

Transforming Daily
“ . . . our Father in heaven . . . ”
Matthew 6:9

The Lord's Prayer, or more accurately the model prayer, reveals something to us about our heavenly Father. And in doing so, offers insight as to how earthly fathers should conduct themselves. When Jesus offers this prayer as an example of humility and instruction, He also emphasizes some characteristics inherent in our relationship with God.

One of God's characteristics is holiness (His chief attribute). A second characteristic is authority, He is to be willfully obeyed. Another characteristic is provider. A fourth characteristic is protector. God is also our redeemer. One other characteristic is reverence, He is to be revered, that is, respected by His children. Whereas God is unique in His attributes, there are, what is called, communicable attributes. What this means is that some of God's characteristics such as love, kindness, mercy, etc., can be directly applied by us. Other attributes like His omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, etc., are unique to Him alone.

It is enough that we can share in the characteristics and attributes that are communicable. The question is, are we willing? Earthly, born again, fathers can learn from this model prayer how we should treat our children and how we should expect our children to treat us. Because of Christ, we are holy, that is, lower case holy. We are set apart by God through Christ to live for Him. Our children should see us distinct in our conduct toward God and His Word.

In doing so, dads gain trust. Willful obedience from our children is earned as we keep our word with respect to their trust. Two responsibilities of earthly father's are provider and protector. Sadly, many fathers have relegated these privileges to their spouses, government entities, or just abdicated the whole idea all together, or so they think. As far as a redeemer, obviously there is only one, Jesus Christ, but fathers certainly can lead their children to the Lord, and it is commanded of them. The last characteristic, reverence, or respect, is to be freely offered by a father's children, but it will not come if first the father doesn't respect himself or gives reason for his children to disrespect him (spouses are integrally related to this process and vice versa).

You get the picture. God is the supreme example of everything we are to be and to do. "Dads," what is your reputation with your children? What do your children say about you? Is fatherhood a high priority with you? Are you blaming your dad for your present failures with your children? Trust the Lord and turn you attention to our Father in heaven.