“God, Our Father” 6/18/2013

Please take your Bible with me and open to Matthew 6. Who do you know might be the best father you can think of? *“Not only is my dad “super,” but he’s also a super. He works long hours every day helping people who work in his building in Brooklyn. On his time off, he teaches me how to fix things, most recently my bike. I look up to him for his hard work and the love he shows me and my family.*

*He’s taught me to work hard, stay in school and get an education. I hope to pass these skills on to my children one day.”* **—** Gabriel Contreras, 14, Brooklyn [Found on [www.nypost.com](http://www.nypost.com) by Barbara Hoffman]

*“What is a hero? Is it someone who saves you? Is it someone you look up to more than anyone, who inspires you? My hero was my dad. He was kind, humble, honest and loving, and he fought leukemia every single day. . . Some people think you need a hero physically present on earth for them to be able to “save” you.*

*For me, my hero is here every day and will never leave me. Happy Father’s Day, Daddy. I know you’re up there with breakfast in bed and lots of cannoli.* **—** Alyssa Kriete, 17, Baldwin, LI [Found on [www.nypost.com](http://www.nypost.com) by Barbara Hoffman].

*“My daddy inspires me to do my best at everything. Whenever I leave for school, we do our handshake and he tells me, “Do great things.” He also inspires me because he was able to achieve his goal of being an architect. He makes me laugh by doing funny dances, making funny faces and making funny noises.*

*I especially laugh when he throws a grape in the air and catches it in his mouth. My dad is one of a kind!”* **—** Breanna Henry, 10, Baldwin, LI [Found on [www.nypost.com](http://www.nypost.com) by Barbara Hoffman].

This comes from the book “The Fear of Fatherhood” by Scott Kelby. *“I heard a good friend of mine, Dave, once reveal what kids really want most from their dads. They don't care what kind of job you have, or how many awards or accolades you've garnered in your industry, or what kind of degree you have. What they want most is your time. They want to be with you. They want your attention, your ear, your opinion, your focus –*

*they just want to be around their dad. They need "dad time" and they want you around as much as possible. I remember Dave mentioning that as long as he was at home, even if he was asleep on the couch, his kids were happy because “dad was there.” They just want you with them, around them, and basically being “there.”*

*Now, what happens if you (dad) aren't around enough? Problems start. They start doing things to get your attention, and not all of them are as well thought out as you'd hope. A kid whose dad spends a lot of time with him will generally stay out of trouble -- a kid who constantly needs to do things to get dad's attention generally won't.*

*All right, now that you know what they want, what's in it for you (besides the fact that it will save you untold bail money)? Every minute you spend with them rubs off on them. Every story, every moral, every hug, every kiss, every time you discipline them, every time you wipe away their tears, every time you buy them popcorn at the movies,*

*every time they see you show compassion to someone less fortunate -- it all rubs off. Your kindness, your wisdom, your examples, your lame jokes. They all rub off.*

*Remember, you're molding a little life here, a very impressionable little mind, and you are your kid's role model.*

*Their hero. Show him how it's supposed to be done; as your child grows older, you'll be amazed at how you two wind up having so much in common. Why is that? Because he's just like his dad.”*

Can you think of a really good father from your knowledge of the Scripture? How about Adam? Would anyone anywhere count him as the best father? How about Abraham? How about Isaac? How about Jacob? How about David? How about Eli? How about Samuel?

One of life’s highest honors is being a dad; being a father to your children.

This past Thursday I shared in one of the most difficult things any dad has ever had to deal with. My friend Clyde and his sweet wife Betsy asked me to bring the words of comfort at the funeral of their 23 year old son Jim.

But back in May of 2006, Clyde and Betsy also had to lay to rest their twelve year old daughter Emily when she died of cancer. Now, can you imagine with me that today, Father’s Day, Clyde has no children? If you think of him today, would you offer up a prayer for God to comfort him and supply him with grace?

I want to say a word today to dads. If anything, I hope to add to your reservoir of joy on this subject. Fatherhood is among the most difficult jobs in the world. And, all of us here who have children know the truth of that statement. None of us thinks we were or are the best dad ever.

So, please open your Bible with me to the dad that you could count as the best Dad ever. Matthew chapter six.

Here in Matthew six, I’d like to read from “The LORD’s Prayer.” Matthew six and verse nine. Matthew 6:9 *“After this manner therefore pray ye:* ***Our Father*** *which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”*

Who might this Best Dad ever be? It’s “God Our Father.” Shall we pray?

I have three of the many lessons here to share with you today.

The first is this. The LORD is a Father. The only time Jesus ever used these two words is here when He taught His disciples to pray. Some say that, since this prayer couldn’t be prayed by Jesus, that He’s not really connecting Himself with us. But, why not? Isn’t *His* Father my father and your father?

