Several years ago, our pastor told a story about a men's prison that provided free Mother's Day cards to inmates who wanted to send cards to their moms. Nearly all the inmates asked for a card and sent to someone they identified as "mom." It may have been their mom, someone else's mom, their grandmother, etc. Even so, they sent it to a woman they saw as the woman who cared for them, raised them, stayed with them, and was there for them.

Mother's Day was so successful, the prison administration decided to build on that success, offering free Father's Day cards. They were shocked when hardly any inmates showed up to get a free card to send to their father. Sadly, this confirmed what statistics had shown – 90 percent of incarcerated men lacked a loving relationship with their father or someone they could identify as their father figure.

As our pastor pointed out, you need look no further than this story to understand the cause of many, if not most, of the ills in our society.

This story suggests how critically important fathers are in the family, how critically important they are to the health and growth of their children. Are we dads doing our job? No, we run away, we disappear, we leave single moms scattered all over the country. The reality – mom odes the best she can, alone. Moms are paying our dues as well as their own.

Isn't it time we pay our own dues and do our job?

Now, how do elephants fit into a column about Father's Day? It starts with the murdering of rhinoceroses in Africa. Interestingly, whoever was killing the rhinos was not killing them for their horns because the horns were still present when the carcasses were discovered. Equally confusing, there were no bullet holes in the rhinos. Instead, the rangers found several large wounds they could not identify. If poachers were not killing the rhinos, then who was? The loss of rhinos was becoming critical, with an average of one white rhino murdered each month in the Pilanesberg national Park in northern South Africa. The rangers learned the exact same thing was occurring in another African park, Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park. The rangers at both parks were baffled, unable to determine who was killing the rhinos and how they were killing them. In all, nearly 10 percent of their prized rhinoceros population was dead, a population they had brought back from near extinction.

It took some time to solve the murders. To everyone's astonishment, the rangers discovered it was a gang of local juvenile delinquents murdering the rhinos. Moreover, they were doing it for sport, killing just for the fun of killing.

These juvenile delinquents hunted the rhinos and indiscriminately murdered them. But these juvenile delinquents were not humans. They were teenage bull elephants.

This problem had its origins in another South African park, Kruger National Park, which was dealing with the overpopulation of its elephant herd. Rather than culling the herd, killing the excess elephants, they decided to relocate young, orphaned elephants to other parks wanting to establish elephant herds. This seemed like a reasonable, even progressive idea. Moreover, it was rather uncomplicated to do because young elephants were reasonably easy to transport and relocate because of their smaller size.

These orphaned elephants suffered two major traumas, the first from the loss of their parents and the second with relocation to unfamiliar territory. These young bulls and cows grew up without "adult" supervision and, as they grew into their "teenage" years, the murdering of rhinos started.

What do you do? You have out of control teenagers with out of control hormones, murdering for sport. How do you rehabilitate an elephant? How do you place a teenage bull elephant in a juvenile detention center? How do we teach an animal values when we cannot even teach values to fellow human beings?

Following lengthy debates and deliberation, an older ranger proposed a unique, unproven, never tried idea. He suggested getting a truck large enough to haul a full-grown old bull elephant, something that up to that time had never been done. Not wanting to kill these young bull elephants, the parks reluctantly agreed to the experiment.

What happened when they transplanted the old bull in with the young bulls? The old bull immediately established a new hierarchy and from the day the old bull arrived, all rhino murdering stopped.

Dad was home. Dad was in charge. Dad would teach you how to behave. Dad would make sure you grew into a good adult.

We have a profound responsibility as fathers. We have a profound impact on the adults our children become. We have a solemn responsibility to our wives, the mother of our children, and to our children. They deserve our best. Remember the prison inmates and the elephants – bother are in need of dads.