

THE ABIDING CHALLENGE

WEEK THREE - DAY ONE

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MASTER GARDENER

KEY SCRIPTURE: James 4:8

READING: John 15:1-2, 4-5, 7-10, 12, and 17

INTRODUCTION

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:8 NKJV

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading again to fear [of God’s judgment], but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons [the Spirit producing sonship] by which we [joyfully] cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” Romans 8:15 Amplified

Our Creator never intended to be distant from mankind. In the beginning, He walked with man in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:8-9 BST says,

“Then the man and his wife [Adam & Eve] heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the breeze of the day, and they hid themselves from the Presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called out to the man, ‘Where are you?’”

Even today, the Father is still calling out, “Son/Daughter, where are you?” He has always wanted an intimate, loving relationship with us. We know this because ...

- **He sent His Son.** Christ came to Earth so we could know God the Father. Jesus is His exact representation; His words and works were the same as God’s (John 5:19; John 12:50).
- **He adopted us as His children.** Through salvation, God invites us to join His family (John 1:12). This close relationship with our Heavenly Father lasts for eternity, providing us with support, encouragement, and love.
- **He is our friend forever.** By calling His disciples “friends” (John 15:15), Jesus revealed a special aspect of His relationship with His followers. Christ is a friend who will never desert or turn away from us (Hebrews 13:5).
- **His Spirit indwells us.** From the moment of salvation, we have the presence of the Holy Spirit within our being. He is closer to us than any earthly kin can be (1 Corinthians 3:16).

PRIVILEGES OF INTIMACY WITH THE FATHER

1. We can talk to God like a child talks to his/her father.

“The Spirit... calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ ” Galatians 4:6 NIV.

The Spirit gives us the confidence to address God as our Father. God is infinite, holy, and majestic. He’s a consuming fire before whom angels cover their faces. He made all things and controls all things. Can you imagine calling him “Father”? Of course, you can! You do it every day when you pray, most of the time without even thinking about it.

2. We can think of God like a child thinks of his/her father.

“So, you are no longer a slave, but God’s child.” Galatians 4:7 NIV.

Slaves are always worried about doing what they are told or doing the right thing. They fear their master’s disapproval, because there’s always the threat that they might be punished or sacked. Children need never fear being sacked. They may sometimes be disciplined, but with any good parent, discipline is redemptive and not necessarily punitive. God our Father prunes us so that we may bear much Fruit. God is the best of parents. We never have to fear being sacked. You cannot stop being a child of God – you are not fostered. You are adopted for life, and life for you is eternal! The cry “Abba, Father” is not just for moments of intimacy. It is the cry a child shouts when in need. *“Call on Me in the day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you shall honor and glorify Me.” Psalm 50:15 AMP*

3. We can depend on God like a child depends on his/her father.

“And since you are His child, God has made you also an heir.” Galatians 4:7 NIV

When Paul talks about “sonship,” he’s not being sexist. Quite the opposite. Paul says “we” (male and female, Galatians 3:28 NIV) are “sons.” Everyone is included. And as heirs, our inheritance is in God Himself. In all the uncertainties of this life, we can depend on Him. He will lead us home, and our home is His glory.

RESPOND

Consider the following questions:

1. How have you embraced the Fatherhood of God in your life?

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as highest, how intimate is your Heavenly Father? And Why?

3. What is hindering your relationship with the Father?

4. What steps are you taking to redeem your relationship with the Father?

5. Do you need healing in your relationship with Abba Father?

A PRAYER TO PRAY

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You for being my Master Gardener. You created me as Your Masterpiece and for Your pleasure. Forgive me for playing Your role in my life. I surrender to You, my Abba Father. You know my end from the beginning. Please cause me to stay in Your will. Help me to keep my mind and eyes solely on You. I can't run this race alone, and You did not intend for me to.

So, I place my hand in Your Mighty Hand, strengthen me, I pray. Please guide me through every step of my journey. Protect me from the evil one and his works. Lord, please fill me with Your Spirit again and again and help me to understand Your distinct voice. Enlighten the eyes of my understanding that I may know the mysteries of Your will. I yearn for intimacy with You!

