

Our Father: Healing From Father Wounds

Pastor Cameron Brice | Sunday, January 30th 2022

Jesus's teaching on prayer in Matthew 6 shows us that the foundation of all prayer is seeing God as Father.

Pray then like this: "Our Father..." - **Matthew 6:9a ESV**

Jesus was transforming His followers theology, ideology and ultimately how they approached God with this seemingly simple phrase.

Calling God Father was a paradigm shift in their understanding of God's personhood.

They knew God as the creator God of Genesis 1. They knew Him to be powerful, transcendent and even a God that rescues. However, they didn't know Him as personal, approachable or relational.

Jesus knew this partial understanding of God would affect the way they engaged with Him in prayer, and ultimately their faith in what He was willing and able to accomplish.

All Jewish men had a basic handle on the scriptures and knew many of the promises of God. However, no one knows better than Jesus that you can quote promises all day, but if you don't know God you can get stuck.

It was important to first and foremost address the way they saw God, so that their prayers would be effective.

The same is true for us!

When we approach the practice of prayer, it must be settled in our hearts that God is a good Father, and that we are fully loved by Him. Many of us agree with the statement that God is a father. But, do we believe that He is a good, approachable, loving, caring, trustworthy, present, or fair father?

What many pastors and I have found to be true over the years is that our answer to this question is affected largely by our relationship with our earthly father. The success and failures of our biological, step or adopted fathers effect how we see God the Father. *(It is possible to honor our fathers and acknowledge ways they intentionally and unintentionally hurt us.)*

All of us were raised by one of or a combination of six kinds of fathers.

The Good/Intentional Father

- Provide for their children financially, emotionally and being present.
- Maintain and develop strong relationships with their children.
- Can over promise but under deliver at times.

The Performance-Oriented Father

- Has demands for perfect obedience and high performance.
- Expresses love and approval only when a child has measured up.
- Out of a good intention of seeing his child succeed, focuses on improvement, even when addressing achievement.

The Passive Father

- Gives his all at work, but is often too exhausted to experience life with his family.
- Simply fails to be home, even when he is home.
- May provide financially, but not emotionally or through being present.

The Absentee Father

- Is not physically present in the home through divorce, abandonment or death.
- May come around from time to time, but is mostly disengaged from raising his children.

The Authoritarian Father

- More interested in the love of law, rather than the law of love.
- May be loving and tender to those outside the home, but stringent and harsh on those in the home.
- Go beyond performance-oriented father by demanding perfection through intimidation, fear and control.

The Abusive Father

- Verbally, emotionally, physically or sexually abusive towards their children.

The wounds of being raised with these types of fathers show up symptomatically through lies we may believe about God.

The Good Father

(You might be think how is it possible to be wounded by a good father? No father is perfect, and the negative implications can be much harder to detect in a child raised by a good father. It isn't dishonoring to acknowledge any area that this might show in our lives.)

- May believe that God has good intentions, but won't keep all of His promises.
- May have an unhealthy attachment to their earthly father that keeps them from "needing" to rely on God.
- May turn to their earthly father, before turning to their heavenly father to have their needs met.

The Performance-Oriented Father

- May feel God is only pleased with them when they are praying enough, reading their bible enough, and doing all the right religious things.
- May battle the fear that God will reject them for not being good enough.
- May think their relationship with God is solely based in hyper-religious activity.

The Passive Father

- May struggle to connect with God in a deep intimate relationship.
- May have difficulty believing God is interested in their life.
- May have great relationships with coworkers, within the church and those they share hobbies with, but struggle to connect at home.

The Absentee Father

- May carry a grudge against God, thinking He took their father away.
- May feel God loves them, but they need to maintain control of their lives instead of surrendering it to God.
- May carry hidden grief or guilt, feeling their father left because of their own fault.

The Authoritarian Father

- May believe God is a dictator and cruel person.
- May read the Bible focusing on holiness and judgement, while breezing past verses on love, mercy, grace and forgiveness.
- May be intolerant of others who do not think like they do.

These lies surface through the way we think and feel.

We may hear someone else receiving a prophetic, and think that could never be me. We pray and have a sinking feeling that it won't happen. We look around a room of people hands lifted, singing out to God and feel uncomfortable with that type of expression.

In my opinion, the first step in the journey of viewing God rightly, is to forgive those who have hurt us or caused us trauma.

A tool we have come to know and love for forgiveness and healing is called:

The 5 R's

Recognize.

“For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.” - **Luke 6:44 NASB 1995**

We need to recognize the affect these wounds have in our life, especially the ways in which they have become sin in our own lives.

Often, the way we've been sinned against becomes the way we sin. Recognizing this is the first step towards healing.

Repent and Confess

“But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” - **1 John 1:9 NLT**

It is important to first take responsibility for the way that these wounds show up as sin in our lives.

Release through Forgiveness

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” - **Matthew 6:14 NIV**

Next step in healing from what others have done to us, is to forgive them for what they have done. Forgiveness doesn't make what they did right, but it sets you free and releases forgiveness for your sins.

Reckon as Dead

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” - **Romans 6:11 NIV**

The feeling of being wronged or hurt many times won't go away over night. We need to continually reckon that hurt and any sin that surfaced as a result as dead.

Resurrect

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” - **Galatians 2:20 NIV**

Now walk in the life and freedom that comes from not being bound by the ways that others have wounded you!