

**Knowing  
the Good, Good  
Father**

1

**Theme Slide**

**Do you fear your father?  
Should you?**

**READ SLIDE**

- Do we fear our Heavenly Father? Should we?
- The Bible tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . .
- . . . yet perfect love casts out fear.
- Can we have a reverent, respectful fear of God and yet not have a dreadful, cowering fear of Him?
- And, if so, how does that impact the way we try to be to those we influence, like our children?

**TR: Last week I brought up an . . .**



**. . . easel.**

**-- I used it to say that we are all like portrait painters, looking to the subject of our painting, God the Father.**

**-- And, how we capture Him will be what others see first.**

**-- We will want to invite them to look beyond our canvas to see Him directly, but we realize that we are role models . . . portrait painters.**

**TR: A good parent . . .**

**A good parent  
is one who faithfully  
reflects  
the communicable  
attributes  
of God**

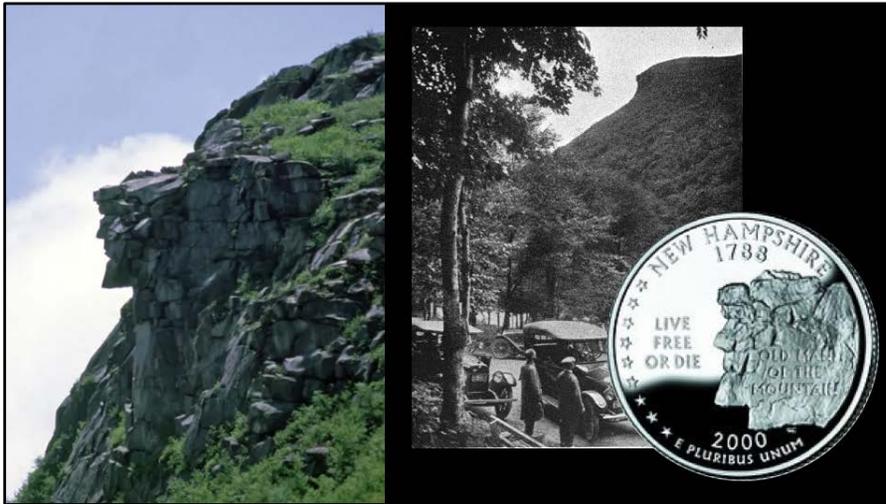
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**... READ SLIDE**

**-- [communicable attributes]**

**TR: As I thought about looking again and again at God the Father,  
then trying to capture his qualities in our lives so others can see .**

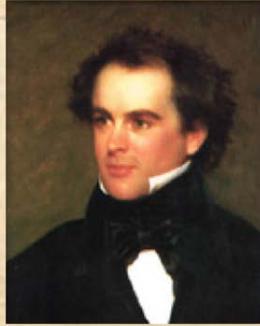
**..**



- ... my mind went back to the Old Man of The Mountain.**
- This outcropping in New Hampshire was a tourist destination for a long time.**
  - It doesn't take too much imagination to see the profile of an old man in the rocks.**
  - It was special enough to be what was on license plates and the statehood quarters series.**

**TR: It was probably this natural feature that was behind ...**

**"The Great Stone Face"**  
is a short story published by  
Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1850.



6

- ... Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, **The Great Stone Face**.
- The story speaks of a legend that when someone would come who fit the profile, they would be a great person who would fulfill the prophecy and bless the surrounding valley in a great way.
  - A number of people try to make themselves fit the profile, but only out of pride and avarice.
  - But the humble caretaker, who became a lay preacher, is the central character. A man named Ernest.

TR: Hawthorne writes . . .

At that moment, in sympathy with a thought which he was about to utter, the face of Ernest assumed a grandeur of expression, so imbued with benevolence, that the poet, by an irresistible impulse, threw his arms aloft and shouted, 'Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!' Then all the people looked, and saw that what the deep-sighted poet said was true. The prophecy was fulfilled. But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet's arm, and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some wiser and better man than himself would by and by appear, bearing a resemblance to the GREAT STONE FACE.