I repent for everything that I have allowed to separate me from You. I draw near, Abba Father, reveal Yourself in me and to me I pray! I give You my whole heart and choose to love You with all my heart, soul, and mind. Help me to love others as You have commanded in Jesus' Name. Amen.

THE ABIDING CHALLENGE

WEEK THREE - DAY TWO

FATHERHOOD OF GOD PILLARS OF LOVE & IDENTITY

KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4:16

READING: Romans 5:5 ESV; 1 John 4:16; John 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 23-24

INTRODUCTION

THE PILLAR OF LOVE

"We have come to know [by personal observation and experience], and have believed [with deep, consistent faith] the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides continually in him." 1 John 4:16 AMP

Fatherhood is defined by Love! And the first role of a father is to LOVE! Our Heavenly Father loves us unconditionally like a parent loves their child. God does not have love. **HE IS LOVE!** What does it mean that God is love? Love is an attribute of God. Love is a core aspect of God's character, His Person. God's love is in no sense in conflict with His holiness, righteousness, justice, or even His wrath. All of God's attributes are in perfect harmony. Everything God does is loving, just as everything He does is just and right. God is the perfect example of true love. Amazingly, God has given those who receive His Son Jesus as their personal savior the ability to love, as He does, through the power of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 23-24).

God is the Source and essence of Love, and we are the beneficiaries of His Love. The greatest expression of God's love is communicated to us in John 3:16 NIV

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Romans 5:8 NIV proclaims the same message:

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

We can see from these verses that it is God's greatest desire that we join Him in His eternal home, heaven. He has made it possible by paying the price for our sins. He loves us because He chose to. He willingly chooses to. Love forgives.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 NIV

My question to you is this: Have you experienced your Heavenly Father's love? How do we know and feel God's love? The love of God is radical and life-changing. It is my hope

today that you will press into Him and really experience how much God truly loves you. You are LOVED and greatly appreciated by your Heavenly Father! His love is not conditional but free for all who seek. Just acknowledge Him and open up to receive His intoxicating love.

“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.” Romans 5:5 ESV

THE PILLAR OF IDENTITY

The Father's heart is for His children from a place of identity and purpose, and for them to understand their inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:7). In 1 John 3:2, the Bible says that we are children of God and will be like Christ when He appears. Identity is defined as the distinguishing character or personality of an individual. It refers to our understanding of who we are. How does God define us?

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ ” Genesis 1:26 NKJV

What did God mean by “Let Us make man in Our own image”?

We reflect God’s glory as we live with the mind of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are not only God’s image-bearers but also the Holy Spirit’s Fruit-bearers. We are created to worship God, to love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. We also share in some of God’s attributes, such as love, kindness, holiness, goodness, and righteousness.

We are “human beings” and not “human doings.” This means that our identity is not defined by our accomplishments, status, possessions, or any other external factors, but rather by our position as beloved children of God. Through faith in Christ, we are adopted into God’s family (Ephesians 1:5 AMP) and given a new identity as a child of God (John 1:12-13 AMP). Our Heavenly Father created you. He formed you in your mother’s womb. You are His Masterpiece and a work of art. He knows you by name and calls you His very own!

When we look at how the Bible describes love, we will see a few ways in which God is the essence of love. “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a ESV). This is God’s description of love, and because God is love (1 John 4:8), this is what He is like.

• THE PILLAR OF IDENTITY

Are you struggling with your identity? Yes, or no? Explain

Do you believe you are a child of God and that God is your Father?

Do you find your identity in your career, achievements, financial status, education, accolades, parenting role, etc., or in Christ in God?

- If you do.... repent.
- Ask the Lord to help you.
- Step out in faith and embrace who you are in God.

