

# Fatherhood: Beyond the Obvious

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In Luke 11:9-13 Jesus used our earthly fathers as a lesson about God, the Father we have in Heaven.

9. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
10. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.
11. What **father** among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;
12. or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?
13. If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,  
**how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"**

**Parents have a purpose in God's plan.**

**It goes beyond just the obvious reasons for having them.**

**In May we celebrate Mother's Day.** Of course we know God made motherhood so we could be conceived and born. And mothers are there to take care of us until we're able to take care of ourselves. But there's a deeper level behind motherhood in God's plan. They're there to display special things about God. In Isaiah 66:13 God says, "**As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.**"

God comforts his children, as a good mother comforts those God entrusted to her care. Mothers should encourage, care for, and train their children as God does for us who belong to him. Everything was made, each in its own way, to display God's nature and wonder. Motherhood serves this special purpose: it displays some of God's important attributes.

**So what about fathers?** Like our mothers, fathers give us life, and are there to care for us until we can go out on our own. But there are special duties God assigns to fathers so they can show more about our Creator and his care for us.

**Throughout the Bible God's often called "our Father".**

When Moses was reminding Israel about how she rebelled, he said in Deuteronomy 32:6, "**Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?"**

In Isaiah 63 the prophet prayed in verse 16 saying, "**For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.**" Again in Isaiah 64 he said in verse 8, "**But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.**"

In the *Lord's Prayer* in Matthew 6 Jesus taught us to pray to God as "our Father" in Heaven.

**The whole family structure is organized very purposefully in God's world.** It's that way so we can learn how to live as part of *God's* family. Colossians 3:18-21 summarizes the roles we have in our own families representing the family of God. It says,

18. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
19. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.
20. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
21. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Wives should help their husbands in the responsibilities and leadership God assigns to them. Husbands are to be loving and kind leaders putting their wives' and family's needs above their own comforts. Ephesians 5:25 "**husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.**" Children should honor the authority God gives to their parents. Fathers are to handle their leadership role with the same loving tenderness God shows toward us. Ephesians 6:4 expands on this advice to fathers. It says, "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**" Fathers often have to discipline us, but it should be without provoking us. It should be to help us grow responsibly. Even the hard times God brings us through are there to teach us so we grow more and more in Christ-likeness.

God as our Father *provides* for us, *protects* us, and *directs* us in godly living. Our human fathers are commissioned to be agents of God in these things, though they aren't able to do them perfectly.

**First: God our Father provides for us.**

In James 1:17 the Bible says, "**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.**"

This means that everything we ever had, have now, or ever will have is a gift of God. He gives us whatever health we ever had, our opportunities, and abilities. He's even the source of our motivation when we do something right and good. He causes whatever success we have in our efforts and work. Whatever we have comes originally from him. He might use fathers and others as his agents, but all they provide originates in God enabling them.

Our fathers here on earth are to be like God our Father by providing for their families. They're one of the means God uses in meeting our daily needs. When our fathers work it reminds of how God called our first parents to work 6 days every week. When fathers cease from regular work on the Sabbath, it's as God our father ceased creating new kinds of things after all he intended was made.

When fathers work to earn their living it's not just to get paid or to please bosses or clients, it's to please God. Ephesians 6:6-7 says they should work, "[not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,](#)"

When fathers fail to be good models of God our provider their families suffer. 1 Timothy 5 says in verse 8, "[But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.](#)"

In our text from Luke 11 Jesus says in verses 11-13,

11. [What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;](#)  
12. [or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?](#)  
13. [If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"](#)

When fathers go off to work, their children should understand that they're first of all being servants of God. We should pray for all the fathers, understanding their responsibility and the demands on their time. When their labor brings in family provisions we should humbly thank God as well as appreciating our fathers. Our Heavenly Father provides the job, gives them strength, and causes every success in their work.

Fathers might rent, buy, or build us a home. They might try to furnish it for our safety and comfort here on earth. They might make repairs and fix things up to make our homes more enjoyable. Our Father in Heaven has prepared an amazing eternal dwelling place where we will be with him in glory. It will last forever as our safe and comfortable home.

God also commissions fathers to provide for the spiritual enrichment of their families. They're to pray for their children, teach them to be faithful in the local church family, and to make sure they're learning God's word and ways.

