

God, the Perfect Father

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There are a few roles in life that make a man feel his inadequacy as much as that of attempting to be a godly father. It is interesting to see the revelation that God has provided. What I have been most struck by are the references to God as the perfect Father.

What Kind of Father is God?

Each of us has or had an earthly father. Jesus instructed His disciples about their heavenly Father (cf. Matt. 6:9). His name or revealed character is to be “hallowed,” or set apart. He is to be treated as holy. He is the glorious Father. God as the perfect Father relates to our inner person. For that reason, He is described as “the Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9).

Only God is a perfectly faithful Father (cf. Ps 27:10). We will do well to entrust ourselves, our sons, and daughters into His care. He alone is also an eternal Father. Jesus was the perfect revelation of the Father and is therefore called “The everlasting Father” (Isa. 9:6), a phrase that accurately describes His Person. In essence, God the Father and God the Son are one (John 10:30); so the Father revealed Himself in the Son (1:18).

God is a Father whose perfect knowledge enables Him to discern all our needs. The all-inclusive, unlimited knowledge of God can greatly comfort us as we pray (Matt. 6:8). We are to trust the Lord and live above anxiety (vss. 31-32). God is also omnipotent. Laying hold of this truth can give us an incomparable sense of security (John 10:29).

Our heavenly Father exercises sovereign control over all life (John 5:26) and over all His creation (Isa. 64:8). He is the “Lord of heaven and earth” (Matt. 11:25), and He has a sovereign plan for His people (20:23) and His entire creation (Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:7). The sovereign plan of God involves the smallest details (Matt. 10:29).

In times of difficulty, we may not always be able to understand all the details of God’s plan. We can always trust His holy heart, however, for He can never be accused of any taint of evil. He can always be trusted as being absolutely good (Matt. 5:45) and perfect (vs. 48).

What does God do as Father?

God is pictured as the Father and Guide of the nation of Israel (Jer. 3:4). In the Old Testament, He is also revealed as a personal Father (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89:26), a truth which the New Testament affirms (2 Cor. 6:18). God’s fatherly care is promised to those who have no earthly father or husband to care for them (Ps. 68:5; cf. Jas. 1:27). God desires that they be defended (Ps. 82:3) and offers His support (Ps. 146:9).

God’s fatherly care involves His loving discipline (Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:7). He desires that our lives be fruitful (John 15:8). He promises to discipline bitterness (Matt. 18:35), to forgive the repentant (6:14-

15), and to reward all acts of love done for Him (vss. 1, 4, 8). The Lord promises to love and honor all who serve and love Him (John 12:26; 14:21).

God the Father is always working (John 5:17, 19). It is specifically stated that He works through prayer (Matt. 18:19). His great work is to reveal Christ (16:17) and draw people to Himself (John 6:37, 44; 10:29). In every way He who sent the Son promotes the honor of the Son (5:23).

God takes special pleasure and delight in Christ (Matt. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:17). He guided every word that Jesus spoke (John 12:49-50) and empowered all His works (10:37). He has given all things into the hands of the Son (Matt. 28:18; John 3:35).

God the Father is also a wonderful Provider. To His children He gives grace and peace (Gal. 1:3), guidance (1 Thess. 3:11), comfort (2 Thess. 2:16), the hope of resurrection (John 5:21) and a heavenly home (14:2), and every good and perfect gift (Jas. 1:17). Perhaps His greatest provision is His own fellowship (1 John 1:3).

How do We Respond to God as Father?

One of the greatest helps in being a godly father is to respond correctly to our heavenly Father. The Spirit of God desires to lead us into an intimacy with Him (Rom. 8:14-15; Gal. 4:6). As we allow ourselves to be vulnerable before the Lord, our spirit will be better able to nurture our children. The Lord alone is the supreme Father (Matt. 23:9). We can rejoice that His heart is compassionate and reconcilable (cf. Luke 15:20). Focusing on the heart of God can aid the transformation of our hearts (2 Cor. 3:18).

God's character as Father is worthy of imitation. As His children, we should grow in such spiritual qualities as His mercy (Luke 6:36), goodness (Luke 6:35), and perfect love (1 John 4:16). This involves getting to know Him better (2:3), which will result in a true reverence of Him.

God the Father, in His perfection, seeks to give us the gift of worshiping Him and enjoying His perfect character (John 4:23). The only correct response to Him is to worship Him in our spirit and in accordance with His revelation, or truth.

Worship includes praying to God as our Father (Eph. 3:14) and thanking Him as the author of all good (cf. Jas. 1:17). It supremely includes honoring or glorifying Him for who He is (Phil. 4:20). This is the supreme motivation for desiring to live a fruitful Christian life (John 15:8).

None of us has had a perfect earthly father, and none of us will ever be one, either. As we seek to trust, reverence, obey, love, and worship our heavenly Father however, we will be enhanced in all our fatherly responsibilities. As we become better earthly fathers, we will make it easier for our children to honor both us and God. May we pause to give thanks that there is one perfect Father who cares for us!