

The Names of God – Part 2

Everlasting Father

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For our Advent series this year we are looking at some of the names given to God in the scriptures. These are descriptive names and titles to help us comprehend and relate to the God we serve.

In the Old Testament whenever God revealed a new aspect of himself they would ascribe another name to him to help them remember and to expand their worship of him.

This is how they came to know God because they didn't have the scriptures like we do. So, they would explain God to their children by the various names that described different characteristics of God. For instance, they would tell their children that ...

- God is Jehovah Nissi – He goes before us like a banner and fights for us
- God is Jehovah Roi – He is a shepherd who leads and cares for us
- God is El Shaddai – He is almighty and more than enough for us

In Isaiah 9 the prophet Isaiah gives a list of descriptive names to the coming Messiah to help us understand what he is going to be like when he comes.

Read Isaiah 9:1-7

Last week we looked at Jesus as the Prince of Peace. This morning I want to look at the description of Jesus as the Everlasting Father.

This seems strange that Jesus the Son of God would be called father. But this is not a reference to the supreme father of the trinity. Jesus is not Father God.

This is referring to the quality of the messiah in how he will relate to those who follow him. He will care for them just as his father does with the same enduring compassion and fatherly care.

We see this same fatherly characteristic in Jesus in **Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**

Jesus came to reveal the father's heart to us. He said, *"If you have seen me you have seen the father."*

In the Hebrew mind the term father often refers to one who is an originator. We use the term "founding fathers". George Washington is the father of our nation.

Jesus is the originator. The founding father of everything. He is eternal. He always was. He created all things and all things exist by him. He is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega.

Colossians 1:15-17 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

That's why Jesus is called the Everlasting Father. Everlasting refers to the never-ending nature of his care – he is a forever father – unlike some earthly fathers he will not abandon us. Never renege on his responsibilities. He never gives up on us.

This is such an encouragement to us because as earthly fathers we fall short. As humans we fall short in our care for each other. We mean well but we don't always follow through.

But we have a Heavenly Father and his son Jesus who care for us with the heart of a genuine father.

Here is the most powerful insight of the morning: God, in all His power and glory, is best understood as a loving, intimate Father. Of all the options, He has chosen to reveal himself to us as a father.

He is the most like a good good father. Let's look at some of the father qualities of God and Jesus.

1. As a good father he knows me thoroughly and loves me completely

I have a heavenly father who knows my name. I am not just a number.

God knows me so intimately that he knows how many hairs are on my head and how many I lost last night. (The average person has 90 to 150,000 hairs.)

In other words, God is so interested in me that he pays attention to all the boring details of my life. But to him they are not boring because we are the center focus of his love and attention.

With all that he has going on in the universe and in North Korea and the Middle East he is still that focused on you and I. Isn't that amazing?

Not only does he know everything about you including all your hidden thoughts and attitudes - he still loves you completely. You are his prized possession. This truth is too wonderful to fully grasp.

The Psalmist expressed it this way: **When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man, that you care for him? For you made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. (Psalm 8:3-5, NIV)**

The psalmist is saying, "Have you ever just stopped to look around at God's creation? A beautiful evening sunset, a clear, star-filled night, and the distant majestic mountains are sights that take your breath away.

And yet, as breathtaking as God's creation may be, there is something He prizes even more highly than His creation—you! You are God's most prized possession.

In fact, in His mind you are His prized possession above the stars, above the moon, above the heavens, and above all His creative handiwork.

He is a good good father who is madly in love with you.

2. As a good father he teaches me and brings needed correction to my life.

God loves me too much to let me get away with destructive things in my life. Left to myself I would quickly mess up my life. My attitudes, actions and motives would become sinful. He brings course corrections to my life.

As the true Father, God's discipline and correction are always done out of love.

Hebrews 12:5,7(NLT) "My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you." As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?

We have seen the results of pop psychology in the 60 and 70 that said you shouldn't discipline your children because it will inhibit their development. Even today there is a similar thought in raising children without boundaries and even letting children choose their own gender. The result is lives that are destroyed as they get older. That is not love. It is child abuse.

If God as the perfect father sets rules and disciplines us, then we as parents should do the same. Grandparents however can spoil the grandkids. No – they need to support the rules of the parents and not undermine them.

The writer of Hebrews says that discipline is not fun. Some parents refuse to discipline because it upsets the child, or it makes them feel bad as a parent. But that is the nature of discipline. If you love your child, you will discipline them.

Hebrews 12:11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

I remember when I got caught talking in class in 7th grade. In those days teachers were still allowed to use paddles. Big paddles. "Big Bertha" with wind holes in it to create greater speed. I was called up in front of the room and given a good hard swat on my behind. It was painful, I didn't like it, but I learned the lesson.

3. As a good father he protects me and provides for my needs.

Growing up on a farm we had some lean times in the 60's. I remember my dad getting extra jobs driving truck to help provide for us. For Christmas we didn't get a lot of toys. Mostly clothing and we were happy with that. Sometimes we would get a family game that we could all play together.

I didn't grow up feeling poor. I grew up feeling loved and cared for by my parents.

We are now in the Christmas season when we think about giving gifts. Good gifts are not always expensive gifts. It's not good to go into debt over gifts at Christmas. Give what you can from the heart.

Jesus said: So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him. Matthew 7:11(NLT)

God provides for all of our needs, not necessarily all of our wants. He gives us what will help us grow and enjoy the life he has called us to.

4. As a good father he forgives me completely.

When I come to God with a genuine confession, God will forgive me. And he doesn't just forgive me half way. He doesn't keep a record of how many times I have asked forgiveness for the same thing.

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

If I am serious about my sin, then God will forgive me. He forgives me because the Everlasting One, Jesus, has paid the penalty for my sin.

I think of how some of my shenanigans as a teenager caused some problems for my father. He forgave me, but it cost him something to do so.

While my parents were at a prayer meeting I took an unauthorized drive in my dad's pick-up truck and drove it into a culvert and tore up the undercarriage pretty bad. He forgave me.

Then I got my first car at 17. It was a 71 Plymouth Duster Muscle Car. 340 engine 4 speed stick shift on the floor. I put big tires on the back and jacked up the back end like we did in those days. Two weeks after I got it I decided to drag race my buddy and in the process burned out my clutch. Again, my father forgave me and didn't hold it over my head.

As parents we forgive our children when they mess up, and we try to help them make better choices in the future. God is a father who forgives his children.

Conclusion:

Today we talked about God as our father. We talked about Jesus being the everlasting father who reveals the heart of Father God to us. Like his father he loves us and cares for us.

It's important to understand that God is only a father to those who are part of his family. God loves everyone but not everyone has chosen to become his son or daughter.

The way to the father is through Jesus. When we accept Jesus into our life we are given the right to become a son or daughter of Father God.

We are going to close with a song after which you will be given the opportunity to come to one of our prayer ministers at the side who will lead you in a prayer to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. To become his son or daughter.

Song: Good Good Father