SCRIPTURE-BASED CONFESSIONS FOR OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

- I am God's workmanship, created in Christ unto God's works. (Ephesians 2:10)
- I am a new creation in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- God has chosen me to be His very own. (1 Thessalonians 1:4)
- I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14)
- I have the greater one living in me than he who is in this world. (1 John 4:4)
- I am far from oppression, and fear does not have a hold on me. (Isaiah 54:14)
- I am born of God, and the enemy has no hold over me or my family. (1 John 5:18)
- I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5)
- My hands carry the power of the Holy Spirit to lay hands on the sick and they shall recover, to cast out generational curses and demonic spirits that influence me and my home. (Mark 16:17-18)
- I have power over the enemy, and nothing shall harm me. (Luke 10:17-19)
- I can do all things through Christ. My God will supply all my needs according to his riches in glory. (Philippians 4:13,19)
- I am firmly rooted, built up, established in my faith, and overflowing with gratitude. (Colossians 2:7)
- I am strengthened with all might according to God's power. (Colossians 1:11)
- I press on in my calling, towards God, to the goal of receiving my eternal prize. (Philippians 3:14)
- God has not given me a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)
- I am a doer of the Word and blessed in my actions. (James 1:22-25)
- I am an overcomer by the blood of the lamb and the word of my testimony. (Revelation 12:11)
- I am called of God to praise Him. (Psalm 66:8, 2 Timothy 1:9)

THE ABIDING CHALLENGE

WEEK THREE - DAY THREE

FATHERHOOD OF GOD PILLARS OF PROVISION AND PURPOSE

KEY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:25-26 & 31-33

READING: Matthew 6:25-26, 31-33; Matthew 7:11; Philippians 4:19

INTRODUCTION

THE PILLAR OF PROVISION

“Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is life not more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?... Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” Matthew 6:25-26, 31-33 NJKV

Providing for the family is one of a father’s most important roles. They provide not only food, shelter, and clothing but also spiritual, social, and emotional support. They are responsible for both the material and spiritual needs of the family. Fathers also play a role in their child’s emotional development. Children look to their fathers for security and to make them confident. Fathers who are affectionate and supportive can help their children develop a sense of well-being and self-confidence. The same is true of God does the same for you. He is a Hands-on loving Father, who is eager to bless his children: Matthew 7:11 says:

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” Matthew 7:11 NKJV

Our Heavenly Father, the Master Gardener, is a great provider. The Hebrew phrase for “God our provider” is Yahweh Yireh, or Jehovah Jireh, which means “the Lord will provide.” Philippians 4:19 makes clear that his provision is abundant:

“And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” AMP is closest I find to this – and it says (fill until full).

The Passion Translation says: “I am convinced that my God will fully satisfy every need you have, for I have seen the abundant riches of glory revealed to me through Jesus Christ”!

And in the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus admonished us to go to our Heavenly Father and request our daily provision:

“‘Give us this day our daily bread.’ ” Matthew 6:11 ESV

So, the Master Gardener is responsible for your Spiritual needs.

The Master Gardener is responsible for your Emotional needs.

The Master Gardener is responsible for your Material needs.

The Master Gardener is responsible for your Social needs.

The Master Gardener is responsible for your Health needs.

The Master Gardener is responsible for your Relational needs.

In conclusion, recall what John 15 says about the Vine and the Branches: of John 15:7-8 *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, [need] and it shall be done for you. By this, My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so, you will be My disciples.”* John 15:7-8 NKJV

THE PILLAR OF PURPOSE

“For we are His workmanship [His own masterpiece, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us].” Ephesians 2:10 Amplified

Let’s take a moment to reflect on these paraphrased verses of scripture regarding God’s purpose for our lives: Man’s purpose is to glorify God through faithful service and relationship with Him. (1 Samuel 12:24)

- Man’s purpose is to glorify God because God created man in His image. (Genesis 1:26-27)
- King Solomon concluded that the only worthwhile life is one of obedience and honor to God. (Ecclesiastes 12:13 –14)
- The Lord has made everything for its purpose. (Proverbs 16:4)
- Man’s purpose is to love God and love others as God loves them. (Matthew 22:36-40)

GOD is a God of purpose. And everything He does — no matter what, when or how — He has a specific objective. Everything that God created, He created with a purpose and for a purpose. In the Book of Acts, we read the account of David:

“Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.” Acts 13:36 NIV

We always wonder, why am I here? What is my purpose? Why was I born? Does my life have meaning and purpose? In Jeremiah, we read:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

And in Colossians, we are reminded:

“For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him.” Colossians 1:16 NIV

In discovering God’s purpose for your life, the question should not be: What is my purpose for my life? The question must be: What is God’s purpose for my life? Are you confident that you know and are fulfilling God’s purpose for your life? I trust you are. Not everyone is. In our chaotic and unsettling world, it is sometimes hard to understand how God’s purposes are being worked out in our lives. Amid the confusion, fears, anxieties, and distractions of this present world, all of us can benefit from a firmer confidence that God is indeed working out His plans in our lives. The New Testament assures us of this truth.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28 NIV

Take some time to ask the Father and Master Gardener what His purpose is for your life.

