

ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD FATHER | TOPICAL | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 6/18/2023

We are to Recognize and Honor: I. Our Heavenly Father II. Our Earthly Fathers

INTRO: Happy Father's Day! Did you know that Father's Day was first held on **June 19, 1910**? It wasn't even made an official national holiday until 1972, by President Richard Nixon. – The day was originally designated as **a time to celebrate fathers, for all that they do.**

Unfortunately, **we live in a culture that allows fathers to be mocked and ridiculed in mainstream media and advertising!** An article posted on *the Daily Caller* in April 2018, entitled 'American Popular Culture Portrays Fathers as Idiots,' by Terry Brennan states:

*"While dads in 'Leave It to Beaver' and 'The Donna Reed Show' had flaws, they were close to what was then thought of as '**perfect,**' part of an idealized white American family. Later, shows such as 'The Cosby Show,' 'Family Ties,' 'Growing Pains' and 'Full House' showcased caring dads of a new generation. But polar opposites replaced these characters, with **Al Bundy** and **Homer Simpson** beginning a new genre of dads. Fathers are similarly portrayed in advertising:*

"Ad after ad makes doltish Dad the butt of all jokes. He's outwitted by his children. He's the target of condescending eye rolls from his wife. He's a dumb, incompetent, sometimes even selfish oaf—but his family loves him anyway." If this is true...

– **What does this promote in our society?** – More so, **how should believers respond to this mindset toward fathers?** In (Ex 20:12; Eph 6:2), God's Word instructs us to **HONOR FATHERS** (and mothers) for their divine responsibility. **Father's Day** then, is **a great opportunity to appreciate the love and effort of our fathers.** Today, we will examine the *ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD FATHER.

First, we are to Recognize and Honor:

I. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER – Of all the ways the Lord God Almighty could have chosen to relate to humanity, He chose the term **FATHER** (*Pater*). In fact, God is identified as our Father 265 times in scripture. Most of those are found in the New Testament because **through Christ, we have a new identity as an adopted child of God** (Rom 8:15). God claims us as His own! (2 Cor 6:18) says, *"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

A. His Paternal Care – I understand that the word **"father"** activates different memories for us all. For some, **"father"** is associated with heartfelt memories and laughter. For others, absenteeism, rejection, or disappointment. **This is why it's so important to understand that God is not only our Father, but He is a Good Father!**

1. **Biblical Fact:** All grammatical evidence contained in Scripture agrees that **God revealed Himself to mankind in a MASCULINE form**, which *communicates strength, protection, and provision*. However, His attributes reveal characteristics of both father & mother (Isa 66:13).

2. Is Expressed in Scripture as a **Caring and Compassionate Parent:** (Isa 49:15-16) says, *"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely, they may forget, **Yet I will not forget you.** See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me."*

3. Is Expressed in His Heart for the Fatherless (Psalm 68:5) – *A father of the fatherless, a Defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation.*

- Even **King David** understood God to have this attribute as a caring Father, *“When my father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.”* (Psalm 27:10)
- We can follow this theme of God and fatherhood through countless scriptures (Matt 5:45; 6:9,32; Rom 1:7; 15:6; 1 Cor 8:6).

B. His Presence Among Us – Scripture tells us that **God is not an absentee God!** – God told Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon **not to fear**, for *“...the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”* (Deuteronomy 31:6,8; Joshua 1:5; 1 Kings 8:57; 1 Chronicles 28:20). And the same applies to us... *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,”* for us (Psalm 46:1).

C. Has a Purpose for Us – The Bible makes it abundantly clear that our Heavenly Father created man **FOR HIS GLORY!** (Isaiah 43:7). **The ultimate purpose of man therefore is simply to GLORIFY GOD!** – (1 Corinthians 10:31) declares, *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*

- In order to bring Glory to God, **We must first have a REAL RELATIONSHIP with Him!** When asked the question, Jesus made clear what the greatest commandment was in (Matthew 22:37-40), *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...”* (

CLOSING THOUGHT: These are just a few of the Attributes of Our Heavenly Father. And as our Father, He wants us to **know, believe** and **receive** the extraordinary and unconditional love that He has for us! He offers it freely, but the question is, will you accept it? **Will you HONOR Him?** (1 John 3:1) says, *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*

The Bible says that we are to Recognize and Honor:

II. OUR EARTHLY FATHERS – Because God gave them to us. Earthy Fathers (dads) are to be **Valued** and **Respected.** – *Billy Graham* said, *“A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society.”* – In (Proverbs 6:20-23) Solomon said that it is wise to listen to father’s (and mothers) commands. We are to *“hold their instructions in our hearts and tie them around our necks,”* In return, we receive guidance (22a), protection (22b), teaching (23a) and discipline (23b) – **Definitely valuable instructions for every child.**

Earthly Fathers should "THEN" manifest...

