

God The Father

Հայր Աստուած

Proverbs 4:10-27

-It was extremely important for me to know that my dad would show approval of the decisions I made. When I received the calling to enter the ministry, I wanted to see dad approve it. He did, and I got his blessing. That was comforting to know that my dad liked my decisions. My dad approved of me.

-My son does the same. He likes to know that I approve of his decisions. In fact, lately, while I was in Germany we had a long conversation about this. I found out how important it was for him to know that I backed him up.

Our God is our Father. He loves to see his creation (you, me ...) to be in relationship with Him. Happy Father's Day to all fathers. And since I was not here for graduation Sunday, I salute and congratulate all the students and their parents. I see a relationship between Father's day and graduates. There are no children without fathers, and one cannot be called a father without having children. Graduates, your fathers (parents) have had a major role in your life. Fathers, (parents) God made you a father so that you model God the Father in your relationships.

The most common prayer that many of us have memorized is the "Lord's Prayer." We had sermon series on this. It starts by calling **God, Daddy, Abba, Hayrig. "Our Father who art in heaven."**

How do you picture God in your life? Is He your Father?

In the Old Testament God was called "Father" seven times. The Israelites perceived God as the **Almighty, Creator, King, Redeemer, Provider, Judge, Protector...** In the New Testament we find Jesus call his Father, *Abba*, *Daddy*, *Hayrig*. **Jesus calls God Father 150 times**. There must be a reason Jesus stressing this point.

Jesus is teaching us that God is not up there away from us somewhere in the clouds. **Our God is the God of relationships.** He is the Triune God. The Three, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are in a relationship. They teach us about having healthy relationships.

Fathers, God gave you the role of a father. The best example of fatherhood is our heavenly Father. What does it mean to call God “Our Father”?

1. God the Father is a Caring and Loving Father

King David writes:

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. (Psalm 103:13 ESV)

The relationship of Jesus with his Father:

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.” (John 15:9 ESV)

Peter says it best:

casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7 ESV).

Don't you see that anxiety around us has become an epidemic? It is all over us, fathers, sons, graduates, parents... The USA is the land of opportunities and achievements and also a land of anxiety. **Casting all... says the Peter.** The Greek exact translation is **to throw upon, place upon.** Fathers and sons and daughters, our Father who is in heaven is a loving, caring Father. Learn to throw upon Him your life, so that **He will build your character and self esteem in this tough world.**

Our Father, our God, loves us. And wants us to learn to be fathers, sons and daughters.

2. God the Father is Trustworthy.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17 ESV) (who does not change like shifting shadows NIV)

Consistency is so important in our lives. We live in a world where things change rapidly. I am not against change to improve things; but we live in a world where relationships are in danger. **We are a society where we lost loyalty and trustworthiness.** There was a time when employees and employers were loyal to each other. One used to stay many long years in a job. We lost it. Marriages are also fragile. Divorce is not going down. Children need stability. I pray as a father to be that man, to be that father who brings stability to my family.

Where do I learn that from? God is trustworthy; God is loyal; God is consistent.

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:29 ESV)
“God will never go back on his promises” (Living Bible)

Listen to the Word of God according to James. Fathers, and sons and daughters, every gift is given to you from God. Your family is a gift. Your father is a gift. Fathers, your children are a gift. Remember that God is faithful to keep His promises. He will not change in His promises. Be careful how you use your gift.

3. What is expected from the Children?

A: Be attentive to God’s Word

Proverbs chapter 4 is a great chapter for valuable instructions from a father to his children. Solomon, a wise man who wrote these poetic verses, is instructing children to be attentive to the words of their parents.

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, (Proverbs 4:1 ESV); **Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.** (Proverbs 4:10 ESV); **My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.** (Proverbs 4:20 ESV)

A father is instructing his son/daughter. You can also look at these verses as God the Father instructing His children.

