

Our Father

“40 Days of Prayer” series- Part 1

Connect: If you are a parent, how has it changed your life?

Hook:

Illustration:

Two first graders were overheard as they left Sunday School class, “Do you really believe all that stuff about the devil?”

“No, I think it’s like Santa Claus. It’s really your dad.”

That’s a funny story...yet it hits too close to home for some of us. We want to think our views about God, the Father, are based on our religious training and on our understanding of Scriptures. Yet, how we experience life with those who are responsible for our care, direction, and protection (like our earthly fathers) can also color our opinions about God Himself.

Reflect for a moment how different parenting styles might affect your understanding of the Heavenly Father. What if your father was detached? Stern? Generous? Gracious?

Book: Matthew 6:5-9

Mat 6:5 "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.

Mat 6:6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Mat 6:7 "When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.

Mat 6:8 Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask Him!

Mat 6:9 Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy.

Look:

Jesus encourages us to pray and in His model prayer He teaches that it is good when we come before God and approach Him as “Father”. The term “Father” is a distinctive New Testament revelation that through faith in Christ, God becomes our personal Father. Father refers to God in the Old Testament only 15 times while it refers to God 245 times in the New Testament. As a name of God, it stresses God’s loving care, provision, discipline, and the way we are to address God in prayer.

How do you want to grow from this FORTY DAYS OF PRAYER study?

How does referring to God as “Father” affect our understanding of the following when we pray:

- ☉God’s love for us-
- ☉God’s provision-
- ☉God’s discipline-
- ☉God’s direction-

Consider the following statement: The term “Our Father” isn’t about our view of God; it’s about God’s view of us.”

What does this statement mean to you?

How can this viewpoint help us when our earthy fathers are/were far from perfect?

How does this affect your approach to and confidence in doing life?

If we knew that prayer would increase our confidence in a significant way, would we pray more earnestly than we do? Explain.

Took:

What baggage do you carry around with you? How do you think this affects your prayer life?

How can we as a small group pray for you during this 40 days of prayer?