

“Where is my daddy? I haven’t seen him in a while”. In an article entitled "Fathering Fatherless America" Dr. Scott J. Larson reports: One in two children now grow up without a father in the United States, and in our inner cities only one in five children live with their father. A whole new mission field has developed in America: Fathering fatherless kids.

The lack of attentiveness to children’s needs by fathers has produced great changes in the American home. Fathers spend an average of only 38 seconds a day being totally attentive and 20 minutes being partially attentive to their children’s needs.

Listen to these stats: *85% of children that exhibit behavior disorders are from fatherless homes. *85% of youths in prison are from fatherless homes. *80% of rapists are from fatherless homes. *75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers are from fatherless homes *71% of high school drop outs are from fatherless homes.. *70% of teen pregnancies are from fatherless homes. Where is my daddy? He just isn’t around any more.

Today, we want to take a closer look at the ultimate of Fathers. This Father is not an absentee Dad. He is always around. He doesn’t abandon his children, ever. On this Father’s Day, lets look at the Perfect Father.

If I were to ask you to imagine God, what would you imagine? How would you imagine Him? Some people kind of imagine God as The Force -- may the Force be with you. An impersonal Force. On television God is always portrayed by thunder. He always has a bass voice. Some people imagine Him as an old crotchety grandfather. He waves a cane at you. He's toothless, feeble and weak -- absolutely impotent. He tells you what to do but you don't have to pay Him much attention. Some people imagine God as an irate judge, sitting up there in heaven condemning people to hell and loving every minute of it. Jesus exploded all the stereotypes of God when He came to earth. He came to show us what God is like. Our lesson today says, “A father of the Fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.”

Father. For many of us that term draws negative implications. It stirs up memories of an unhappy childhood. It arouses fear, anger, guilt, frustration. Some fathers make their homes a hell on earth. They're selfish, demanding. They neglect their children. They're impulsive, inconsistent, moody. A little kid disobeys at home. His mom says, "You just wait till your father gets home. Then you're going to catch it!" Then he goes to Sunday School and the teacher says, "God is like your father." The little kid puts two and two together and says, "If God's like my dad, no thanks, God!"

Wait you say, God is much different. He is the model of what all earthly dads should be like. Let’s take a look at 4 qualities that make God, the only Perfect Father.

First, **GOD IS A CARING FATHER.** This is His most outstanding quality. Every child needs to know he's loved. Psalm 104:13-14 *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who honor him, for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."* God knows your make up. He knows you're frail. He knows you make mistakes. He understands that you're human, that you're imperfect. He still loves you because God is a caring Father. He cares.

Mark 4. The disciples were out in a boat. The winds came up, the waves came up. The water started sloshing over the boat and it began to fill with water. Jesus was sleeping. The disciples woke Him up and asked the most important question you can

ever ask, "Jesus, don't you care that we're drowning?" A lot of you have been asking, "Doesn't God care?" God says, "I am a caring Father."

I Peter 5:7 *"Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."* Does God care about your house payment, your health, whether you are a success or failure in life, your children and the education they get, whether you ever get married or not, about the argument you had with your boyfriend, or about how you feel this morning? God says, "You bet I care! I am a caring Father." It matters.

The Greatest act of caring that this Father showed us was when He sent Jesus into this world. In Jesus, we see the Father's care and love. You see, every person here today was homeless. We were all a bunch of orphans. We were the most disrespectful juvenile delinquents you could imagine. In and out of Juvi again and again. No one could stand to be around us. And yet, Jesus was willing to put his life on the line for us. You might say, to take the bullet that should have hit our heart and killed us eternally. By His death on the cross, we who were fatherless, now have a Real Father again. Our sins of selfishness, harsh words, and uncaring spirit were paid for by Him. We now have a family. Our Father is a Caring Father.

Second, **GOD IS A CONSISTENT FATHER.** He can be counted on. He's dependable, reliable. He is worthy of your trust. James 1:17 *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father who does not change like shifting shadows."* Circle "does not change". Some fathers are unpredictable, unreliable, fickle. They're always changing. It depends on the mood they're in. Inconsistent fathers produce insecure children. But the scripture says that God is not only a caring Father, He is a consistent Father.

