

Father's Day. What better day to talk about our Father, God, and all the things he does for us.

But I want to take a different look at fathers, and at God the Father. This Father's Day, I want to encourage the fathers here.

How is your relationship with God?

Chances are, your relationship with God was influenced by your relationship with your earthly father. If you had a great relationship with your earthly father, you probably have a great relationship with God. If your father abused you, you probably had a hard time accepting a loving God. If your father wasn't around, or didn't interact with you, chances are you have a hard time interacting with God.

There are two things I want to talk about today; what a blessing it is to have God as our Father, and the example we have from God as our Father.

**As children, we are blessed to have God as our Father.**

God is the Father of everyone, right?

Well, not exactly.

Let me be clear, here. God created everything and everyone, and because of that, He is the Father of everyone; but, not everyone chooses to accept Him as their Father, so He allows them to go on their own way.

We know that Jesus said many times that He was the Son of God. In the Psalms, David prophetically spoke of this relationship between God and Jesus.

***Psalm 89:24-28***

*<sup>24</sup> My faithful love will be with him,  
and through my name his horn [or strength] will be exalted.*

<sup>25</sup> *I will set his hand over the sea,  
his right hand over the rivers.*  
<sup>26</sup> *He will call out to me, 'You are my Father,  
my God, the Rock my Savior.'*  
<sup>27</sup> *And I will appoint him to be my firstborn,  
the most exalted of the kings of the earth.*  
<sup>28</sup> *I will maintain my love to him forever,  
and my covenant with him will never fail.*

In John 10, Jesus talks about being the Son of God publicly, and He gets a lot of people very upset at Him.

### ***John 10:22-33***

<sup>22</sup> *Then came the Festival of Dedication [Hanukkah] at Jerusalem. It was winter,* <sup>23</sup> *and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade.* <sup>24</sup> *The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."*

<sup>25</sup> *Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me,* <sup>26</sup> *but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.* <sup>27</sup> *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* <sup>28</sup> *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.* <sup>29</sup> *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all[c]; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.* <sup>30</sup> *I and the Father are one."*

<sup>31</sup> *Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him,* <sup>32</sup> *but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"*

<sup>33</sup> *"We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."*

In John 8, we see another time Jesus is talking to the people around Him in the temple courts. He discusses several points with them, and they simply chose not to believe him. Starting in verse 31:

### ***John 8:31-47***

*<sup>31</sup> To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

*<sup>33</sup> They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"*

*<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. <sup>38</sup> I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father."*

*<sup>39</sup> "Abraham is our father," they answered.*

*"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do what Abraham did. <sup>40</sup> As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. <sup>41</sup> You are doing the works of your own father."*

*"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."*

*<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. <sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to*

*carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! <sup>46</sup> Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."*

Here, Jesus is telling those who don't believe Him and don't follow His teachings that they are children of the devil.

Let's look at verses 35 and 36 from John 8 again:

*<sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

So, here Jesus is saying that those whom He sets free are God's children, no longer slaves; not slaves to sin anymore.

So, to be a true child of God, you need to accept freedom (or salvation) from the Son.

### **As fathers, we need to try to be more like God to our children.**

So, as children of God, we have an example to follow; two, really. We have the example of Jesus to follow for how to live life in general, but we also have the example of God for how to be a great father.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows us God's example as a Father.

#### ***Matthew 6:25-34***

*<sup>25</sup> "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly*

*Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[e]?*

*<sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Fathers, do your children worry about the little things, or do they trust that you will provide for them whatever they may need (and kids, please notice I didn't say 'want' here.)?

As a father, do you reach out to help others? Psalm 68:5 and 6 says this about God:

*<sup>5</sup> A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,  
is God in his holy dwelling.*

*<sup>6</sup> God sets the lonely in families,[c]  
he leads out the prisoners with singing;  
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.*

God is compassionate. He has mercy and a tender heart toward His children, and knows our weaknesses.

### ***Psalm 103:13, 14***

*<sup>13</sup> As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;*

*<sup>14</sup> for he knows how we are formed,  
he remembers that we are dust.*

God also disciplines us. And discipline doesn't mean punish. Discipline is simply teaching, using punishment only when needed to correct disobedient children.

### ***Proverbs 3:11, 12***

*<sup>11</sup> My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline,  
and do not resent his rebuke,  
<sup>12</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves,  
as a father the son he delights in.*

Some people think it's odd that Paul, who was a single man, would give advice about marriage and raising children. But anyone who has spent a long time dealing with a church family understands that you don't have to be a biological parent to be a father figure.

Paul gives advice to children and to fathers in his letters to the church in Ephesus and Colossae.

### ***Ephesians 6:1-4***

*<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— <sup>3</sup> "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." [Deut. 5:16]*

*<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

### ***Colossians 3:21***

*<sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.*

So, fathers, here's my challenge and my encouragement for you this Father's Day:

I challenge you to try to follow God's example of how to be a father; kind, compassionate, merciful, honest, fair, and just.

And remember, we're all broken, so no matter how hard we try, we're going to fail sometimes. God will forgive us, and believe it or not, since our kids know we're human, they'll forgive us, too.

And remember, almost any man can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a dad.

Opening scripture: Deuteronomy 32:7-12

Closing scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

Questions:

1. How has your relationship with your father affected your relationship with God?
2. What can you do to overcome your past experiences with your earthly father to make your relationship with God better?
3. What can we do as parents to help our kids have a better relationship with God?