-In verses 10-19 Solomon uses **words of motion: led you in the path, walk, step, run, stumble, go...**

I have led you in the paths of uprightness. When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble... do not let go (do not stop)... Do not enter (do not set foot) the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on ...they have made someone stumble... the path of the righteous (Proverbs 4:10-19 ESV)

The message is clear: you can go two directions. The warning for walking in the way of evil is an eye opener. It is a warning; do not go there... turn away and pass on.... Do not look back. There is an escalation of sin once you enter it. Such are addictions... all kinds of addictions.

Psalms 1 reminds us: **Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;** (Psalm 1:1 ESV)

Three verbs: **walks**, then **stands**, finally **sits** there, gets stuck, gets hooked....

Verbs of motion: from walking to sitting. From simply walking with wicked friends all the way to sitting there and eventually getting really **inside that group**. Also the verbs have other meanings:

walking (way of thinking),
standing in the way (behavior),
sit in the seat (is the position of leadership).

The encouraging part is that we are children of light (as Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5). Solomon says the same thing: **But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.** (Proverbs 4:18-19 ESV)

B: Guard your heart

My son, be attentive to my words; ***incline your ear*** to my sayings. Let them not escape from ***your sight (eyes)***; keep them within ***your heart***. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to ***all their flesh (whole body)***. Keep your ***heart*** with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you ***crooked speech***, and put devious talk far from you. Let your ***eyes*** look directly forward, and your ***gaze (pupil of the eye)*** be straight before you. Ponder the path of your ***feet***; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your ***foot away*** from evil.
(Proverbs 4:20-27 ESV)

Solomon uses body parts, ear, eye, flesh (body) and the heart to give instructions.

All body parts are to be committed to the right way:

-The ear and eye are the **receptive organs for wisdom**- they can absorb wisdom.

-The foot, lips, mouth are **active organs**.

-The heart is the center, giving direction to the body. In the Biblical language, all life emerged out of the heart. The heart was the center of life, emotions, thoughts and decision.

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

(Proverbs 4:23 ESV)

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

(Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

How do you guard your heart? How you keep your heart vigilant?

Guard your emotions. What movies you see, how you put things in your mind, heart, soul. How do you feed your mind?

God our heavenly Father does love us and wants from us our heart: to love Him and worship Him.

Our Father, Our God, Our Daddy,” seeks us. He does not give up from us.

Let me end with this story written by my friend from Ainjar who resides in Cairo, Egypt.

I met this man in downtown New Delhi last December.... he was passing in front of a spice shop, where I was shopping for tea and spices for my wife, and nuts for my daughters, to take with me to Cairo the next day.

He looked like he had just emerged from a movie screen... his outfit, beard, hair, and that copper things that he carried...I took out my iphone to take his picture. He diverted from his route, and stopped by me; greeted me with a smile, and offered me his hand. I took and shook it out of politeness... but left it immediately out of disgust... the dirty hand of a filthy Indian Sikh beggar, I thought.

He asked me something, that after being translated into Indian-English by the manager of the spice shop, meant "where do you come from?" A complicated question for someone like me...I said, "Egypt" and a long round of interrogation kicked off, stopping at the piece of info of my being Christian, and always through the translation of the shop manager:

-So isn't it Christmas today? Yes ,it was the 24th of December, but I was far from getting him into the long story of my being Armenian, and our Christmas being at a different date, etc...

- Yes, it is.

- So are you here with your family to celebrate Christmas?

- No, a business trip

- You left your family behind on a holy day like this, to run behind money?

- I need money to raise my children

- But they need a father around them in such days to be raised like real children.

Your are running behind the treasures of the world, **but the real treasures are in your own home...**

I couldn't believe that this strange dirty man, with his strange appearance, was teaching me how to be a father. He turned his back, and left without even a farewell...

And I was later really so glad, that I didn't act in an impolite way with him... the spice-man, my translator, asked me not to be angry at the man...he had a family

one day, a wife and 4 children, and he had lost them in a huge fire in that neighborhood 50 years ago.”

Time with the Lord everyday...

*Save me from bloodguilt, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue will sing aloud of Your righteousness.
O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth will declare Your praise.
For You do not desire sacrifice, or I would bring it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and contrite heart,
O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51:14-17)*