RESPOND

THE PILLAR OF PROVISION

1. Do you look to God first for provision or yourself, or others?

2. Do you believe in this scripture? “And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19?

IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE ABOVE SCRIPTURE, THEN PRESENT YOUR NEEDS LISTED BELOW TO YOUR MASTER GARDENER.

Spiritual Needs - Ephesians 1:3-6

Emotional Needs - Philippians 4:6 and Psalms 42:11

Material Needs - Matthew 6:31, 33, and Philippians 4:19

Social Needs - Hebrews 6:10

Health Needs - Jeremiah 17:14 and Psalm 147:3

Relational Needs - Psalm 147:3 a

A PRAYER TO PRAY, TO DISCOVER GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

Heavenly Father, You are the Master Gardener. In You, I find my purpose. You said in Jeremiah 29:11 that You have a good plan and purpose for my life. I surrender all my plans and dreams, and I am ready to do Your will. Give me a fresh vision for Your purpose for my life.

Father, help me to see how You have been preparing me through my life experiences to do the good works that You have planned for me. Father, help me to see myself as Your masterpiece created for good works. I trust Your Word that I have been born again and made into a new creation through Jesus.

Lord, I surrender my life to You and say like JESUS, not my will but Yours be done! I know without You, I can do nothing. I know my life is not my own. It is Yours to work through. Reveal to me what You have planned for me and give me the courage to fulfill it.

Thank You, Lord.

In JESUS' Name!

Amen

Write down what your Heavenly Father said to you!

THE ABIDING CHALLENGE

WEEK THREE - DAY FOUR

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD PILLAR OF PROTECTION

KEY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 32:7

READING: Ephesians 6:4; Psalm 121:5-8; Deuteronomy 6:4-25

INTRODUCTION

“You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.” Psalm 32:7 NIV

Fathers have a responsibility to protect their families, both spiritually and physically.

Physical Protection – Fathers are responsible for providing protection for their families from physical threat and harm.

Emotional, Social, and Spiritual Protection – Fathers are also expected to provide emotional, social, and spiritual protection and support.

Building Self-Confidence – Fathers may help their children build self-confidence by being physically strong and present in the home.

Teaching Values – Fathers help their children feel confident by teaching them their values and modeling empathy, flexibility, resiliency, and teaching them the ways of God. The Bible says: *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”* Ephesians 6:4 NIV. And in Deuteronomy 6:4-25, Fathers are instructed to teach their children to love God with their whole being and are told they should lead by example.

The Master Gardener’s role and responsibility as a father is to protect. He is our protector and guide Who watches over us. Some Bible verses that emphasize God’s protection include.

Psalm 121:5-8 — The Lord watches over us, protects us from harm, and will never leave us.

Psalm 18:30 — God shields those who take refuge in Him.

Psalm 91:1-3 — Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

As a loving Father, our God in heaven desires to protect His children. King David took comfort from knowing that God is like a good shepherd who has a rod and staff always ready at His side to fight off hungry wolves and bears (Psalm 23:4).

God promises divine protection from the following scriptures:

“Because he holds fast to Me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows My name.” Psalm 91:14 ESV

“The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.” 2 Thessalonians 3:3 NIV

In the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:13 NIV), Jesus taught us to ask the Father “to lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.”

As a Master Gardener protects His vineyard, so your Heavenly Father loves to protect you. so, where does that leave us in our desire for God’s protection?

