

**Knowing
the Good, Good
Father**

1

Theme Slide

A DAUGHTER NEEDS A DAD

**TO BE THE STANDARD
AGAINST WHICH
SHE WILL JUDGE
ALL MEN.**



2

READ SLIDE

- We want to be a good dad, right? Or a good mom, right?**
- We want to be a worthy role model for others to follow.**

TR: But the fact of the matter is, when we get home, the best we can hope to hear is a greeting like . . .

**“How’s my
sorta-good husband?”**

READ SLIDE

- That’s how Kathy greeted me last week after Sunday’s services.
- She said it with a smile on her face.
- She had paid attention . . . Jesus said, “Who is good but God alone.”
- When it comes to truly good . . . and especially good, good . . . there is only One who can “wow” us and that is God.

TR: Though not in the absolute sense of “good,” most of us really do want to be “good parents.” Even if it is with a lower case “g.”

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

4

READ SLIDE

TR: How can we better reflect our Good, Good Heavenly Father to our children and those we influence?

**Do we need to be
“re-parented?”**

I think we might need to be “re-parented.”

-- None of our parents were all we needed. They didn't get it “just right.” Even the best of them.

-- We too often approach parenthood with the design to be worthy of the best dad or best mom mug.

-- But then we parent looking at flawed role models, making our flawed choices about which qualities we should copy and which we should chuck.

-- And then comes our flawed implementation of our flawed choices.

TR: How can we do better at breaking the cycle, even if our kids are now already grown? I believe we need to be re-parented by God.



Awesome and Approachable

The previous two weeks' studies bring us to today's exploration of what the Bible says about God as our Father.

-- We learned that only He is good, good . . . good in glorious holiness and good in gentle graciousness.

-- We pondered that His hand is firm in discipline and pruning us for our good . . . and generous in giving us all we need for life and godliness.

-- Today my hope is that we can be "wowed" by God being both awesome and approachable.

TR: We all need to be re-parented by God the Father.

Ephesians 3:14-15

For this reason **I bow my knees before the Father,** ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named . . .

ESV

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He is the Father who has the sovereign authority to name everything.

TR: And if we don't actively seek His re-parenting in our lives, I'm afraid we will look to a different father . . . and not just an earthly one.

John 8:42-43

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.

ESV

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READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 44

John 8:44

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

ESV

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READ SLIDE

- Jesus' strong words to the Pharisees remind us that we can be extremely religious people and still have our eyes on the wrong father.**
- The Devil's most powerful weapon against us is lies. Especially lies about Jesus and the Father.**

TR: So, let's reflect on more passages that speak of God the Father and be "wowed" afresh that He is both . . .



**Awesome
and Approachable**

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READ SLIDE

TR: Let's begin with . . .



Awesome
and Approachable

11

. . . the Awesomeness of God the Father.

-- I know the word “awesome” has been so overused it almost doesn’t mean anything . . . when people call an ice cream sundae “awesome,” what does it mean to call God that?

-- But, please let me try to redeem the word.

-- In the same way I tried to teach my children to not throw around words and phrases like, “I hate this . . .” or “I love this . . .”

-- Let’s save big words for big truths.

TR: God is truly awesome.

1 Corinthians 8:6

. . . yet for us there is **one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist**, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

ESV

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In contrasting the true God with the silly false idols of the people of Corinth, Paul tells us . . . READ SLIDE

- All things come from God. He alone is the uncreated One.**
- All things are for Him. Creation has its purpose in bringing glory to the Creator.**
- And that includes believers.**

TR: In describing the incredible unity that the Church has, not just in its local expression but worldwide, Paul says . . .

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**

ESV

13

READ SLIDE

- There is only one God and Father of all.
- He is over all . . . in power and authority.
- He is through all and in all . . . present everywhere at all times.

TR: But that doesn't mean that the love of the Father is in everyone. John tells us in his first letter . . .

1 John 2:15-16

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, **the love of the Father is not in him.**
¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—**is not from the Father** but is from the world.

ESV

14

READ SLIDE

- Everything was created by God and for God, but the “world,” which is the system of beings in rebellion against Him, is not from the Father.
- When we allow the world, through the desires of our physical flesh and old nature,
- . . . pursuing the desires of what we see,
- . . . all coming forth from an arrogance of thinking it is all about me . . .
- . . . then the love of the heavenly Father is not in us.

TR: Is this a big deal when we look to Satan as our father and look to this rebellious world as our source of self-satisfaction?

Matthew 13:41-43

The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴²and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³**Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.** He who has ears, let him hear.

ESV

15

It certainly is. God is awesome because He is not only the Creator but also the Judge.