A. Good Attributes – The Bible doesn't have any single exhaustive list of ideal fatherly traits. However, there is much in scripture we can learn by using the acronym **F-A-T-H-E-R-S**.

Good Fathers...

1. **FEAR the Lord (Psalm 128:1-4)**, *Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. – **Your children will imitate your faith!***

Good Fathers are...

2. **ACCOUNTABLE to God for Family** – They realize that children are a blessing from the Lord, which is their own responsibility. (Psalm 127:3-5a), *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them...* – Fathers are responsible to provide for their needs. (1 Timothy 5:8) says, *"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and **especially for those of his household**, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*

Good Fathers...

3. **TEACH their Children (Prov 22:6)** – *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.* – Parents are to teach their children by **being involved in their lives** from the very day that they are born. It is their responsibility to provide family, social, academic, and spiritual guidance, not the schools or the churches. **George Herbert** said, *"One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters."*

Good Fathers...

4. **Open their HEARTS to their Children (Deut 6:6-9)** – Dads should spend time with their Kids. **Make every moment count!** – The Scriptures are clear that dads must engage their children **in deep, heart-to-heart conversations that impart wisdom**. *"And these words which I command you today **shall be in your heart**. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Good Fathers...

5. **ENCOURAGE their Children** – Good fathers do not shy away from encouraging or praising their children. One word of encouragement or positive advice blesses your child, which could positively affect their future. – **Too many fathers destroy their child's future by cursing them instead of blessing them**. Scripture warn fathers about this, *"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."* (Eph 6:4)

Good Fathers are...

6. **ROLE-MODELS for Children** – Your children see everything you do! And quite often, they imitate the good and the bad things they see in their father! – (Psalm 1:1 ESV) says, *Blessed is the man, who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; – Men, we need to walk circumspectly... our kids are looking to us to be Good Fathers... Godly examples of what is right and wrong! – Dennis Rainey said, "What a boy can use, and too often doesn't have, are the heart of his father and the fellowship of men. A boy needs at least one man who pays attention to him, spends time with him, and admires him. A boy needs a role model, a man whom he can regard as a mentor." – I have heard it is said that "a father is a daughter's first love and a son's first hero!" Men, I encourage you to be a good role model!*

Good Fathers Demonstrate...

7. **SACRIFICIAL LOVE for Children** – The greatest quality an earthly father must learn, stems from our Heavenly Father's heart. (1 John 4:9) says, "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

- Sacrificial love is patient with our children's shortcomings (1 Cor 13:4-8)
- Sacrificial love is willing to put our children first
- Sacrificial love produces life in our children
- Sacrificial love always pleases God

◆ These are the "Good Attributes" of Earthly F-A-T-H-E-R-S.

B. A Bonus Attribute – If I can add one but one more letter to the acronym, it would be the letter **"P."** When placed in front of the word FATHERS, its pronunciation would not be changed, but "it's practice" changes everything. **PFATHERS** – Praying Fathers are Good fathers. **Fathers should be men of PRAYER, earnestly depending upon the Heavenly father for direction and guidance for his children.**

"A Father's Prayer"

*Dear God, my little boy of three...
Has said his nightly prayer to Thee;
Before his eyes were closed in sleep,
He asked that Thou his soul would keep.
And I, still kneeling at his bed,
My hand upon his ruffled head
Do ask, with deep humility,
That Thou, dear Lord, remember me!*

*Make me, kind Lord, a worthy Dad,
That I may lead this little lad...
In pathways ever fair & bright,
That I may keep his steps aright.
O God, may his trust never be...
Destroyed or even marred by me.
So, for the simple things he prayed
With childish voice so unafraid,
I, trembling, ask the same from Thee.
Dear Lord, kind Lord, remember me.*