7

## **READ SLIDE**

-- It is only a story, but the idea of looking at the face for a lifetime . . . so that our face is transformed into the likeness . . .  
-- . . . is what we are hoping to inspire in this study of God the Father.

**TR: This is a Biblical hope . . .**

**Romans 8:29**

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

*ESV*

8

**. . . as it says in Romans 8 . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Jesus said to his disciples, if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father.**

**-- So, if we are conformed to the image of God the Son, we will also reflect the likeness of the good, good Heavenly Father.**

**TR: Last week we pondered that God the Father is GLORIOUS YET GENTLE, today . . .**



## **Firm, yet Generous**

**We see His hand is FIRM, YET GENEROUS**

- We usually do an either/or, while God does both/and.**
- Our pendulum swings into the realms of distortion . . . yes, we are made in the image of God.**
- All humans are and therefore have intrinsic worth.**
- But sin causes us to distort and taint that image.**

**TR: Today, let's ask the Spirit to help us look past our easel's and see our good, good Father's profile . . . at least part of it.**



**Firm, yet Generous**

**Let's begin by seeing that the Bible makes clear about God's FIRM hand in His discipline as a Father to His children.**

**TR: This truth is first seen in Deuteronomy, where Moses writes .  
..**

**Deuteronomy 8:5-6**

Know then in your heart that, **as a man disciplines his son**, the LORD your God disciplines you. <sup>6</sup>So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him.

*ESV*

11

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The later wisdom literature of Proverbs reminds us . . .**

**Proverbs 3:11-12**

**My son, do not despise  
the LORD's discipline  
or be weary of his reproof,  
<sup>12</sup>for the LORD reproves him  
whom he loves,  
as a father the son  
in whom he delights.**

*ESV*

12

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: This imagery is picked up powerfully in the NT, in Hebrews . . .**

**Hebrews 12:7-9a**

It is for discipline that you have to endure. **God is treating you as sons.** For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. ESV

13

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 9 continues . . .**

Hebrews 12:9b-10

Shall we not much more be subject to **the Father of spirits** and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

ESV

14

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: God's firm hand is not only one of corrective discipline . . . it is also one that is firm in helping us be more fruitful through pruning.**

John 15:1-2

“I am the true vine, and **my Father is the vinedresser**. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

ESV

15

I'm thinking of what Jesus taught in John 15 . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Jesus certainly did not limit God's FIRMNESS to pruning, as we see in Matthew 15 . . .

**Matthew 15:12-14**

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" <sup>13</sup>He answered, "**Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.** <sup>14</sup>Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

ESV

16

**READ SLIDE**

- The disciples thought Jesus was a bit too "FIRM" with the Pharisees, offending them.
- But Jesus, the perfect reflection of the Father, was doing what had to be done in order to give them a chance to repent . . . firm discipline.

TR: Taking all these texts together, our notes capture for us that . . .

**The Father's hand is Firm, so . . .**

- *walk in His ways and **fear Him,***
- *do not **despise His discipline or grow weary under His reproof,***
- *be subject to Him and live,*
- *receive His pruning and **bear more fruit.***

17

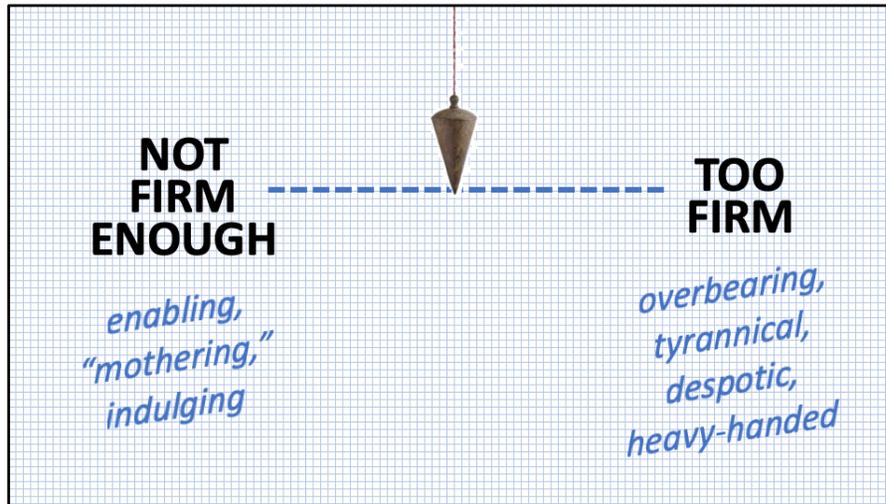
### **READ SLIDE**

-- So, we are to fear God . . . reverencing Him and therefore walking in His ways.

