

Introduction:

- So many great movies are based around Father son/daughter relationships. One of those is Star Wars. *"Luke, I am your father. NOOOOOOoooo!"* So much of the story is wrapped up in the internal struggle of the character trying to find their father, get away from their father, to being a father. Often it is the father figures filling in between the lines: Obi Wan, Yoda, "Do or do not. There is no try."
- Those struggles are real. For many people, Father's Day is a downer because of the father they had, didn't have or sort of had. If that is you, don't check out on me this morning. I have good news. We are going to look at one of the best fathers ever found in the Word.
- God is the best Father any of us could ever have! Oh, that we would have faith to receive from Him all that our earthly fathers were unable to give us.
- Dads, get free today! Let God be the best Father you have ever had! Model your fatherhood after Him and you will make a powerful difference in your children's lives no matter how old they are!

I. God As Father

A. Jesus taught much about God as Father.

1. In Mt 6:9 Jesus taught the disciples to pray, *"Our Father, who art in heaven..."* It is a beautiful relational term. It was somewhat new in the personal closeness that Jesus brings to God. He wants to be close to us!
2. He also taught that God is not everyones Father. *"Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me." (John 8:42, NKJV)* He went on to tell those to whom He was speaking, "You are of your father the devil.
3. God is Father only of those who are led by the Spirit. Romans 8:9,14-15 Those who are led by the SPirit of God are the sons of God.
4. Everyone can't lay claim to knowing God as Father, only those who are born again. Jn 1:13, 12
5. The Father gives good gifts to those who ask. Mt 7:11

B. Jesus also taught about evil earthly father's:

1. *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11, NKJV)*
 - a) evil means just that...morally bad. Jesus is saying in this statement you will not be perfect fathers...But overall, even those fathers know how to give good gifts to their children.
 - b) Jesus acknowledges that there are earthly fathers who manifest more sin than others but most of them really do want more, or the best for their children. Even if they do not deliver on being good fathers.
2. But here is the good news! *"...how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"* God is the Good Father! If your earthly father let you down,

failed you, then look up to your heavenly. He restores, He heals, he brings recompense
Isaiah 35:4.

- C. Jesus introduces us to God the Father, the good good Father!
1. To make sure we understand that we have a good Father in God Jesus states: *"... He who has seen Me has seen the Father; ..."* (John 14:9, NKJV)
 2. How can you not like Jesus? He is good to everyone! Loves people, forgives people, boosts confidence, raises faith, heals, delivers, accepts...
 3. All of these brings out the best in people. If you did not have a good earthly father I want you to reach out to your heavenly Father and let Him supply all that you missed or have been missing! He will bring out the best in you!

II. What Makes God Such a Good Father? What makes God a good father will make you a good father.

- A. He tells us we are valuable in tender ways. *"Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?"* (Matthew 6:26, NLT)
1. You are what matters most! The word valuable means - superior too. You are superior to birds and flowers.
 2. Luke 15: Lost sheep, lost coin, lost sons. What was missing was valuable. It caused the shepherd to leave the 99, the woman to frantically search, the Father to accept his son back!
- B. He affirms us and who we are. He gives us identity and roots.
1. This is my son. And He brings me great joy. *"And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.'"* (Matthew 3:17, NLT) Affirmation helped the Son to over come. It tied him to father's strength.
 2. His spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are sons of God. Ro 8:15 Gal 4:6 Abba Father.
 3. I have a father! Every child wants to know that they have a father. 'Father' is used 17 times in the sermon on the mount. I believe that Jesus was making a point! "I have a father and he is approachable."
- C. He knows all about me. Ps 139, Luke 12:7 the number of hairs on my head. He knows detail upon detail. It is up to us to find out the details of our childrens lives. IE. Makyah when little always asked me, "How was your day PawPaw?" And she loves to be asked, "How was your day?" "What did you do today?"
- D. He thinks wonderful thoughts about me and tells them to me. Ps. 139
- E. He forgives often!
1. *"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you."* (Matthew 6:14, NLT)
 2. *"Then Peter came to him and asked, 'Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?'"* (Matthew 18:21, NLT)
 3. *"Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.' And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice."* (Luke 23:34, NLT)

- F. He rejoices over me. *"For the Lord your God is living among you...He will take delight in you with gladness. ... He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."* (Zephaniah 3:17, NLT) Laughter and smiles.
- G. He loves unconditionally. Never do I have to earn His loves. Prostitute, tax collector, pharisee, demon possessed. 2 Peter 3:9 He wants none of us to perish. Romans 5:8 while I was a sinner he died for me.
- H. He gives me security and significance. Everyone wants to be loved, accepted and significant. The receiving of unconditional love, acceptance, forgiveness, value, and identity (I have a home, a place to belong, etc) gives me security and significance.
- I. God is good Father...learn from the best!

III. As My Father Is So Shall I Be

- A. Since we have such an awesome heavenly Father, what can we do to be more like Him?
- B. Purpose to value your children. Make it your aim. Put it in your calendar as a reminder to do regularly. Discover their love language and communicate that way.
- C. Purpose to regularly affirm your children. Don't affirm what they do, affirm who they are. To affirm what one does will develop a performance identity. But to affirm who they are develops their own God given identity. Affirmation: "You are so creative. You are so thoughtful. I love watching others as you serve them...you are so kind when you do. I love your determination."
- D. Take time to find out what is happening in their lives. Show interest in the things they are interested in. Get to know about them.
- E. Think wonderful thoughts about them and tell them. Ie. That moon up there is the same moon I will be looking at when I am thinking about you.
- F. Be quick to forgive and quicker to ask forgiveness.
- G. Do things that cause your children to be secure in their relationship with you. Love well!

Conclusion:

- When my sister's fiancé passed away and was buried. I was walking through the cemetery and I noticed something about each of the graves. Funny how things stand out to you in such sad and solemn times. What I noticed is was the dash "-" on each gravestone. Have you ever noticed that?
 - That dash separates a persons beginning date and their ending date. The dash is small in size and looks somewhat insignificant, but in actuality, it represents great significance because it indicates the life that was lived in that span of time.
 - Your dash is an accumulation of how you live today, tomorrow, in five or fifty years or until the day, you die. I don't know about you, but I want my dash between my beginning and end dates to represent a powerful, lasting legacy, a time that is filled to capacity with living.
 - Dad's, this message this morning is about making that dash between the start and the finish of your life that much fuller. Dad's, I want to be an encouragement to you today.

- You choose how you live between your dates by the actions you take today, tomorrow and the years to come. Every day is a new canvas to paint the picture of how you want to be remembered in your dash. When you get to the end of your life what story will your dash tell?
- Pray for dads who want to put Jesus in their lives.
- For you older dads, share what you have learned along the way; IE. Rod Stewart, OooLaLa, *I wish that I knew what I know now / When I was younger.*