

The Fatherhood of God

Characteristics of Being a Good Father Patterned After God

Lessons from the Model Prayer: Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:9-13

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INTRO: The concept of the fatherhood of God is surprisingly rare in the Old Testament, occurring only 15 times out of all 39 books. The story is quite different in the New Testament where the concept of *Father* or *Abba Father* occurs 65 times in the Synoptic Gospels and 100 times in John's Gospel. Paul uses the designation of God as Father over 40 times.

This concept of God as *Abba Father* is not intended to convey His work in the origination of the universe and the human race, but His nature as a kind and loving Father to His children. The Trinitarian God has all the attributes of both male and female as He made them (Adam and Eve) "in Our image, male and female He made them in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26-27).

The Fatherhood of God is one aspect of His being and is worth understanding and accepting as a part of His nature worth emulation. Many of these divine fatherhood characteristics can be found in the model prayer.

- I. **Pray, then, in this way:** *'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'* (Mat 6:9-13 NAU)
 - A. **Respect:** a father deserves respect because he is, with our mother, the source of our life. He should also be worthy of respect because he reflects the character of God to his children. (Ephesians 6:1-4)
 - B. **Legacy:** a father models a life that is worthy of emulation by his children. Along with their mother the family traits are built into children who are obedient and loyal. They carry on the family traditions—not in terms of actual traditions and occupations—but in terms of character. A godly father is one worth following.
 - C. **Provision:** a godly father puts his family first in the use of his resources and insures, to the best of his ability, that his children have what they need. He works hard for them.
 - D. **Loving Acceptance:** a godly father loves at all times and is quick to forgive, not harboring bitterness or resentment toward his children (or their mother), and models for them the forgiveness of others so that they will not harbor any root of bitterness. (Hebrews 12:15-17) Home is always a place of love and security, safety and acceptance.
 - E. **Protection:** a godly father neither exposes his children to temptation by his own behavior; neither does he lead them down a path of temptation. He protects them from evil and establishes a place of safety from the dangers of the world until they are strong and capable of standing on their own against evil. (I John 2:12-14 regarding youth)
- II. **The Apostle Paul, in his letters, most often refers to God our Father as the God of Grace and Peace:**
 - A. These gifts from our Father God are priceless, and encourage us who are fathers to provide them to our children in our limited measure.
 - B. Grace is often referred to as unmerited favor. Children need an abundance of help and guidance, even when they do not realize it, or don't deserve it.
 - C. Peace is the absence of turmoil, the presence of inner tranquility and wellbeing. To the extent that we are able, godly fathers should provide an environment that fosters peace in the lives of our children.

III. Not everyone has a living father, or has a Father like this

- A. It is wonderful to know that even without the presence of an earthly father, we have a heavenly Father who will perfectly care for us (Psalm 146:9) He is a Father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5)
- B. Some have, or have had, fathers who were very selfish, or cruel, or abusive. For some, thinking of God as a Father is abhorrent and repulsive. But God is not like these earthly fathers and we need to ask that God enable us to forgive ungodly fathers and teach us the true way of a loving, heavenly Father.

CONC: We do, in fact, have a heavenly Father Who is full of grace and peace. He is a Father Who deserves our respect, Who gives us a legacy and an inheritance in Christ Jesus, Who provides our every need, Who accepts us time and time again just as we are, and Who protects us from the evil one. Regardless of the character of our earthly fathers, we have a wonderful heavenly Father Who does not change. For us who are fathers, He is worthy of emulation by the strength and power of the Holy Spirit.

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