-- We are to understand that He disciplines us out of love, as a good Father, so we shouldn't despise the at-times painful discipline.

-- We must submit ourselves to Him, even when the pruning takes away our favorite new growth . . . knowing He yearns for us to be more fruitful, not just more bushy.

**TR: The truth is, most of us do not reflect the likeness of the Heavenly Father very well.**



**We distort His grandeur by either swinging to the “not firm enough” side . . .**

**-- or arcing to the “too firm” end of the spectrum.**

**TR: If we are going to be conformed to God’s true image as the good, good Father . . . we must first be His children . . .**

We can trust the Good, Good Father  
and by faith receive with thanksgiving . . .



whatever He  
chooses to give us from His hand.

19

**. . . who . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Some of us didn't respect our earthly fathers or mothers,  
because they never seemed to stand up to us.**

**-- While others of us learned to hide under the bed, because the  
hand that fed us was also the hand that would beat us.**

**-- Let us not make God the Father in the image of our imperfect  
parents, but rather, let us look to Him directly.**

**-- Our parents' portrait painting of God as Father was imperfect . .  
. we must grow up and look directly at the original, God Himself.**

**TR: It is as we do that that we have opportunity to become a  
better parent or influencer of others in our care, remembering . .**

.

**A good parent  
is one who faithfully  
reflects  
the communicable  
attributes  
of God**

20

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Like the story of the Great Stone Face, we will become like the ones we look to.**

**Psalm 115:8**

**Those who make (idols)  
become like them;  
so do all who trust in them.  
⁹O Israel, trust in the LORD!**

*ESV*

21

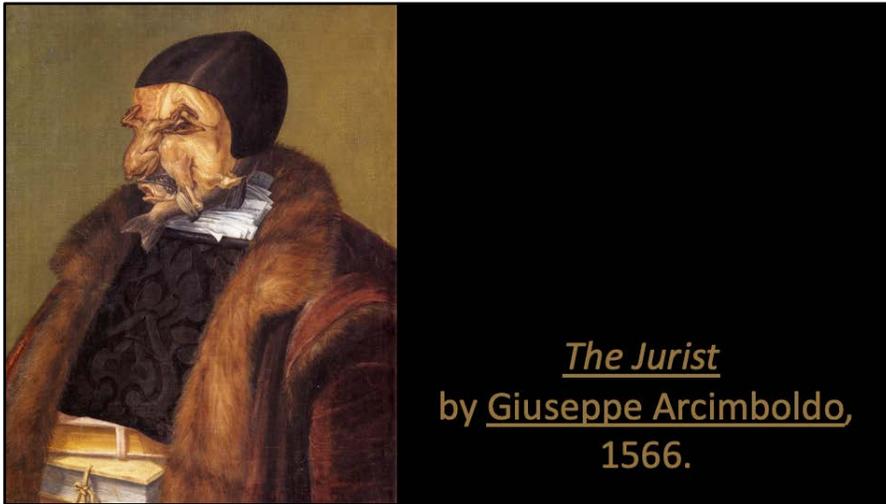
**The Psalmist says . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- we become like the ones we trust in.**

**-- God is calling us to look full in His wonderful face, and see Him as the good, good Father.**

**-- His hand is firm, but never abusive.**

**TR: We dare not cast our gaze on our own parents or grandparents, for they are not the ultimate model for us.**



**And we certainly don't want to look at the world's foolishness of what a good parent is.**

**-- An artist from the 1500s had a sense of humor.**

**-- What appears to be the subject of his portrait's face is a collection of fish and poultry.**

**TR: What or whose likeness does our face reflect . . . to our spouse, our kids, our neighbors, our co-workers?**



**Firm, yet Generous**

**The good, good Father is firm, and yet also the Bible makes clear His hand is so very generous.**

**TR: If we want to reflect His likeness, being called His sons and daughters, we must see that He is generous, amazingly so.**

