

Father's Day 2025 **A Father's Role Model**

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(Matthew 6)

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Intro: It's Father's Day! A day for card companies to provide an equal opportunity to separate you and your money so you can buy cards and gifts, just like you did for your mother, to celebrate dear old dad!

Like Mother's Day, the origins of Father's Day, as we celebrate it in the United States, had nothing to do with such commercialization.

In 1910, the daughter of a widowed Civil War veteran and father of six children, she chose her dad's June birthday as the day to celebrate and honor his courage, selflessness and love.

Out of that single celebration emerged our present-day Father's Day. Of course, it took a Texan to make it official. In 1966, LBJ signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of every June as the official day to celebrate fathers.

So, Happy Father's Day y'all! And, with this opportunity to speak today, it seemed reasonable to share a few thoughts on fatherhood from God's Word.

Before opening our Bibles, let's turn to the Divine Author – our Heavenly Father – and ask for His guidance and wisdom.

PRAY

Today, I want us to consider what we can learn about fatherhood from what is referred to as “The Lord's Prayer.”

When Pastor Dave preached a message from Luke 11 earlier this year,¹ one section caused one of those “a-ha” moments for me with an insight on that Scripture passage I don't remember having made before.

Matthew, in his Gospel, has a similar account which will be our primary text today. Both Luke and Matthew tell us that after teaching His disciples how to pray, our Lord unpacks His perspective on prayer and gets to a point where He compares the gift-giving of earthly fathers to the giving of good gifts by our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 7:9b-11

“...what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being 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!

For me, when I read this, the word “evil” gets my attention. His immediate audience are His disciples. What is meant by calling them “evil?”

The Greek word used here often depends on the context for its meaning. It is the word used to describe the Devil – the evil one. But here, the context is the giving of gifts by a father.

So, my understanding of the “evil” in view here is the sin of stubborn, self-centered selfishness, a grudging spirit that would rather keep what a father has rather than give what is good and necessary to his children.²

Yet the dads Jesus describes, in spite of that natural bent, still give gifts to their children. And if they in their imperfection give good gifts, how much more will your infinitely perfect and loving Heavenly Father give good gifts to His children who ask?

So, we earthly dads (as well as everyone else) are imperfect living in an imperfect world. Yet, most fathers desire to give their children good gifts which Jesus commends and compares it to the good gifts our perfect Heavenly Father gives.³

¹ Sharpening Discipleship's Focus; The Guts to Pray for THAT!; Luke 11:1-13; January 19, 2025

² Expositor's Greek Testament; Matthew; A.B. Bruce Matthew 7:11; from <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/egt/matthew/7.htm>

³ Deuteronomy 32:3-4

It was this comparison that caused me to look back to the model prayer Jesus had just taught His disciples.

This model prayer is included in an extended explanation of how God as our Heavenly Father cares for us and how dependence on Him is always for our best.

Interwoven in all of these parables and divine instruction, I wondered what I might learn about fatherhood from the Lord's Prayer with my Heavenly Father as my role model?

All of us have, or had, imperfect fathers in this imperfect world. Birth fathers, step-dads, adopted dads as well as other men – spiritual dads, coaches, teachers, employers – who acted as mentors and father-figures.

If you are a dad, perhaps one or more men served as a role model for how you wanted to parent your children. My role models for fatherhood were primarily my dad along with some of my friend's dads, and dads at our church. To be honest, as I was growing up, I did not think of God in terms as a fatherly role model.

Now, that lack of insight didn't keep me from learning about good parenting from God's Word.⁴ Yet I missed out on the blessing of seeing what I hope to share with you today.

Let's read through this familiar text to remember what Jesus says to the disciples.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,**

**As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.**

Our Heavenly Father as a Father's Role Model

Although I am addressing dads on this Father's Day, everyone here can benefit from the lessons we learn from this model prayer. Jesus' description of our heavenly Father's care provides guidance for living life as a citizen of Heaven.

But since today is Father's Day, I will be making specific applications primarily to dads!

So, what can I learn about being a dad, being a parent, being a mentor from this prayer?

If you have put your faith in Christ alone as Savior, then His Father is your Father, too!⁵ Which is why Jesus starts off this prayer with the words, "Our Father..."

Jesus includes Himself in terms of relating to God the Creator and Sustainer of our universe as Father. Remember that Jesus is speaking to His disciples – men who have believed in Jesus as Messiah. So they have a relationship to the Lord God Almighty as their Heavenly Father.

Now I recognize there are people who have a hard time thinking of God as a father—much less calling him that. For them, in their experience, the word "father" is hardly a term of endearment. It conjures up images of rejection, anger, absence, and even abuse.

Hopefully as we walk through this passage, seeing this model of fatherhood, we will see what a father is like and what is reasonable for a child to expect from his or her father. And in this prayer, we learn our heavenly Father is indeed **THE** role model for fathers.

