

Prayer—Talking to a Perfect Father

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BIG SANDY, Texas—One of the greatest lessons in life is for a person to learn how to effectively pray. And one of the greatest services that a friend can provide to other people is to influence them to have a better prayer life.

Today, I am starting a seven-part series about prayer.

■ Part 1—Talking to a perfect Father.

Flawed examples

Whenever I encourage people to view God as a Father, I realize that my worthwhile goal is sometimes met with negative reactions. The reasons are understandable.

The experiences that many people have with parents are often not positive. The memories may range from mildly negative to serious emotional scenarios.

But I want to influence people to get past the negative experiences, and I believe that accepting God as a perfect Father is the best course of action.

Understand my paradigm

It is my recommendation that you view the Scriptures with the paradigm of God as your Father. For all of us, He is the Father we never had.

■ Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7 tell us that we are saved by grace. (I had nothing to do with my physical birth.)

■ Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 3:8 proceed to tell us that our Father has expectations of us. (Since I had nothing to do with my physical birth, my parents told me what they expected of me and my siblings.)

Loving correction

1 John 3:2—“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

1 John 4:19—“We love Him because He first loved us.”

Hebrews 12:5-6—“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ ”

Hebrews 12:7-10—“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.”

Talking to the Father

Matthew 6:9-13—“In this manner, therefore, pray: 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.”

1 Peter 5:6-7—“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

James 4:3—“You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

1 John 5:14—“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”