**Matthew 5:43-45**

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>**so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

*ESV*

24

**Jesus said . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: The Father's hand is generous . . .**

**The Father's hand is Generous . . .**

- *Even to the evil and unjust*

25

**READ SLIDE**

**-- But the fullness of His generosity is towards those who put their faith and trust in His Son, Jesus.**

**TR: Consider the bounty we can receive from His hand.**

**John 6:32-33**

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but **my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.** <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

*ESV*

26

**READ SLIDE**

-- The context of John 6 makes it clear that this true bread is Jesus Himself.

TR: The Father gives the true bread from heaven. And Jesus also tells us . . .

**Luke 11:11-13**

“What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; <sup>12</sup>or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>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!**”

*ESV*

27

## **READ SLIDE**

- God the Father doesn't give us evil, He gives good gifts.
- Including the incredible gift of His presence with us in the person of His Holy Spirit.

**TR: The Holy Spirit, Who comes to dwell within all who put their faith in Jesus, is called . . .**

**Acts 1:4-5**

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for **the promise of the Father**, which, he said, "you heard from me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

*ESV*

28

... "the promise of the Father."

-- Luke captures what happened just before Jesus' ascension into heaven . . . READ SLIDE

-- The baptism of the Holy Spirit, when a person is identified as belonging to God as His child, comes from the Father's generous hand.

TR: The gifts of God keep coming. Jesus said . . .

Luke 12:32

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

ESV

29

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Jesus spoke further of this kingdom when He said . . .**

"You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup>and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup>that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

ESV

30

## READ SLIDE

- The Father gave the Son the kingdom . . . and He wanted the Son to give it to us.
- This kingdom is here now, in a measure, but the fullness of that kingdom awaits the return of Jesus, when He comes and makes all things right.

TR: To have a clear view of God as the good, good Father, we have to look beyond just here and now. We have to keep our minds on things above, knowing that when Christ, who is our life appears, we will also appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

**1 Peter 1:3-4**

Blessed be **the God and Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

*ESV*

31

**Peter blessed the Father for what gifts? READ SLIDE**

**TR: The good, good Father gives us from His generous hand an inheritance. Paul says the same thing in Colossians and Romans .**

..

**Colossians 1:12**

**. . . giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.**

*ESV*

32

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: And in Romans . . .**

**Romans 8:16-17**

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God,**<sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—**heirs of God** and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

*ESV*

33

**READ SLIDE**

-- Here we see both the firm and generous aspects of God's hand . . . suffer and glorified.

TR: The Father's hand is Generous . . .

## **The Father's hand is Generous . . .**

- *Even to the evil and unjust*
- *He gives us **Jesus**; the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father to baptize us; the Kingdom; an eternal inheritance; the right to be His children/heirs.*

34

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Jesus tells us to look at creation around us to be reminded of the Father's generous hand of provision.**

**Matthew 6:26**

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and **yet your heavenly Father feeds them**. Are you not of more value than they?

*ESV*

35

**Jesus said . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: He also said . . .**

**Matthew 10:29-31**

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? **And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.**  
<sup>30</sup>But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup>Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

*ESV*

36

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The Father's hand is generous. Why?**

## **The Father's hand is Generous . . .**

- *Even to the evil and unjust*
- *He gives us Jesus; the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father to baptize us; the Kingdom; an eternal inheritance; the right to be His children/heirs.*
- *He **values** us enough to care for us.*

37

**Because . . . READ SLIDE**

- Isn't one of the evidences of a good parent that they care for us?
- A deadbeat dad or mom is one who abandons us, not even providing childcare support.
- I think all kids yearn to be able to see their parents as gracious providers.
- It seems dads are most often the ones who run out on their kids, though it is not always so.
- If that was your experience, your children's hope is that you don't keep looking at the chicken and fish face of your flawed parents, but look at Who God the Father really is . . . and see His hand as generous because He values us.