1. We should pray for our Father’s protection and expect it. (Psalm 91:1–16 NIV). Verses 15 and 16 say that when you call Him in prayer, He will answer you; He will be with you in trouble; He will rescue you, and you will honor Him. With long life, He will satisfy you and show you His salvation.
2. In those exceptional times when God chooses for us the alternative good that will come through suffering, we should trust Him and still pray and believe for deliverance. (2 Corinthians 1:9-10 NIV)
3. If we believe and trust Him, our Heavenly Father always gives us strength, courage, and comfort to overcome pain and hardship. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV). *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction.”*
4. If we believe and trust Him, He will always protect you from evil or harm coming to you. (Romans 8:35-39 ESV). *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Meditate on Psalm 91:1-16 ESV and let the Lord speak to your heart.

Verses 1-2: *“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’ ”*

Verses 3-4: *“For He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and buckler.”*

Verses 5-6: *“You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.”*

Verses 7-8: *“A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.”*

Verses 9-10: *“Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place — the Most High, Who is my refuge — no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.”*

Verses 11-12: *“For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”*

Verses 13-14: *“You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot. ‘Because he holds fast to Me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows My name.’”*

Verses 15-16: *“When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life, I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*

A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

Heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus, acknowledging Your power and sovereignty. I pray for Your divine protection over me and my loved ones. Surround us with Your angels and create a hedge of safety around us. Guard us from harm, both seen and unseen, and keep us secure in Your loving care. I trust in Your promise that no weapon formed against us shall prosper. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

THE ABIDING CHALLENGE

WEEK THREE - DAY FIVE

OUR EARTHLY FATHERS

THE DYNAMICS OF OUR UPBRINGING

KEY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 127:3

READING: Psalm 127:3; Ezekiel 18:4

INTRODUCTION

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.”
Psalm 127:3 ESV

“Behold (pay close attention), all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.” Ezekiel 18:4 AMP

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” Matthew 10:37 AMP

The role of earthly fathers is a role of stewardship and not ownership. As stewards, they are accountable to our Heavenly Father, who is the Owner of all. Fathers are called by God into an office of responsibility and given the authority to advocate for God’s will, plan, and purposes for the child or children God has placed in their care. The ultimate role of earthly fathers is to represent the Heavenly Father to their children. *“For I have chosen him, so that he will command his children and his household after Me to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has promised.”* Genesis 18:18-19 BSB

The Lord cautioned fathers in Ephesians 6:4 not to provoke their children to wrath; instead, to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The role of fathers has the ability to shape or condition the lives of their children and those within their households in a positive or negative way. The five main areas of conditioning are:

1. Their Children’s Relationship with God
2. Their Children’s Worldview
3. Their Children’s Outlook on Life
4. Their Children’s Behavior
5. Their Relationships [Marriage, Parenting, Friendships and Work]

Types of Earthly Fathers

Romans 3:23 NIV says, *“For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.”* Our fathers are not perfect. Many of us lived and grew up in dysfunctional homes with broken or fractured relationships with our fathers. As a result, many sustained wounds, deficits, identity crisis, and voids in our souls.

1. The “P.O.W.” Dad

The Prisoner of War Dad. This dad is present in his children’s lives, but he is not positively engaged in them. He is not just disengaged, he is enraged. To his children, he always seems angry, and because of that anger, he hurts his children and others through his words, tone, attitude, and actions. The family is wary whenever they are around him, unsure if or when they’ll encounter the angry guy inside him.

ABBA FATHER IS PERFECT.

“You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48 ESV

2. M.I.A. Dad

Missing In Action Dad. This dad chooses not to be present in his children’s lives. He may have helped bring them into the world, but he wants nothing to do with them. He is not engaged, and his children may not even know who or where he is. They probably wouldn’t recognize him if they saw him on the street. He chooses to stay away, because the pain and shame of returning are too great for him to face.

ABBA FATHER IS EVER-PRESENT.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you”. Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV

3. A.W.O.L. Dad

Absent Without Leave, Dad. Yes, he is *physically* present in the home, but he is not *emotionally* present. The children see him but can’t seem to talk to him. He comes home and secludes himself from the family. He may not necessarily be a bad dad. He is just emotionally detached from others in his home. So, he struggles in silence as his loved ones suffer and struggle in his absence.

ABBA FATHER IS GOOD, MERCIFUL, AND SHOWS LOVING KINDNESS.