-- Jesus said . . . READ SLIDE

-- There will come a time when the difference will become evident between those who have God as their Father versus those who have the father of lies as their dad.

**As we look at this awesome God, using our heads to capture what He has revealed to us in His Word . . .
. . . we are affected deep within our hearts.**

TR: Through Jesus we now have been given the right to be called Children of God. Peter is amazed at this . . .

1 Peter 1:15-17

. . . but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." ¹⁷**And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially** according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile . . .

ESV

16

READ SLIDE

- What is the "wow-factor" here?
- The awesome Creator God, Who is all-powerful, everywhere-present; for Whose glory all creation was made . . .
- . . . we get to call Him, "Father."

TR: If you'll let the Holy Spirit help you welcome that into the depths of your soul, you will cry out . . .



“WOW!”

READ SLIDE

-- *Example:* Symphony orchestra just finishes a powerful presentation of some of Mozart’s works. Before people can clap, the microphones capture a young boy’s voice saying with a feeling of awe, “Wow!”

-- Steve Hartmann of CBS News captured the story. Not only did the director try to find out who it was . . . when they did find him it was a boy with the challenge of being severely autistic. He barely says anything, so his “wow” stunned everyone.

-- You and I are a lot like that boy . . . trapped with almost no words to express our thoughts . . . until something resonates deep within us.

-- How much more should we shout out “wow!” when our heads and hearts have connected with the living, awesome God?!

TR: Our re-parenting will require more than just one “wow” experience. We will also need to be overcome in our minds and affections with the incredible truth that our Heavenly Father has made Himself . . .



**Awesome
and Approachable**

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... approachable.

TR: For us to become better parents and influencers of others, we must ...

1 John 2:13

I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from
the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil
one.

I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

ESV

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... know the Father. John writes ... **READ SLIDE**

-- The Beloved Disciple's assumption is that through faith in Jesus Christ we can really know that Father.

TR: A few verses later he would write ...

1 John 3:1-2

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **²Beloved, we are God's children now,** and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

ESV

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READ SLIDE

- Through faith in Jesus, trusting in what He did on the cross to pay for our sins, we now can experience the love of the Father!
- The Father now calls us His children.
- We are His children now . . . BUT someday we will be perfectly re-parented in His presence and we will be like Him.

TR: This incredible hope for the future is tied to our wonderful access to God the Father.

Ephesians 2:17-18

And (Jesus) came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have **access in one Spirit to the Father.**

ESV

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READ SLIDE

- Whether Jews, who were the near ones, or the Gentiles, who were the far off one . . .
- . . . all those who have received Jesus' offer of peace with God through His blood . . .
- . . . now have access through the Holy Spirit to the Father.

TR: The OT sacrifices and Temple and thick veil keeping out all but the High Priest once per year from the Holy of Holies . . . all spoke of God's awesome holiness. But now through Jesus' death that resulted in the veil being torn . . . God has made Himself approachable to the very smallest of His children.

1 John 1:3

... that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed **our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

ESV

22

How amazing that we can have fellowship with other Christians because we have fellowship with the Father and His Son.

-- John writes again in his first letter . . . READ SLIDE

TR: In the vision Jesus gave this same John when he was much older, we read . . .

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had **his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.**

ESV

23

READ SLIDE

- The 144,00, symbolic of the perfect number, the complete number of God's children . . .
- identified with Jesus and the Father's name.
- Like the bells of Ezekiel's vision that are labeled, "Holy to the LORD," so we will be labeled.

TR: We understand when Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, prays . . .

Mark 14:36

And (Jesus) said, "**Abba, Father,** all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

ESV

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READ SLIDE

TR: But when the awesome, glorious, holy God allows us to do the same . . . we are strangely touched and deeply affected.

Romans 8:14-15

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, **by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"**

ESV

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READ SLIDE

- God is so approachable through Jesus that He has approached us by giving us His Spirit.
- His Spirit leads us.
- His Spirit takes away from us the fearful spirit of slavery.
- His Spirit speaks the truth of our adoption as children with inheritance rights into us . . .
- . . . and we cannot help but cry out, "Abba! Father!"

TR: Theologians use bigger words but they are talking about very similar things . . .

Transcendence and Immanence

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READ SLIDE

TR: The theologian many consider the best America has ever produced needed more than just the role model of his earthly father, he needed to know (not just know about) the awesomeness and approachableness of the Heavenly Father.

