

Our Father's Love Demonstrated

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him (John 14:23).

Unique, awesome, incredible and overwhelming are just a few words that are overused and misused. And yet there is one area where each one of these words does appropriately apply: the love of God our Heavenly Father.

An earthly father cannot perfectly duplicate the love of God our Father, but he can, through His grace, come close. Although the same principles below apply to mothers as well, God has given fathers a special place in a child's life. A child often visualizes God the Father by what he knows of his own earthly father - a great responsibility, to be sure, and one not to be taken lightly. A person's life has often been affected positively or negatively by his father's influence. What a blessing a person has when her own father strives to be the kind of father God is to His children.

Children know when they are loved. A father's love is demonstrated when he is:

PRESENT AND INVOLVED

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb... Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them (Psalm 139:15-16).

You are near, O Lord, and all Your commandments are truth (Psalm 119:151). Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1a).

A child needs his father's involvement more than anything money can buy. A father can become involved in his child's life long before his birth. Along with his mother, the father plans for the arrival of the child. He is so proud to call the newborn baby "his" child and makes every attempt to be near him as much as possible - involved in every aspect of his life. This is every bit as true in the case of an adopted child - planned for and loved even before the first meeting. No expense or effort is too much. A father's love for his child properly exercised is sacrificial and all consuming.

DISCIPLINING

For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights (Proverbs 3:12).

A godly father takes the time to correct those things that need to be righted. An indulgent father sometimes thinks that allowing his child to make choices before she is ready and giving her everything she asks for is showing love. In reality it is neglect. It takes more care, time and love to mold a child's character than it does to grant her every wish.

MERCIFUL

For the Lord your God is a merciful God...(Deuteronomy 4:31). Be merciful to me according to Your word (Psalm 119:58b).

A godly father is merciful - strong in guidance and discipline but swift to show mercy. Knowing that he has been shown mercy and grace by his heavenly Father, a godly father passes on what he has learned about the everlasting and faithful grace of God to his child.

A HELPER

*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may abide with you forever— ... But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you (John 14:16, 26).*

A godly father spends time helping a child accomplish what he is capable of doing at his age. He does not do it for him, but stands ready to give advice or assist when needed. It is much easier to take over the task and do it, but the child will learn best by doing - with possible assistance - than watching his father do it. "How may I help you?" is much better than "Let me do that for you."

A REFUGE

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms... (Deuteronomy 33:27).

...Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9)

The world is full of painful experiences. A godly father can offer refuge from those times - a band aid and comfort, a shoulder to cry on, a listening ear or just the knowledge that he is there if needed.

A DEFENDER

...God is for me (Psalm 56:9) ...God is my defense (Psalm 59:9) The Lord God is a sun and shield...(Psalm 84:11) Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him (Proverbs 30:5) for the Lord your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you (Deuteronomy 20:4) ...for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He has promised you (Joshua 23:10)

A child not only needs a refuge - a place to go when times get tough, but someone who will fight for him when the bullies of life appear. A loving dependable father makes all the difference.

God the Father is our refuge and strength. Through His Son Jesus Christ, He fought sin's battle for us and won. Through His Holy Spirit, He gives us an Advocate for reconciliation. And there is nothing that can separate those who trust Him from His love. *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).* What a unique, awesome, incredible and overwhelming demonstration of Fatherly love - one worth striving to duplicate.