“For the Lord is good; His mercy and loving-kindness are everlasting; His faithfulness and truth endure to all generations.” Psalm 100:5 AMPC

4. Combat Dad

The Abusive Dad. The abuse may be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or mental. He abuses the children, or he abuses his wife in front of them. Children who witness or are victims of abuse are at higher risk for health problems as adults. When a child grows up in a very hostile environment, it opens the door to fear, anxiety, low self-esteem, and negative self-image. In some instances, victims become abusers themselves, because abuse is all they know!

ABBA FATHER CARES

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Psalm 34:18 NLT

5. Reserved Duty Dad

Reserved Duty Dad treats fatherhood like a part-time job. He is engaged with his children but only occasionally — maybe only on the weekends, or when it's most convenient for him. He has good intentions, but his children require more time than he's willing or able to give. His children need him to be a full-time dad, but he is content with giving them a part-time effort.

ABBA FATHER LOVE IS STEADFAST

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever." Psalm 136:1
ESV checked/verified

6. Active Duty Dad (AKA an All-Pro Dad)

Active Duty Dad is not a perfect dad, but he is a consistently and emotionally present dad. He is actively engaged, attentive, available, and accessible to his children. He is intentional about learning and winning the hearts of his children, even if he must struggle to do it. He loves, protects, serves, and provides for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. He is not afraid to affirm his love for his children when they are in his presence. His children usually feel emotionally and physically safe and secure

ABBA FATHER IS THE ESSENCE OF FATHERHOOD AND PERFECT

"Do not call anyone on earth your father, because you have one Father Who is in heaven."
Matthew 23:9

"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke 11:13 CSB

"For our earthly fathers disciplined us for only a short time as seemed best to them; but He [God] disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness." Hebrews 12:10
AMP

RESPOND

Which one of the six types of fathers describes your father? What was your relationship like?

- **In what negative ways did your upbringing shape you, and how have you responded?**

- **Are you ready to forgive your earthly father for all he did or didn't do?**

“‘Honor your father and mother’ — which is the first commandment with a promise.”
Ephesians 6:2 NIV

“Honor (respect, obey, care for) your father and your mother, so that your days may be prolonged in the land the LORD your God gives you.” Exodus 20:1

- **Did you ever dishonor, judge, criticize, or condemn your earthly father for his behavior? If yes, are you ready to repent and ask the Lord to forgive you?**

- **How has the negative effect of your upbringing influenced your relationship with your Heavenly Father?**

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24 NIV

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of negative impact.

PRAYER

Healing from father-inflicted wounds and redeeming your relationship with your Heavenly Father – Restoring the Fatherhood of God

1. **Go before the throne of Grace.** Hebrews 4:16 NKJV says: *“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*
2. **Thank God for the father He gave you.** 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV says: “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
3. **Present your case before the Lord.** Isaiah 41:21 NKJV says: “ ‘Present your case,’ ” says the Lord. ‘Bring forth your strong reasons,’ says the King of Jacob.”
4. **Repent for dishonoring your earthly father.** Psalm 66:18 AMPC says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”
5. **Forgive your earthly father for everything he did or did not do.** Mark 11:25 CJB says, “And when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive your offenses.”
6. **Invite Abba Father to step into the office of your earthly father and do the following:**
 - Redeem all losses you have suffered.
 - Overturn, cancel, revoke, and nullify all word curses and agreements with the devil.
 - Shut all demonic doors and open the Heavens over you.
 - Release your soul from any demonic influence.
 - Blot out every handwriting of ordinance against you.
 - Cancel generational curses, cycles, and patterns.
 - Heal and restore your soul and all you have lost.
 - Ask Him to restore your relationship with Him – Lord, draw me closer!
Psalm 73:28 says; But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.
7. **Ask Him to bless you. Pray the Aaronic blessing over your life.**
Numbers 6:22-26 - **The Priestly Blessing:**
“Lord bless me and keep me; - Lord make Your face shine upon me and be gracious to me; Lord, lift up Your countenance upon me, and give me Your Peace.” Amen
8. **Thank God for your father - Philippians 4:6 says** With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.