



## **Military Appreciation Month**

May is National Military Appreciation month. This is a time to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the courageous men and women that have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. To those of you that have served or are currently serving, we tip our hats to you and offer up our heartfelt Thank you!

Yesterday was Memorial Day, a day set aside to remember with gratitude and pride, those that lost their lives fighting for our nation and for our freedom. To those of you that have lost loved ones in battle, we pray that your day was filled with peace as you remembered your loved ones or comrades.

Remember, we are here to help. Don't hesitate to give us a call. 417-501-8867

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## **-Check Out This Video-**

Some gave all--all gave some.  
Thank a servicemen!



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## **- Helpful Resources -**

- [File for Unemployment Benefits](#)
  - [Special Unemployment Link for COVID-19 crisis](#)
  - [Legal Services of Southwest Missouri](#)
  - [Child Support questions? Contact Ra'shad Hibler-Family Support Division 573-751-0980](#)
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## **Mentoring: A Life-Changing Experience**

- If you are interested in having a mentor, or if you are interested in being a mentor, please contact Lisa at the Good Dads office. She will assist you in making the connection.

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### **- NPGD SPOTLIGHT -**

*Inspiration From New Pathways Dads*

### **Meet Cody Pickens**

If you were to have the pleasure of talking to Cody on the phone today, you would probably agree that you can almost “hear” Cody smile! Cody’s voice and positivity are infectious. The joy of the Lord shines in his eyes. Unfortunately, life has not always been this way for Cody.

Cody grew up in a broken home in a small Missouri town. His mother

and grandmother raised him. He attended the same school from Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Cody participated in many school activities, including basketball and baseball.

At the age of 14, Cody began smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol. Before long, he was addicted and experimenting with harder drugs.

After Cody graduated from high school, he went to work at the shipyard in Caruthersville, MO. Here, he was introduced to opiate painkillers. This addiction lasted for more than 10 years. Cody was eventually fired from the shipyard for failing a drug test.

After being fired, Cody found a job delivering pizzas. At this job, he met the woman that he would marry and be the mother for his child. Cody tried to hide his addiction, but like addiction does, it reared its ugly head. Cody was in and out of rehab. Nothing seemed to work. After a short marriage, Cody and his wife divorced—his daughter was barely one year old.

Cody tried rehab again. He spent the next year at the Army Church in Branson. Things went well for a time. However, there was still something missing in Cody's life, and again he relapsed. During this relapse, Cody was sent to prison for 120 days for stealing vehicles. Upon his release, he returned to Branson for another attempt at rehabilitation. By this time, it was 2016. Cody had not seen or talked to his daughter in more than two years.

Cody relapsed again. Again he was sent to prison for vehicle theft involving a police chase and assault on an officer. Cody spent the next year in the Department of Corrections. Upon his release, Cody made Victory Mission his home plan. Through the Restoration Program at Victory Mission, Cody rededicated his life to Christ and has not looked back!

That was December 5, 2018. Since then Cody has been in contact with his daughter's mother. He started writing letters to his daughter each week. His ex-wife saw that he was serious in his desire to restore his relationship with his daughter. She has since given their daughter all of Cody's letters and allowed her to write to Cody.

After two months of back and forth letters, Cody and his daughter had their first phone conversation in many years. Cody was prepared for a short, one-sided conversation. But, to his surprise, the conversation lasted over one hour! The next week their second phone conversation lasted for two hours! When Cody tells this story, this is when you can "hear" him smile! Cody stated, "This is a process, but it is worth every minute. I am so excited for the day to come when I can see her and hug her again!"

Cody is working full-time at SMC. He bought a vehicle just before Christmas. He serves faithfully at Freedom City Church on the

Administration and Hospitality teams. Cody is a graduate of the New Pathways for Good Dads program and a soon-to-be graduate of the Victory Mission Restoration program. Through it all, Cody exclaimed, "God is on the move!"

## **Congratulations Cody!**



*New Pathways for Good Dads*  
**- Upcoming Classes -**

It's not too late to join a  
**Fatherhood Development** class!

**Enrollment is now open!**

- **Fatherhood Development** -- A new class began on Monday, May 11, at 6:00 p.m. This is a virtual class hosted through the Zoom app. You may still join this group. When it is safe to do so, classes will meet in person at Victory Mission.

For more information or to enroll, call the Good Dads office at 417-501-8867.

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*This Week's Featured*  
**- Good Dads Podcast -**

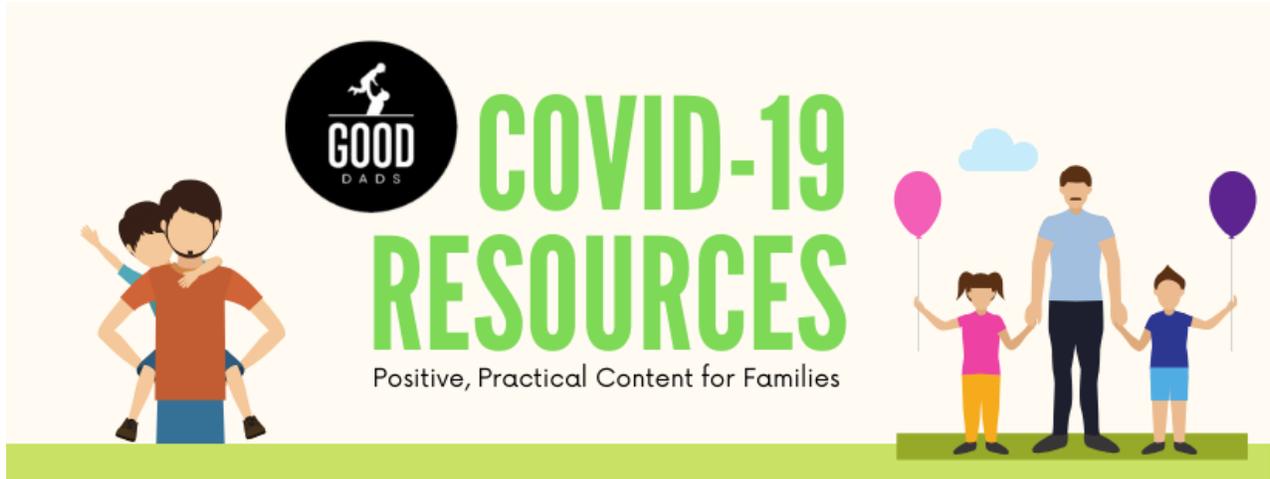
**-E336 Dads of Pre-Teens-**

Alex Green and Michael Vaughn, dads of pre-teens, talk with us about having realistic expectations and privilege versus entitlement.

*Click below to listen to an episode on [iTunes](#), or search on any other favorite podcast player - we're on [Google Play](#), [Stitcher](#), [Spotify](#), [TuneIn](#), and more.*



# - COVID-19 Resources For Your Family -



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