There are lots of things you know about God. He’s the Creator. He’s the Savior. He’s the Sovereign LORD of the universe. He’s the Forgiver of sins. He’s the Shepherd. He’s the greatest of all Comforters. But this might just be the greatest. The LORD is a Father.

So, yes, there are many ways we can look at the LORD. But the Creator of fatherhood is also a Father.

I notice from the reading of the rest of the NT that almost every single N.T. epistle begins with a reference to God as “Our Father”? Fifty-five times Paul refers to the LORD as Father in the NT.

And, this tremendous prayer that some call “The Our Father” is the only prayer found in the Sermon on the Mount. Now, notwithstanding the fact that Jesus could *not* pray this particular prayer simply because He had no sins to ask forgiveness for; yet, Jesus was always turning the hearts of the people to His *Father*.

Look back at Matthew 6:1 *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of* ***your Father*** *which is in heaven. (4) That thine alms may be in secret: and* ***thy Father*** *which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

*(6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to* ***thy Father*** *which is in secret; and* ***thy Father*** *which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (8) Be not ye therefore like unto them: for* ***your Father*** *knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

*(15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will* ***your Father*** *forgive your trespasses. (18) That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto* ***thy Father*** *which is in secret: and* ***thy Father****, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”*

Here is what God is. He has a Father Nature. He’s Fatherly. He’s a Father. Fathers, for Father’s Day this year, here’s your Namesake and your Example. The LORD is a Father. And He’s always been a Father because He always had a son. He’s always been Fatherly. So, even on the day He spoke the universe into existence, He did it as a Father. It was the Father Who said, “Let there be light.” Paul even go on to say that He’s the “Father of Lights.”

And as a Father to His Only Begotten son, He has always the Father/Son connection with Him. His love, His fellow-ship, His provision, His purposes, His gladness in having a Son was always His to enjoy. There has never been a time when God was not a Father. And isn’t there a verse somewhere that says He’s the Father of Eternity?

Put yourself in the shoes of those who listened to this first sermon Jesus preached, the Sermon on the Mount. It must have been an eye-opener to them. Up till now they knew Abraham as “our father” or “our father Jacob,” or “our father Isaac” or “our father David.” But Jesus arrives and now they hear over and over that God is “your Father.” And Jesus, the Father’s only begotten Son, has arrived.

Matthew 5:16 *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify* ***your Father*** *which is in heaven.”*

Now they could see that their Creator, in His essential nature, is their father.

Matthew 5:45 *“That ye may be the children of* ***your Father*** *which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”*

Matthew 6:1 *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of* ***your Father*** *which is in heaven.”*

And how did Jesus pray in His most difficult hours?

John 17:1 *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,* ***Father****, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: …”*

John 17:5 *“And now,* ***O Father****, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”*

 Mark 14:36 *“And he said,* ***Abba, Father****, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”*

Actually, Jesus used this most tender term to speak to His Father; Abba, which means “Daddy.”

So, Dads, your highest and best example of a father is the LORD.

First, The LORD is a Father.

Second, God, the Father, is the kind of God you and I need. When you see God as your father, the Father *you* need, you have discovered one of the greatest treasures in the entire world.

You can almost see what kind of father the LORD is when you hear these words as Jesus preached them that day. He’s personally interested in your life. He’s got His eye on just you. He’s your Protector and Provider. Yes, it’s true that He has His eye on everyone else on the planet – all of us at the very same moment. Yet, He sees and He knows you personally. He knows the most intimate details of your prayer life. And He sees those things from a Father’s viewpoint. Besides that, He knows exactly what you all your needs are. You are a special treasure to Him.

I don’t think that I could have even been a true father to my children if I had looked only to my own father in order to see what one was. My dad died when I was just ten. But up till then, all I ever knew was a man who was consumed with self. Today in the LORD I see the Perfect Father. And the more I live in the light of a Creator Who is quote “my Heavenly Father,” the more I truly live. He’s the One Who can meet my deepest needs.

And, if you really want to know who your earthly example of a father is, look at the fatherliness of your own children.

I see it in my son Dan. If you could just see how my son treats Tessa and Landon, you’d say, “That’s a father!” He’s all father to those children. They love to be around him; in his arms, thrown in the air by him, eating his sandwich. I watch my son and I see a father in action and I, like you, am learning to trust my heavenly Father with the things in my own life.

And this is a message for everyone. You’ve heard me say it again and again. See the LORD as He is. So, for today, say to yourself today, “From now on, God will be my father.”