TR: The Good, good Father pays attention to us . . . He knows  
what we need.

37

**Matthew 6:7-8**

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for **your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**”

*ESV*

38

**It is Jesus Who teaches us . . . READ SLIDE . . . we don't have to whine**

**TR: A few verses later . . .**

**Matthew 6:31-32**

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup>For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.**

*ESV*

39

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: He also said . . .**

**Luke 12:29-31**

And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. <sup>30</sup>For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and **your Father knows that you need them.** <sup>31</sup>Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

*ESV*

40

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The Father's hand is generous, providing for us because . . .**

## **The Father's hand is Generous . . .**

- *Even to the evil and unjust*
- *He gives us Jesus; the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father to baptize us; the Kingdom; an eternal inheritance; the right to be His children/heirs.*
- *He values us enough to care for us.*
- *He already knows what we **need**.*

41

### **READ SLIDE**

-- When we peer over the easel and look to the Subject of our portrait, God the Father, we see that His hand is generous . . .  
**REVIEW SLIDE . . .**

**TR: So, the right response is to give thanks.**

**Colossians 3:17**

And whatever you do, in word or deed,  
do everything in the name of the Lord  
Jesus, **giving thanks to God the Father  
through him.**

*ESV*

42

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Paul said the same thing to the Christians at Ephesus . . .**

**Ephesians 5:20**

**. . . giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .**

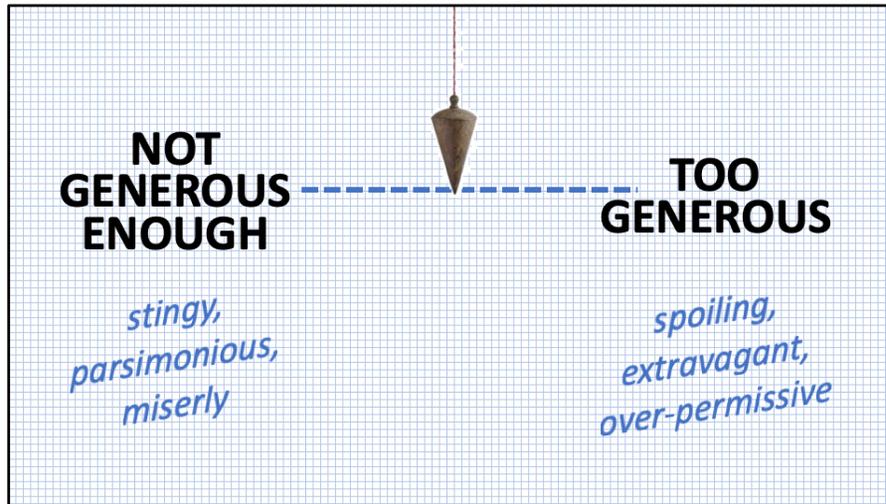
*ESV*

43

**READ SLIDE**

**-- Whether the firmness of discipline or the generosity of delights, give thanks.**

**TR: Let's be honest, it is very difficult for us to get this profile of God right.**



**Our pendulum swings between . . . being not generous enough OR perhaps too generous.**

**-- Being “dutch” by heritage and nature, I have tended to swing to the “not generous enough” side.**

**TR: And even as I ponder God, I know that while He is never TOO generous, but He is still incredible generous. This verse was used to correct my stinginess toward buying my wife jewelry.**

**Ephesians 1:7-8**

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup>**which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight**

*ESV*

45

**READ SLIDE**

- God is generous, He lavishes blessing upon us.
- But, He always does it in all wisdom and insight. Never spoiling us but providing so that we know we are the apple of His eye.

**TR: If we are to reflect the likeness, not of the Great Stone Face, but the face of the Good, Good Father, we must begin by . . .**

We can trust the Good, Good Father  
and by faith receive with thanksgiving . . .



whatever He  
chooses to give us from His hand.

