

A First-Class Father

Luke 15:11-32

(Zeke Flores, from “A Worthy Father” by Boyd Jennings)

Intro: Should be no surprise that “father” appears between the words “fathead” and “fatigued” in the dictionary!

- A. Have seen both characteristics in many fathers, including myself.
 - 1. Used to be, in the days of “Father Knows Best” that dads were portrayed as wise men; now most sitcoms depict them as bumbling buffoons.
- B. According to snopes.com, though Father’s Day is distant 3rd behind Mother’s Day and Christmas for telephone calls, it is 1st for most collect calls on that day!
- C. Usually Mother’s Day sermons extol the virtues of Mom, while Father’s Day sermons come down hard on Dad regarding his duties & responsibilities.
- D. Today, we’ll turn attention to a good Father as we examine some virtues that make for a dad everyone can look up to.
 - 1. The Father in story of prodigal son is usually described to be God yet note what He teaches us about what a godly father can be.

I. He Was A Teacher

- A. The younger son learned about:
 - 1. Making demands – Be careful what you ask for!
 - a. Besides, God knows what you need & when you need it.
 - 2. Repentance – Consequences of sin can lead to repentance & change of life
 - a. But can only occur when you are honest about yourself and your condition.
- B. The older son learned about:
 - 1. Jealousy – It makes you uncertain about yourself & future and only leaves you miserable
 - 2. Forgiveness – It’s important after one repents to accept him back, allow the relationship to move forward.

II. He Was Approachable

- A. Parental partiality can smother what otherwise might be good and healthy father-child relationships.
 - 1. Isaac was partial to Esau - **Gen 25:27-28**
 - 2. Apparently, penchant for partiality ran deep for Jacob, Esau’s brother - **Gen 37:3-4**
- B. Luke 15 father appears to have the respect of his sons without intimidating them
 - 1. Younger was confident that he could approach his father and audaciously demand his inheritance
 - a. During his worst times, he felt that father was only one who would have compassion for him.
 - 2. Older son never left father’s presence preferring to continue working the family farm.
- C. Most fathers want to convey sense of authority; want obedience.
 - 1. Effective fathers will have a strong, yet gentle, unthreatening manner in which children can approach them w/o fear, one whom children will want to be around.
 - a. **Psalm 128:1-4**
 - 2. Our Heavenly Father is such a one
 - 3. **Psalm 34:4-6, 15, 17-18**

III. He Was Spiritually-Minded

- A. Though he was apparently wealthy, he didn’t dwell on it
 - 1. When his son left, he expressed no bitterness in giving away his money
 - 2. When he returned, father exclaimed, “*My dead son is alive again, he was lost but is found!*”
 - a. Words from a man who thinks in spiritual terms:
 - (1) Man’s accountability to God
 - (2) Judgment
 - (3) Spiritual life, salvation
- B. This father emphasizes importance of spiritual things & is most concerned with their spiritual condition.
 - 1. **Col 3:1-3; Eph 6:4**
 - 2. The godly father will help his children lay up treasure in heaven.

IV. He Was Affectionate

- A. **Luke 15:20** - Father *ran* to hug & kiss him!
 1. Father didn't know what the son came to say, only that he had returned home & he rewards him with tender affection.
 2. Some fathers might have simply walked away, completely emotionally unattached.
- B. Children are given as a gift - **Psalm 127:3-5**
 1. Fathers should enjoy them, show them love & affection.
 2. Love is common theme running throughout Scripture:
 - a. Especially for God's children
(1) **1 John 3:1**
 - b. If it's such a delight to be God's kid, it should also be so in your own house.

V. He Was Forgiving

- A. **Luke 15:21-24** - Father threw a big party!
 1. Pretty excessive, right? Wouldn't a pat on the back and "*Good to have you home, son*" been enough?
 2. Perhaps this response is so appropriate because fathers can consider their own need for forgiveness.
- B. Forgiveness means that both parties can get over the past and concentrate on restoring the relationship.
 1. **Luke 17:3-5**
 2. If adults make frequent mistakes and cause numerous offenses, how many more will children make as they try to navigate their way?
 3. Forgiveness shouldn't be cheap, but it should be freely available.

VI. He Was A Disciplinarian

- A. Usually think of the father in the story as a softie but consider how he dealt with older son – **Luke 15:25-32**
 1. He gave him "instructive discipline"
 - a. Not all discipline must be hard & harsh
 2. The father spoke calmly, reasonably & intelligently
 - a. **Eph 6:4; Col 3:21**

like this!

- A. It doesn't stop when your children are grown.
 1. Fatherhood continues as do the responsibilities of it.
 2. Fathers continue to grow into their roles as fathers throughout their lives.
- B. In this way, we become more like our heavenly Father:
 1. He is our Teacher
 2. Approachable
 3. Spiritually-minded
 4. Affectionate
 5. Forgiving
 6. Disciplining
- C. God, the ultimate Father, created the role of father in the home for the good of the family, and by extension, society.
 1. "*Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land.*" Ps 25:12-13
 2. "*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children*" Prov 13:22

D. INV

Conc: *We NEED fathers like this; We NEED TO BE fathers*