Jonathan (Edwards) recalled that he was “pretty much affected” by this conversation, and when it ended he walked alone into the field for contemplation. “And as I was walking there,” he reported, “and looked up on the sky and cloud;

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A biographer writes of Jonathan Edwards, who lived in the early-mid 1700s, . . . READ SLIDE

TR: (continues)

. . . there came into my mind, a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express.” What overwhelmed him was two seemingly opposite attributes of the triune God in a sweet conjunction:

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READ SLIDE

TR: (continues)

“. . . majesty and meekness joined together; it was a sweet and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high and great, and holy gentleness.”

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READ SLIDE

TR: What so touched this brilliant young man that he would go from knowing about God to actually knowing God?



30

Even as one of our core values reminds us . . . God wants to touch our intellect AND our emotions.

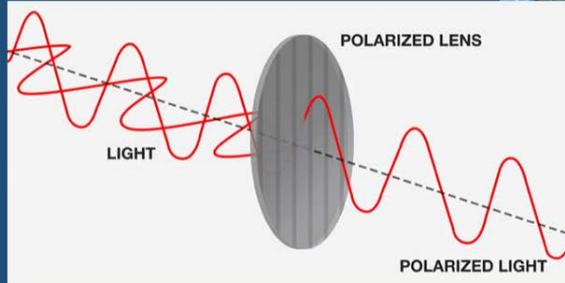
-- To KNOW Him we need to KNOW ABOUT Him.

-- When we seek to be role models to our children and others, it is then that our focus is exposed.

-- Many of us believe we can be the ultimate role model for them.

TR: But our sinfulness makes it virtually impossible this side of the return of Jesus to be the role models we want to be, and even to . . .

**IN A SENSE, SINFULNESS
"POLARIZES" OUR FILTERS**



31

**. . . see God for Who He really is.
-- It is like polarizing sunglasses.
-- Most of us "polarize" out some aspect of God's awesomeness
OR His approachability.**

TR: And in some extreme cases . . .



... we might not be able to see God at all.

-- Go into a store and pick up two polarizing sunglasses and then turn them slowly. You can end up blocking most of the light that comes through them.

TR: How does this polarized filtering of the truth about who God is impact our experience of knowing Him?

When we minimize God the Father's awesomeness, we tend to become . . .

**flippant, casual,
careless, cheeky, glib,
smart-alecky, lackadaisical,
even reckless,
maybe prayer-less**

33

READ SLIDE

-- When someone says to us about the way we approach God, "Would you treat your boss at work this way?", we've probably minimized our Heavenly Father's awesomeness.

TR: For some the polarizing cuts out another part of the revelation of Who God is.

When we minimize God the Father's approachableness, we tend to become . . .

**unemotional, detached,
duty-driven, fearful,
like one walking on egg-shells,
maybe prayer-less**

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READ SLIDE

- You may have noticed I listed “prayer-less” as an impact of both polarized views of God.**
- When we are not awed by God and His great power, we don't bother praying because we don't think He can do anything about it.**
- But when we are not “wowed” by the privilege we have to draw near to Him because He's drawn near to us through the cross of Christ . . .**
- . . . then we don't bother praying because we think “who are we to bother the Holy, Holy, Holy King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**

TR: When we take off our sinful sunglasses and see God as He truly is, we see that . . .



35

READ SLIDE

- When theologians speak of the “beauty” of God, when we call Him “beautiful” . . .
- . . . we are not speaking of His appearance or how He fits into our cultural definitions of attractiveness.

TR: Rather, we are saying . . .



“He is the sum of all perfections.”

-- To be a “sorta-good” parent, we need to be re-parented by the Good, Good Father.

-- We need to humbly admit to our children and those we lead that we are not “the sum of all perfections.”

-- We need to move from pretending that we are worthy role models, to becoming humble leaders who others can follow to the Only One Who is truly Beautiful.

-- The autistic boy who cried out, “Wow!” at the symphony was visited by Steve Hartmann.

-- The symphony director sent a world-class cellist to play for the boy in his home . . . talk about “approachable.”

-- And as I watched the video of the boy’s response, I noticed an adult trying to mouth for him the reaction they were hoping for . . . “Wow.” But it didn’t come.

TR: Perhaps that is a glimpse of the truth that even the best this world has to offer may stir up a “wow” in us, but it is only knowing the Good, Good Father that is worthy of a . . .

“WOW! WOW!”

READ SLIDE

- Let's confess our sinful polarization . . . our temptation to only look at God through our most comfortable angle. (Take a moment)
- Let's confess our pride that wants to be the perfect role model for our kids and others. (Take a moment)
- Let's humble ourselves, allowing our head and heart, our intellect and affections, to try to understand more of and then truly know the Good, Good Father. (Take a moment)

- It is only then, as “sorta-good” dads and moms, that we can lead others well.
- Not to look at us, but to join us in worshipping the One Who is the Sum of All Perfections, The Only truly Beautiful One.