**A Double Loss Causing Tears to Keep Falling: The Impact of Absent Fathers of Justice-Involved Youth**

Research for the 21st Century

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Having worked with youth for almost twenty years in my church and professionally as the administrator of a juvenile detention center, I am considerably passionate about adolescents, particularly those who are justice-involved. What I find concerning yet interesting, however, is the number of children in the justice system who are made to grow up without the presence of a father in the home. Most of the teens I encounter daily come from single-parent households where the mother is actively present, but when it comes to the father, he is nowhere to be found. When speaking of absent fathers, it includes several conditions, like having a father who is absent during a child’s life and can be a result of death or divorce, or he can be absent due to work commitments, incarceration, or he can physically exist but is considered absent because of neglect (Sabrina, S. A., & Suminar, D. R., 2020, p. 2286). This issue has become so prevalent in the United States, and at the end of the day, the children are directly impacted and are the ones left suffering the most. More precisely, juvenile offenders housed in correctional facilities appear to have the hardest time dealing with absent fathers and the loss of freedom due to incarceration. As a result, they are often left in constant tears as emotions of abandonment and neglect plague their minds. Certainly, at the rate this issue is expanding, Jim, the lead cast from the days of *Father Knows Best* would suggest such a familial position is unthinkable. I often say it is an insult to God, as one of the first jobs given by God to men was fatherhood; thus, the family is very important as it was the first institution created. Because of that, I desire to explore what the Bible says about fatherhood. Secondly, given the costs that such delinquent behaviors levy on society and the youth themselves, I want a better understanding as I look into the forces of adolescent risky behavior connected to the quality of the father-child relationship and delinquency, which is considered a risk that destroys lives and property (‌Peter, P. F., & Nwadukwe, H. T., 2022). Lastly, as one who works hard to find solutions, I am a "hope-dealer,” so I believe the issue of absent fathers among justice-involved youth can be mitigated by maintaining and strengthening the parenting skills of men who are currently active in their children’s lives and increasing the number of men who will help mentor those youth without fathers.

# Key Terms on Absent Fathers and Juvenile Delinquency

Search terms related to the topic of this paper are as follows:

* Absence
* Adolescence
* Attachment
* Causes
* Crime
* Delinquency
* Drug Addiction
* Empirical Study
* Extended Family
* Family Issues
* Father
* Fatherhood
* Father Absence
* Father-Child Relationship
* Father Involvement
* Fatherhood
* Fatherhood Issues
* Imprisoned fathers
* Imprisonment
* Juvenile Delinquency
* Mentoring
* Mentorship
* Nature
* Parental imprisonment
* Pastoral-Theological
* Trust in God
* Youth Ministry

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