



God Our Father
Message Notes, June 19, 2016
John 8:37-59

In John 8, Jesus tells a group of religious leaders that if they hold to Jesus' teaching, they would be set free. They responded that, as Abraham's children, they had never been slaves to anyone. (More on this next week.) Jesus replies that those who sin are slaves to sin, but those who have God as their father hear what Jesus has to say and obey Him. Understanding God as our father can be challenging since we often compare Him to our earthly fathers who have shortcomings.

God is called "Father" over 250 times in the New Testament, but very few times in the Old. Even then, it is primarily emphasizing the people of Israel being His children, not so much God being their Father. This is because in the Old Testament, God wanted the Jewish people to identify with his transcendence (God as Creator, being over us) while in the New Testament He wants us to understand His nearness, His Father-ness.

Earthly fathers are meant to be reflections of our Heavenly Father. They are critical, and valuable to our family and our society. We desperately need fathers to fulfill their roles. ManSchool is a great way for men to get involved in community with one another.

Our Heavenly Father is the perfect father. Often, we project the hurts, and shortcomings of our earthly father, onto our Heavenly Father.

As God's children, we have been adopted into God's family. Romans 8:15-17

As God our Father, He is:

- **Our authority:** God is over us, and has authority over all areas of our lives. But how often do we resist authority? Often, those who have difficulty submitting to the earthly authority of their fathers, have difficulty submitting to the Heavenly authority of their Heavenly Father.
- **Our identity:** Subcultures thrive because people seek an identity. Russia had a policy of stamping the passports of orphans who were not adopted when they turned 18 with the phrase "No Heritage." Fathers give us a sense of belonging, and our Heavenly Father does that in a way no one else can.
- **Our provider:** He sees to it that we are taken care of.
- **Our security:** Psalm 62:1-2. Keith told a story of quail hunting with his father. When the grass would get too thick, his dad would tell him to wait for him at the edge of the forest. Keith would watch his dad as long as he could, and as soon as he disappeared, Keith would run to the other side and wait for him. That sight of orange signaling his father was coming brought a rush of security to Keith. God wants to give a sense of security to us, His children.

God is affectionate towards us. Read Zephaniah 3:17 and consider that this passage is from the Old Testament.

Reflection Questions

1. The world has tainted what it means to be a father. In what ways, either from culture, or from your own personal experience, has your view of what it means to be a father been tainted?
2. Do you recognize how this affects how you view God as your Father?
3. Do you associate more with God being Creator/ King/ Authority, or God as your Father who is near to you? How does this impact your life?



4. Scan the list of things that God is to us. Which of these are difficult for you? In which of these items on the list have you seen God show up tremendously?