

# *“Is this where I come to get a dad?”*

*A teenager expresses the pain of a fatherless generation*

In early August, SpoFI set up a booth for the weekend at the Hillyard Festival in northeast Spokane. As the sun was setting on a warm Saturday night, I was approached by three teens. Our pop-up tent was professionally designed, so there was no mistaking their destination: these kids were headed for the Spokane Fatherhood Initiative. They weren't looking left or right. They were zeroed in on me.



*SpoFI team at Hillyard Festival, Aug. 7, 2021*

Two young men stood on each side of a young woman. I later learned they were all 15. With no preamble, the young lady stepped up to our table and asked me a startling question: **“Is this where I come to get a dad?”** Her tone was demanding, insistent, perhaps a little sassy. Before I could process a response, she fired another missile: **“What do I have to do to get a dad?”** I was still on my heels when I was hit with a third question: **“Will you be my dad?”**

In dozens of presentations in the community over the last four years, I have spoken of the pain caused by absent fathers. And now, here was a living example of that pain, standing before me, seeking answers, searching for something to fill the emptiness that haunts her so she could medicate an unrelenting sense of unworthiness.

Her father, she said, “is a druggie. He’s got seven kids.” With her head up, looking me in the eye, she declared, “I don’t mean anything to him.” I suspect her bravado is a thin veneer. Joseph Mattera writes,

*“I believe all of the emotional, physical and spiritual ills of society can be traced to humans feeling alienated from God and their biological fathers...The orphan spirit is perhaps the greatest curse on the earth today.”*

I had no prescription for this young woman’s pain except prayer, which she agreed to receive. I asked the Lord to reveal to this troubled soul her uniqueness, her value, her significance, her beauty. But mostly I asked God to reveal His love for her as her Heavenly Father. When I finished, she said, **“God doesn’t love me.”** “What makes you say that?” I asked. She said, “Because I’m gay.” I replied, “The Bible says every human being is created in the image of God. I can promise you that God loves you.” She thanked me and then she and her friends disappeared into the night.

At the Spokane Fatherhood Initiative, we seek to repair the devastating consequences of father absence and the orphan spirit. In this holy season, **our confidence in our mission is renewed** by the celebration of Christ’s birth. He came so we would no longer be orphans, to welcome us into His family, as His Father promised:

*“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*  
(2 Cor. 6:18)



I pray every day that God will capture this young woman’s heart so she may be filled with the love she so desperately seeks from a father. Your faithful support empowers us to share God’s invitation to move into his household. Thank you.

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