

Community Group Discussion Questions

“A Father’s Heart” Malachi 4:6 June 15, 2019

Getting Started

The way a person perceives God is the lens in which a person sees the world, and the way they see themselves. Our effort today is to change out the lens!

C.S. Lewis once said, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” When we study the Bible and understand who God is, it makes all the rest of the world make sense. We call this our ‘worldview’ or how we see and interpret the world. Our understanding of God deeply impacts our ‘worldview’. Thinking back to your childhood, what kind of worldview did you learn? Was it based on God or something else?

Going Deeper:

Recognizing the Role of Father: (Genesis 2:24)

1. **The Image:** “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son” **Exodus 4:22**
2. **The Investment:** “O, Lord you are our Father, we are the clay, you are our potter, we are all the work of your hand.” **Isaiah 64:8**
3. **The Instruction:** “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” **Deut. 6:7**

God describes Himself as our spiritual heavenly Father. We are then to take what we know of God and use it as our example when we parent our children. How did your parents reflect the character of God as Father to you?

Requirement of Respecting our Father:

1. **The Principle:** *"Honor your father and your mother"* **Exodus 20:12**
2. **The Promise:** *"that our days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."* **Exodus 20:12**

Honoring our parents is one of the 10 Commandments given by God to Israel. Doing this brings a promise of blessing. What are some ways you have chosen to honor your parents? Are there some ways you are not honoring them that need to be changed?

Rejection of Replicating our Father:

1. **His Beliefs:** *"Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?"* **Ezekiel 18:14-19**
2. **His Behaviors:** *"Don't be like your father's...."* **Zachariah 1:4**

Absent/Abusive/Authoritarian/Accusing/Addict

Growing up, you watched your father do many things and you may have felt that this was normal or acceptable. However, some of them may have been ungodly things. If he was absent, abusive, authoritarian, accusing, or an addict, you saw those things too. The passage above in Ezekiel makes it very clear that you don't have to become the same person your father was. You can reject the things about him that were ungodly and 'less than' and instead choose to pursue righteousness and 'more than'. To the degree you are comfortable, share with us some of the things your father did that were bad or good examples to you. How have you replicated or rejected those things?

Results of how we Regard our Father: *"For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."* **1 Corinthians 4:15**

Dictates my Filter > Drives my Feelings > Determines my Future

You may need to supplement your earthly father with other strong and mature Christian men who can do for you what your earthly father could not do. Read 2 Timothy 3:10-11. What did young Timothy learn from Paul about how to live as a Christian? What older man do you have in your life who can fulfill this role for you?

Reclaim the Reality of Father: *“and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”* **Luke 1:17**

1. **You are Acknowledged:** *“the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God”* **Luke 12:8**
2. **You are Accepted:** *“No longer a slave, but a Son”* **Galatians 4:7**
3. **You are Approved:** *“I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”* **2 Cor. 6:18**
4. **You are Affirmed:** *“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are!”* **1 John 3:1**

If your earthly father was never able to lead you spiritually, know that you have a heavenly Father who can lead you perfectly. He acknowledges you, accepts you, approves you, and affirms you. What does this reality mean to you? How does it help the healing begin in your heart?

Take Away: Do not allow your past pains from an earthly father prevent you from present pleasures from a Heavenly Father.

Prayer: