- the biological father in the home have significant health gains over children, both boys and girls, who do not. ... This is fascinating research, but it just points to God's intention in creation order."

Mohler went on to observe that in a post-Obergefell era where same-sex marriage has become largely (if slightly less so as of recently) accepted, studies highlighting the uniquely fundamental roles of fathers are all the more important.

"Now what we face are people who are arguing it doesn't matter if there's any father in the home," he noted. "And then, of course, you've got the LGBTQ revolution and all the rest that makes, I think, this research all the more brave. ... I mean, here we're talking about some researchers who actually dared to document, with a scientific and academic depth and thickness, the fact that having a biological father in the home really does matter to children."

Still, Mohler pointed out that much of the mainstream culture refuses to acknowledge what the social science data clearly shows. "The mainstream culture has been arguing, 'It doesn't make any difference. There's no evidence in the lives of children that makes a difference.' And of course, we know as Christians, you bet there is and will be, and now it's becoming undeniable. So I'm very glad to be a part of this movement. ... I think a part of what is shocking people is that we're saying things out loud. ... If we as Christians don't say these things out loud, no one else is going to."



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Children deserve both a mother and a father," Mohler further underscored. "Now, due to all kinds of circumstances and tragedies, sometimes the child doesn't have one or the other. But we're living in a time in which the larger culture says it doesn't matter. We know that by God's design it matters. And now we know in terms of the evidence that's right before our eyes, it really does matter."

Originally published at The Washington Stand (<https://washingtonstand.com/article/fathers-play-uniquely-critical-role-in-health-of-children-study-finds>)

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