⁴ I highly recommend Charles Swindoll's "YOU AND YOUR CHILD." Swindoll walks you through the Scriptures, especially Proverbs, to encourage parents at any stage of raising children with wisdom and faith in the Lord.

⁵ John 1:12

We can sum up what this passage teaches us about fatherhood in four words: **Respect, Provision, Forgiveness, and Protection.**

RESPECT

Three of the words we will examine — Provision, Forgiveness, and Protection — show what we can learn about fatherhood from our Father in heaven.

But the first word I want us to look at — Respect — shows us how fathers and all believers are to approach and interact with our Father in heaven. And within that truth, there is an important lesson about fatherhood we can learn.

In verse 9, Jesus starts his prayer with these familiar words:

MATTHEW 6:9b
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

“Hallowed” is not a word we often use other than when we pray this prayer. So, what is meant by “hallowed?” The word has to do with holiness – keeping our Heavenly Father’s name holy. It is one word that encapsulates the first three of the ten commandments.⁶

The idea here is that of reverence, honor, respect. Proverbs 9:10 summarizes this for us:

PROVERBS 9:10
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Our Heavenly Father is to be set apart as holy in our lives. It means we don't try to whittle Him down to size.

It means we acknowledge that there is no one else like Him. It means we know He alone is glorious, infinite, eternal, righteous, pure, and just.⁷

⁶ Exodus 20:2-7

⁷ Isaiah 44-45 provide multiple statements from the LORD stating He alone is God and Isaiah 6:3 makes clear the LORD is “holy, holy, holy.”

Fathers, how do your kids – and the world around you – see how important it is to you that God is respected in your life?

What do they observe you giving priority to by the choices you make with your time, your money, and by seeing what you are most passionate about? Do those things reflect your respect for your Heavenly Father?

That's why what Jesus says next in this prayer is so important:

MATTHEW 6:10
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.

Are you yielded to your Heavenly Father’s will in your life? Your Father is “hallowed” when doing His will takes precedence over other things. That shows you respect your Father in Heaven.

BUT – and this is an important point – as Jesus is teaching His disciples about prayer and “hallowing” our Heavenly Father, throughout what He teaches, Jesus underscores God Who is holy, hallowed, unique, one-of-a-kind, and a distinct, He is also the believer’s Father in Heaven Who is crazy in love with His children and invites them to pray, to ask, to seek, to knock.

In a word, our Heavenly Father is accessible! Yes, He is holy, yet He is accessible because of what Christ did on the cross for us!

As fathers we can learn from this...in respecting your Father in Heaven, let that be reflected in how you respect others who have been created in the image of God. This is especially true of family members, especially your wife and your children.

The first word that instructs us as fathers is the word "Respect."

PROVISION

The second word—Provision—relates to what Jesus teaches next. Jesus encourages us to pray,

MATTHEW 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread.

Within the context of what Jesus is teaching both here and in Luke, our Lord makes clear that along with our spiritual relationship with Him, He also cares about our physical needs. God cares about our daily lives and concerns.

In other words, our heavenly Father wants to provide for us. Later in Matthew 6, Jesus says:

MATTHEW 6:31-32

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

Following our Heavenly Father’s lead, dads will make sure his family has what is needed...food, clothing, and shelter, along with love, spiritual guidance, encouragement, face-to-face attention, physical activity, rest, safety, and more.

This kind of provision is what an earthly father is called to do for his family. In fact, earthly fathers, and mothers, are the primary means by which our heavenly Father provides for families.

As a father, providing for your family might look different than other dads. For instance, if you are not working but your wife is, support her by caring for the household responsibilities. Perhaps both parents work, balancing those household responsibilities is called for. Because one of things you are providing your children is a model of what married life looks like.

The Apostle Paul is rather straightforward about this when he writes to Timothy. He says:

1 TIMOTHY 5:8

...if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Now, a quick word of warning: a lot of men think this mandate to provide gives them permission to bury themselves in their work. The call to provide becomes an obsession so huge that other responsibilities are neglected.

It's important to note that Jesus, in this prayer, says, *"Give us this day our daily bread."* He doesn't ask for prime rib. He asks for daily bread.

There is a tendency among us men to measure our worth and identity by how much we provide for our families. This is precisely the problem Jesus was confronting when he said, *"Don't worry about what you will eat or drink or wear."*

One more thing - dads, included in what you provide, be sure to provide YOU!

Just as God your Father is accessible to you, be sure you are accessible to your kids.

Take time to be with your kids. Let them know just how special they are to you.

As we fathers respect our Heavenly Father, we will provide for our families, just as He wants to provide for us.

