

“Fatherhood: God’s Design and Our Calling”

Matthew 7:7-11

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Every father wants to know the answer to the same question: “Am I doing this fatherhood thing _____?”

Also, every father (or father-figure) has the same picture of what a good father should do:

- A good father should protect, provide, and love their families. *Doing this well is doing fatherhood right!*

This universal picture... let’s call it a _____... well, where did it come from? Who defined it? Is there an ultimate standard we can look to and learn from?

- According to Jesus, we can look to God. He's the perfect example of doing fatherhood right.

I understand how many would rather _____ look to God, due to...

- Being hurt by a father (or father-figure)
- Being disappointed by a father
- Seeing Christian or Catholic religious “fathers” fail
- Knowing fathers who claim to be Christians fail

I mean, how can a loving God allow fathers to hurt those they are entrusted to protect, provide, and love? (That’s a fair question.)

The point? Don’t project the failures of your earthly father (or father figure) unto God!

Here's the deal. Christianity doesn't ask us to judge God based on the failures of imperfect fathers.

Instead, Christianity asks us to evaluate ourselves as fathers by looking to God, the perfect Father.

In other words... God's design for fatherhood is revealed by exploring the perfect example of our Heavenly Father. *Let's see what God's design looks like in our main passage.*

Matthew 7:7-11... God’s design can be encapsulated in three words:

1. **VV 9-10...** _____ - It’s absurd to think that a loving father would give his child a snake instead of food to eat when he’s hungry!
 - A loving father is protecting his child from physical harm or fear by NOT giving him a snake, or any harmful things, for that matter, in his child’s hands. (Eph 6:4; Prov 22:6)

TURN OVER

2. **VV 7-8, 11...** _____ - Even evil fathers provide for their children. Well, if that's the case, then how could one doubt that their Father in heaven would provide?
- After all, our Father in heaven is perfectly good and loving. Further, His provision is generous and even intimately personal. (Phil 4:19; Matt 6:31-32)
3. **VV 11...** _____ - Jesus is stating rather bluntly that our Father in heaven WILL give good gifts to those who ask!
- Jesus is NOT teaching primarily about prayer, but rather about the character of the Father. (Rom 5:8; 1 Jn 3:1; Zeph 3:17)

That last supporting verse we just explored is so awesome.

*The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.*

This leads me to the following question: Do you believe that God feels this way about you?

- If no, then why not? _____

Here's the deal. Zephaniah 3:17 was spoken NOT to people who had it all together, but rather people who had been reconciled to God.

To be reconciled to God means that...

1. Your sin separated you from God. (Isa 59:2)
2. Jesus removed that sin barrier on the cross. (2 Cor 5:21)
3. By exercising faith, you can be reconciled to Him. (Rom 5:1)

And NOW, you can follow God's design for fatherhood in His strength! By His grace! (Phil 2:13)

A PRAYER FOR FATHERS TO PRAY TODAY AND ALWAYS

Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me, forgiving me, and making me Your child through Jesus Christ. I confess that I cannot be the father You have called me to be in my own strength. I need Your grace and the power of Your Holy Spirit every day.

Help me PROTECT those entrusted to my care. Help me PROVIDE for their needs. Help me LOVE them the way You love me.

Where I have failed, forgive me. Where I am weak, strengthen me. Where I lack wisdom, guide me. May my life reflect the heart of my Heavenly Father and point my family closer to You.

In Jesus' name, amen.