In Job 1:5 we have a good example of a father back in ancient times. It says, "[And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.](#)"

Today since the death of our Savior, we're no longer supposed to bring burnt offerings to God. Jesus was the Lamb of God, the final sacrifice for the sins of his people. But good fathers still pray for their children, for their salvation, and their holy walk in the Lord.

### **God our Father also *protects* his family.**

We're reminded in Psalm 23 about the way our Good Shepherd watches out for us. It says in verse 4, "[Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.](#)" God, our Father, watches over us day and night, moment by moment.

So many times in the Bible we read about fathers who protected their families. They defended them from attackers, helped them through famines and disasters, and led their families in the right way to deal with their sins. Noah built the great ark to obey God which included protecting his family from the coming flood. Job got up extra early every day to intercede with God for his family. Abraham defended his family from enemy attackers, even going to war to protect them.

Our Heavenly Father is there for us even through the disasters and crimes committed against us. He doesn't always see it best that we never go through difficult times. But he prepares us to endure them with his care and comfort. And he assures those who are his that even the hard times work together in his plan for good. Many have found great comfort in those hard times from Romans 8:28, "[And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.](#)"

Our fathers here on earth are called to protect us as God's agents. Our earthly fathers should be there to see us through our earthly calamities and challenges. Their job is not so much to keep us from ever experiencing them, because our human fathers can't. But God calls them to prepare us to endure through them, not to run from the challenges, but to deal with them in God honoring ways.

When our fathers are protectors, though imperfect ones, they illustrate God's perfect protection of us through whatever challenges that come along.

### **God our Father also *directs* his family.**

Our Heavenly Father gives us his perfect direction in his word. He knows perfectly what's going to happen. His word prepares us for whatever comes along. It shows us what's right and best for us in all our decisions.

God's word is where our human fathers should get their principles for the home. They teach their children to read and study their Bibles. They help them learn to pray, worship, and serve Christ in the way God's word teaches us. When our own fathers carry out their responsibilities as they should, they're showing how God as our Father is our teacher and guide for life.

Our human fathers should give us direction in the best way they know how. They can advise us about budgeting the time and money God gives us. They can help us learn what's right and wrong in the eyes of God. Good fathers try to prepare us with God's word and give us good examples to follow. That's why they might not always let their children go along with popular trends. They should introduce them to more godly heroes than the world idolizes. They need to realize that certain movies, games, or songs aren't good things to fill their heads.

No earthly father knows for sure what lies ahead for his children. But he's called to prepare them as best he can for the things they might one day face.

Our own fathers might help us plan for our careers and financial future. They might plan family outings and vacations. They might even help us learn to drive, balance a bank account, and learn to fish. Above all, our fathers should teach their children the way of salvation in Christ, help prepare them to be admitted to the Lord's Table, and do their best to show how to live for God's glory. But behind all their efforts is the guidance of our Heavenly Father.

When we see what fathers are called to do, we should pray for them.

### **We should appreciate all that God is as our Heavenly Father.**

In 1 John 3:1 the Bible says, "[See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; ...](#)" It's God our Father who moves us to understand, trust, and obey him by his work of grace in our hearts. This is far more than the most persuasive human father can do. It's not that we deserve God's care and provisions. It's by God's grace, an idea the world can't comprehend. Even us as God's children understand it so imperfectly. Grace is the undeserved love that redeems us and makes us God's children forever.

As good fathers continue to be there for their children, even when they disappoint them, so much more our Father in Heaven will not give up on those he chose eternally. In fact, it's for our failures that Christ came and died.

That's what fatherhood should teach us. It points to the *Father of all our fathers*, and should show us something of his amazing care and love. We should appreciate the amazing love our Heavenly Father has for us, though it's undeserved.

We should want to live as those who bring honor to him, and to show our humble gratitude. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "[... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.](#)"

**In June we celebrate Father's Day.** It's not a biblical holiday, but it's a good time to show some special appreciation for our fathers. God set up human fatherhood as one of his means for providing for, protecting, and directing his people. Behind all that these earthly fathers are called to do, we should remember the perfect loving concern our Heavenly Father has for us.

How will we show our special thanks to our God our Father every day? We should shine for him, show our love for him, and show our dedication to the rest of his family. It's our duty to honor our Heavenly Father who has loved his children forever. He gave his Son to suffer and die for us who know him. And he will always be there to *provide* for us, to *protect* us, and to *guide* us through even those hardest of times. Call upon him. Look to him. Trust that he's there for you as one of the children he eternally and perfectly loves.

(Bible quotations are from the *English Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.)