

The Present Father

"Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation" (Psalm 68:5).

The presence of an earthly father is foundational to the upbringing of both boys and girls. Boys need masculinity around them. They need to see what it looks like to work hard and support a family. Girls need a compassionate father who is there to hold them and love them in both the easy and rough days of childhood. And above all, both girls and boys need a father to show them what it means to follow Christ and to give them a small dose of the Fatherly love of God. Now, as I type this, I can think of multiple friends who, growing up, didn't have this, including myself for a prolonged season of my teenage years. I can also think of children who are currently in desperate need of a father's presence...

The presence of a "good" father, it seems, is a rare commodity in our culture today. Father's Day, much like Mother's Day, can be a tough spot for some depending upon those parental relationships. But instead of thinking with an earthly perspective today, I encourage you to think with an eternal view in mind. Through our faith in Christ, we have been adopted into the family of God, and we now can approach and know God as "Father" (Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5). This is sweet and marvelous grace indeed, especially because before our faith in Jesus, we were God's enemies. But now that we are His dearly beloved children, our entire life changes... As the ultimate Father, God exceeds all fatherly traits as He loves, leads, and provides His Life-giving presence into every aspect of our being.

This Father's Day, I pray you consider two gospel truths. First, never take for granted or down play the fact that you are loved by your Heavenly Father and that His presence will always be with you. Please know dear Christian, this is a huge blessing! Once you were lost, but now you are found. The Father of compassion came running towards you in your muddy pig sty clothes and has clothed you in His own Son's Sunday best (Luke 15:11-32). This is good news that needs to be meditated on and rejoiced in, not just on the third Sunday of June every year, but every time you kneel and pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matthew 6:9).

Secondly, fathers, uncles, grandpas, and great grandpas, I want you to truly analyze your sacred role given to you by God the Father. Your primary job as a dad or as a male influence in a young person's life is to represent the unfailing love, authority, and holiness of God the Father. Now, when you read this, you should think: "Wow, this is a big responsibility..." And you are absolutely right, but please know that the Father of Mercy will grant you His sustaining and strengthening grace for the task.

In relation to the power of the presence of a father in a child's life, I have always loved the 19th-century diary entries of Charles Frances Adams and his son Brook Adams. One day, Francis entered: "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted." The same day, his son, Brook Adams, entered: "Went fishing with my father—the most wonderful day of my life!" There is no wasted time when you are in the presence of your children. For your presence is what will change not only how they fish, but how they live life both now and forevermore!
Happy Father's Day!

Respect the Blood,
Dalton Mathis