God never has a bad day. He doesn't wake up grumpy. He's not moody. He doesn't get up on the wrong side of the bed. He's consistent, faithful. He doesn't have mood swings--one minute He's real nice to you and the next He's real mean to you. He is a consistent Father. 2 Timothy 2:13 *"If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself."* Even when I'm unfaithful, God's faithful. Even when I'm inconsistent, God is consistent. Even when I'm unreliable, God is reliable. He is a consistent Father, dependable. No matter what else is changing in the world, there is one thing I can count on: God always acts the same way toward me. He is loving and He is consistent regardless of my mood. He loves me just as much on my bad days as on my good days.

Malachi 3:6, God says, *"I, the Lord, do not change."* God is immutable, unchangeable. He is consistent. That is good news!

Third, **GOD IS A CLOSE FATHER.** He can be counted on and He's nearby when you need Him. He is available. He's accessible and not far away. He's close. He's there when you need Him.

Acts 17, Paul gave a sermon to the people in Athens. He said, "God doesn't live in a temple or a little house. He would be confined. He has chosen to live all around the world. God is everywhere." Why? Acts 17:27 *"God did this so that men would reach out for him and find him, since he is not far from each one of us."* God's close, available, and accessible.

That means: **A. God is never too busy for me.** Psalm 145:18 *"The Lord is near to all who call on him."* He's never too busy to talk to me. When I want to pray to God, He never says, "Not now, I'm busy." He's always near. He never says, "Some other

time." **B. God loves to meet my needs.** He's not annoyed by my request. Matthew 7:11 *"If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"* If you, being an imperfect father, know how to give good gifts to your kids, if you want the best that your money can buy, the best experiences, and you being an imperfect father full of mistakes and sin, don't you think God, who is a perfect Father, knows how to give good gifts to you? He loves to meet my needs. **C. He is sympathetic to my hurts.**

Psalm 34:18 *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* When you hurt, God hurts. When you grieve, God grieves. When you are brokenhearted, crushed and think you can't even get out of bed in the morning, God feels. He is caring, consistent, and close. Some of you came in this morning just dragging. Your heart has been broken this week. You lost a loved one, you had a bad experience at work, you had a major fight with your spouse, or your grand kids are going further away from God.. Your heart's breaking and you feel like the person in the Psalms -- My spirit is crushed. *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted."* You are never closer to God than when you are in pain. He is there. And He cares. He wants to meet your needs because He's caring, consistent, and He's close. That is such good news.

Fourth, **GOD IS A CAPABLE FATHER.** He can handle any situation you give Him. He's not overcome by it. No problem is too tough for Him. Nothing is beyond His ability. But the first thing you've got to do is bring it to Him. Jesus spoke Hebrew and Aramaic, which was the language they spoke in Palestine during New Testament times. In Aramaic the word for "father" is the word "Abba". Abba is the most endearing term you can use. It literally means "daddy". We translate abba to mean papa, dada, mama. It's one of the first words a baby learns: abba. Jesus says when you talk to God that's the kind of intimate relationship you can have with Him. Daddy -- Abba -- I'm helpless but you're not. That's the kind of intimacy God wants you to have.

Luke 1:37 *"Nothing is impossible with God."* What's the decision you're facing this week? What's the mountain that needs to be moved? A cancer? Somebody's moved out of your life and you need him to move back in? Bankruptcy? Your kids are having problems? Can't break a bad habit? *"Nothing is impossible with God."*

Jeremiah 32:27 *"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"* It's almost like God laying down the gauntlet saying, "I dare you. Think up a problem that I couldn't solve. Is anything too hard for me?" He is a capable father.

On this Father's Day, as Father's we all recognize our shortcomings. We have not been the perfect Father or mother. But as we have heard today, we all have a Perfect Heavenly Father. This father motivates us to be all we can be to our children and grandchildren. It's not too late to be more the Dads or Grandfathers we should be.

Let me suggest to you something this morning. God calls the church his family. And here this morning, there are lots of good, godly dads. No matter what your age, there is still a chance for you to be an example to your grandchildren, to other children you may have contact with, as to what a godly father looks like. Fill the Fatherless void of our society. Be a father to the fatherless like our Heavenly Father!