

**Session #7 LESSON PLAN #5 The Father - Heart of God**

- BEGIN BY OPENING IN PRAYER
- LIST A HIGHLIGHT FROM LAST WEEK & CHALLENGE YOU ARE FACING

Highlight

Challenge

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- DID YOU SPEND TIME in DEVOTIONS THIS PAST WEEK? TELL US ABOUT IT .

**Lesson Four: Father Heart of God**

God can be described in a lot of ways. He is our creator and savior. He is holy, loving and all-powerful. In the New Testament, we come to know Him as Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit. When Jesus came he showed us what the Father is like and how to have a relationship with Him. He also taught His disciples to address God in prayer saying, "Our Father who art in heaven." When you come to faith in Jesus, you are adopted into God's family (Romans 8:15). God becomes your father.

We all have an earthly father. Like it or not our relationship (or lack of relationship) with our earthly father has significantly shaped the way we each view God as our heavenly Father for good or for bad.

Circle the words below that best describe your earthly father. Then check the areas that describe God as a perfect father.

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distant and disinterested     | <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful to protect and provide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind and compassionate        | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplines because he loves me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passive and cold              | <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to help me                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nitpicking or perfectionistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Condemning and unforgiving      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm and accepting            | <input type="checkbox"/> Full of grace when I fail       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow to anger                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Let's me do whatever I want     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient and harsh           | <input type="checkbox"/> Unconditionally loves me        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too busy for me               |  |

In what ways do you believe God is like or not like your earthly father?

Read Matthew 7:7-11 **Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are 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!**

What does this verse teach us about God?

Read Daniel 3:13-28. Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. 22 Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here! Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. 27 And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. 28 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

What do these verses teach us about God's protection of us?

Read Matthew 6:31-34. **Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**

Why are God's children not to worry?

### Our Father's Love

Read Luke 15:11-24. **And he said, There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me. And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.**

**But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to celebrate..**

What are the similarities between this father and God the Father?

Read Hebrews 12:5-11. **And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?**

*My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.*

*For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.*

**It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate**

**children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

Why does God discipline us?

What are the results of God's discipline?

Read Romans 8:31-39. **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,**

*For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.*

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Describe the love of God in your own words.

List some ways God has revealed His love to you?



#### YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Share with the one taking you through this lesson any painful memories of your relationship with your earthly father.
- Pray the following prayer: "God, I believe you are my perfect Father. I choose to believe what the Bible says about you rather than my experiences. Open the eyes of my heart to see you more clearly as you really are."
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share the gospel this week.
- Spend daily time with God doing your devotions (praying and reading the Bible-use the 3 questions as you read)

CLOSE IN PRAYER TOGETHER

Schedule Your next time together: Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_