FORGIVENESS

The third word – Forgiveness – is what Jesus now addresses as we dads learn another way our Heavenly Father provides a model for us earthly dads. Jesus says,

MATTHEW 6:12

**And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.**

As an expression of his love, grace, and mercy, our heavenly Father is a forgiving Father. We earthly dads need to be forgiving as well.

But first, let’s understand what this forgiveness is within the context of the prayer and what Jesus states after the prayer.

Isn't it interesting that right after providing this model prayer to His disciples, the one element of the prayer that Jesus immediately elaborates on is forgiveness. He says,

MATTHEW 6:14-15

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

The forgiveness in view here is NOT the forgiveness of the penalty of sin – which is death -- offered by Jesus to all those who believe in Him for everlasting life. There are no conditions required for that forgiveness other than one – believe!

But the forgiveness in view here has a requirement – you are to forgive others for your Father to forgive you. What kind of forgiveness is that? It is forgiveness with a view to restoring fellowship.

Remember when, in the Upper Room, Jesus washed the feet of the disciples? When He came to Peter, Peter basically said, “No way are you going to wash my feet!”

To which the Lord replied,

JOHN 13:8-11; 12-14

...“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean...So when He had washed their feet...He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

Which is another way to say, “*forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*”

We ask God to forgive us and restore us to fellowship in the same way we forgive others who have harmed us, seeking restoration to fellowship.

If we have unforgiveness in our hearts, then we are acting in a way that is not pleasing to our Father, making our prayers and fellowship with Him difficult.

So, how do we apply that as earthly dads with our children?

Being a father brings a lot of blessings, a lot of joy, a lot of laughter and fun. But it is also quite costly to be a father. The biggest cost is not financial; it is emotional. Fathers must make an emotional investment in their kids. Kids need affirmation, encouragement, and expressions of love. And most of all, kids will need to be forgiven.

At various times in being a dad, you will have to offer forgiveness. After all, our kids are sinners—just like us! Parents, you know what I mean! At some point – some say it begins at the age of 2 – you will need to demonstrate forgiveness.

And these moments become those teachable opportunities to offer loving, age-appropriate loving guidance along with the realization of possible consequences even though forgiveness has been offered.

Dads, hopefully you regularly give thanks to your Heavenly Father, for the forgiveness received from Him—as well as your need for continued cleansing.⁸ That reminder enables you to extend forgiveness to others and forgiveness is modeled in your own life.

One more thought on forgiveness . . . unlike our Heavenly Father Who is perfect, dads, we are not.

There will be those times when you need to ask your kids, your wife and others, for forgiveness. More than a few times I've had to go to my kids as well as Chris and ask for forgiveness for something I said or did or didn't do that I should have.

⁸ 1 John 1:9

Humble yourself when you have messed up and ask for forgiveness so fellowship with those you love can be restored.

By forgiving and requesting forgiveness you allow forgiveness to overflow within your family, creating a culture of forgiveness in your home.

Respect, a father's first priority is his Heavenly Father. Provision, a father provides for his family. Forgiveness, a father creates a culture of forgiveness for his family.

The final word is "Protection."

PROTECTION

Jesus invites us to come to our Heavenly Father and pray,

MATTHEW 6:13

**And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.**

When we pray this, what exactly do we mean? After all, we know we will still experience temptation in this life, and we know we are all touched by evil. Even Jesus experienced those things.

Rather, this is a realization we need spiritual strength to not be overpowered by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life.⁹ Fathers, in this same manner, your children need you to protect them.

This protection is much more than just physical protection. It is also moral and spiritual protection.

They need you to be aware of the dangers and evils that are out there. They need you to be aware of the world in which they live. They won't always see what is out there in the same way you see it.

Of course, such protection will be age-appropriate. And involves more than simply saying some of those catch-phrases dads sometimes use like: "...because I say so"... "As long as you live under my roof"... "I pay the bills, I make the rules"

Rather use those times when you believe it best to say "no" as opportunities to explain, in a way your child can understand, why you are, or are not, permitting this behavior.

Of course, there are some fathers who take their role as protector to the extreme. They see this responsibility as an excuse to control, dominate, or manipulate. That's not what is meant by being protective either.

The trick to being a protective dad is being consistent with discipline, yet while being strong, looking for opportunities to be gentle and kind.

Most of all, provide your children with the protection that comes by drawing close to the Lord, through His Word, through the church, through understanding what it means to seek first His kingdom.

CONCLUSION

Four ways from the Lord's Prayer we see our Heavenly Father provide a role model for earthly fathers: Respect, Provision, Forgiveness, and Protection. Dads, with God as your Father, you can be that godly father your children need.

For all of us, let's pray for earthly fathers, for their walk with the Lord and for their understanding of what it means to fulfil his responsibilities as dads by God's grace.

PRAYER

⁹ 1 John 2:15-17