46

**READ SLIDE**

- We do not begin by just grabbing our pendulums and putting them plumb.
- We won't be able to do it.
- To be good parents and influencers of others, we must first be good children . . . REVIEW SLIDE AGAIN.

**TR: Remember, our hope in this study is to . . .**



**. . . look over our easels and again see God the Father.**

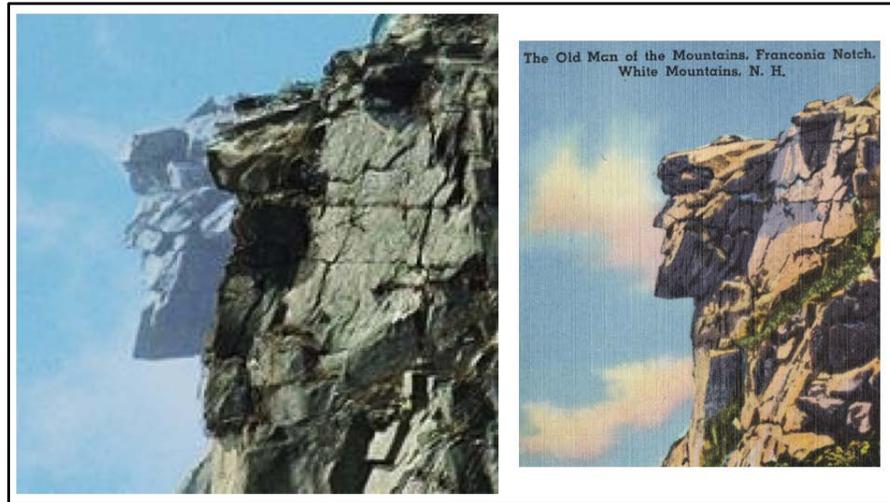
**TR: And having seen Him more clearly, to then . . .**

**A good parent  
is one who faithfully  
reflects  
the communicable  
attributes  
of God**

48

**. . . faithfully reflect what we have seen.**

**TR: Interestingly, the Old Man of the Mountain, the stone outcrop in New Hampshire, provides a further illustration for us. Especially for us who are tempted to look merely to human role models . . . or to try to be the ultimate role model to our kids and those we influence.**



49

**For in 2003, the Old Man didn't have a face lift . . . he had a face collapse.**

**-- As the slide shows the profile before and then after.**

**TR: The only image worth pondering at length is that of God Himself.**



50

**After the Old Man's face fell off, they created a park.**

**TR: If you stand in the right spot . . .**



**... and look at the appropriate sculpture at the top of one of the posts ... you can see the profile again.**

**-- Many of us are like that ... nostalgic for the old days, or at least how we remember them.**

**-- The truth is, every other profile of a role model will ultimately lose face.**

**TR: There is only One Who is worthy.**

## **Knowing the Good, Good Father**

52

**He is the Good, Good Father.**

**-- His outstretched hand to us is good in that it is firm in “for our good” discipline.**

**-- His outstretched hand to us is good in that He is generous to provide all we need for life and godliness.**

**-- He is the good, good Father.**

**TR: We must lift our eyes beyond our dads and moms, beyond our elders and pastors, beyond any GREAT STONE FACE.**

**Mark 10:17-18**

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, "**Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.**"

*ESV*

53

**Jesus reminds us only God is good . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Jesus is not denying He is good, but that He could only truly be good in the full sense of the word if He were God . . . and He is.**

**TR: Will you begin today by . . .**

We can trust the Good, Good Father  
and by faith receive with thanksgiving . . .



whatever He  
chooses to give us from His hand.

54

### **READ SLIDE**

-- like Ernest, of Hawthorne's story, knew he was wiser or better enough . . . in a sense what I imagine he wanted and needed was to see the face of Jesus, the perfect likeness of God the Father.

-- Will you right now receive with thanksgiving what God, the good, good Father, is choosing to give you from His hand . . . whether firm discipline or generous delights . . . the right response is to say, "Thank you, Father."

-- Will you trust that whatever has come into your life, even things that are in themselves evil, have come filtered through His loving fingers . . . will you trust Him enough that right now you say to Him , "Thank you, Father."