You will be renewed and refreshed by His Fatherliness to you. There may be no greater joy than to know that it’s not how perfect a son or daughter you are. It’s not how perfect a mother or father you are. Bit, it’s enough to have Him as a personal, one-on-one, tenderly loving *you* Father, holy and in Heaven, yet right now filling up your heart with His love, just as you’d expect a father to do.

Along this same line, let me remind you that your relationship to you Father in heaven is not based upon how holy or how good you are, but on how fatherly He is towards you. It’s a Father-first relationship. And every time I see God as a Father, I’m blessed beyond anything I can find here on this earth.

Here’s a Father’s Day prayer for each of you. “LORD, I want to know you as my Heavenly Father and all that means.”

Your calling, Christian, is to see your LORD as the kind of Father you need in your heart of hearts. See Him as He is – a Father.

First, The LORD is a Father.

Second, God, the Father, is the kind of God you and I need.

Now third. Everything in your life will be seen through your “Father Glasses.” I hope you heard the sermon a while back by a man who used a large pair of glasses as his object lesson. The glasses the Pastor put on that day were not normal. Actually they distorted everything he saw. And his point is my point. How you see life is most definitely affected by how you see God. And if He is not the Father, then what is He?

As a child and as a teen-ager, I got into a lot of more trouble; more than any of you can imagine. I got in trouble with the neighbors. I got in trouble with the law. I got in trouble with my brothers and sisters. And looking back I think I can see now why trouble was my middle name. Here’s why. The deepest need in my life was not being met. That deep need was to know a father and be related to a father that was a father indeed.

So, I grew up in a fatherless world. Then I met the LORD and *His* Father. And, yes, it took a lot of struggles to come to the place where I could trust in a heavenly Father. But, today, I see Him as my Heavenly Father. Why? Because my perception of life was and is today, seen through my “Father glasses.”

And now I realize everybody wears their own pair of “Father glasses.” Some people see Him as a hard taskmaster; Someone Who could never be pleased. Some see Him as unreasonable and even unconcerned. Some say He is unreliable, that He doesn’t care, that He allows suffering and is therefore inconsistent or that He’s not fair. Some see Him as an aloof grandfather with no interest in challenging and correcting their character issues. Some see God as a disinter-ested party they sometimes bump into. And some see Him as He is; a True Father, a gentle Father Who, when correction is necessary, corrects – in love; when right, rightly praised. Well-pleased. Reasonable. Concerned. Reliable.

So, when you see what kind of “Father glasses” someone wears, you can see why they are where they are in life, can’t you? You’ll give them a whole lot more space when you see that their “Father glasses” are dirty or cracked or misaligned or opaque. Remember everyone wears them. Your life simply shows others what you see in God and how you view Him.

So, Dads, look at the truest example of a father you can find – God, the Father; and imitate Him. See Him as He truly is, the *Father* of Jesus. And when you fall short as a dad, which we all have; look up to the Ideal Father for Someone Who can help you be a better father or a better grandfather.

I’m afraid far too many fathers sell themselves short as far as fatherhood is concerned. We fail and we’ve failed miserably at times. Yet, who did you turn to when you blew it and got angry and said or did something you regretted later? Did you turn to your heavenly Father?

One, of the biggest things that helped me when it came to fathering was the LORD’s forgiveness. Think about how important this is. Every time I wasn’t the example I should have been. Every time I lost my temper. Every time I failed as a father, I had someone to go to who truly knew all the issues involved in fatherhood. And He was ready and willing to forgive me and to teach me the right way.

What we want and need more than anything is a Father who understands us and who is ready to forgive us and help us get back on track with our lives and especially with our children. That One is the Father of the LORD Jesus Christ.

And what did the Father do for you and me? He gave His only begotten Son as our Substitute for sin. Jesus was crucified so that we could enter a genuine Father/Child relationship with God. He, the Father, made a way, by His grace for each person to become His child. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”*

And the day you repent of your sin and receive Jesus Christ as your LORD and Savior, that day, your Creator becomes your Father. Today, as you know is the Day of Salvation. Today you need to Repent and to Believe.

* To Repent = I change my mind about God, Christ, my sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.
* To Believe = I simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for my sins.

Salvation Prayer*. “LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and deserve judgment for my sins. I believe Jesus died in my place on the Cross. Please save me today. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”*

So, Dads, when you aren’t what you know you ought to be, go to the One Who is all He ought to be because He’s, not only able to forgive you, but He also able to get you back on track. He’s available 24/7 and He’s got just the right word to say to you at just the right time.

So, first, the LORD is a Father.

Second, He’s exactly the kind of Father you need.

And third, everything in your life is seen through your “Father Glasses.”

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 93 “God, Our Father”