

A Father's Influence

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[0:00] Matthew 5, verse 43, we'll read through verse 48. You've heard that it was said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his Son to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others?

Do not even pagans do that. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. The early bird gets the worm.

A stitch in time saves nine. Many hands make light work. What do we call these?

[1:11] They're proverbs, aren't they? We call them proverbs, common sayings that in a few words communicate an observation on life. Something's been found happening over and over again, and a proverb captures it in a few catchy words.

Now, I'm going to give you three well-known proverbs about fathers. And see if you can discover what all of them have in common. What is the single truth that they are communicating?

All right? They get easier the further we go. The acorn never falls far from the tree. He's a chip off the old block.

Like father, like son. Well, they all recognize the powerful shaping influence of a father upon his children, and especially a son.

I'm going to refer to sons in my sermon this morning, but it does apply to daughters as well in many ways. Over the years, people have observed life.

[2:24] They've just noticed what's going on around them. And something that they've noticed is that sons often turn out to be like their fathers in many ways.

Not just in appearance and physical mannerisms, but even in behavior. Strangely enough, even in their character. The fact that we have so many current proverbs making this point suggests it's undeniable reality.

That it's true. But now having said that, not all of our proverbs that are current are true. Reality can be skewed in the eyes of the beholder.

And we can overemphasize and de-emphasize. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Well, I'm not sure of how true that is. Maybe some of you can try that.

Barking dogs seldom bite. I'm not ready to risk my leg on that proverb. They always seem to be barking before they bite me.

[3:30] So, is a proverb true or not? Well, we've got to turn back to the Word of God. And I don't just mean to the proverbs in the Word of God. We have proverbs here.

But to the Word of God in general. And when we do, what do we find? We find that the Bible also testifies to this shaping, powerful shaping influence of a father upon his son.

In my devotions, I'm currently reading through the record of the kings of Israel and Judah. And each one of these kings has a short summary statement of their life and reign.

Just a few words that sum up their life. Maybe something that would be put on a tombstone. And something that I've been struck with as I've read those short summaries of their reigns is how often their father is referred to.

And not just in a way of genealogy, but in significant ways. Let me give you some examples. Abijah was the king of Judah. And it said of him that he committed all the sins that his father had done before him.

[4 : 38] Ammon, king of Judah. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. As his father Manasseh had done. He walked in all the ways of his father.

He worshipped the idols his father had worshipped. And bowed down to them. Three times in this brief summary of Ammon. We're told of his likeness to his father's behavior.

Oh, and then we all know Ahab, don't we? From his run-ins from the prophet Elijah. And here's the summary on him. There was never a man like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel, his wife.

He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols. Ahab was bad to the bone, we would say. So we're not surprised when we read of his son Ahaziah, the next king, that he did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Because he walked in the ways of his father and mother. He served and worshipped Baal and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger.

[5 : 54] Just as his father had done. Over and over, the record is saying that these sons turned out to be just like their fathers. And are we to conclude that this is just a coincidence?

Just being mentioned to point out such an unlikely thing, can you believe it? Who would have thought it? That a son of Ahab would turn out evil. No, that's not the reason for this reference to the father.

It's rather at least a partial explanation of why he lived that way. That's why it's being included in the record.

At least partially. This is why he was evil. Because he simply followed in the ways of his father. It's testimony to the powerful shaping influence that a father has upon his son.

Well, you think about it. Think about you growing up every day in Ahab's palace. So there's the boy Ahaziah. And he saw his father's evil deeds close up.

[7 : 04] He saw what he did to Naboth to get his vineyard. He saw him pouting, killing, abusing his power. He witnessed him serving and worshipping Baal. He saw all the idols.

He saw the temple built to Baal. It was as much a part of his upbringing as church is to some of your upbringings. And whenever there was sickness or trouble in the family or in the nation, he saw his father turning to Baal for help.

Whenever good things happened, he heard his father tell his mother how kind Baal was to bless them. And he often went with him to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Baal and to just ensure that good things keep happening.

So when Ahaziah grew up and faced troubles of his own, it was quite natural for him to look to Baal to help him.

And that is exactly what he did. It was quite natural to attribute all good things in his life to Baal and his influence.

[8 : 13] And he served and worshipped Baal just as his father had done. A father's example is a powerful thing. Stephen, the first martyr of the New Testament church, says to those who are about to stone him, You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised heart and ears.

You're just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit. Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the righteous one.

And now you have betrayed and murdered him. You're just like your fathers. This powerful shaping influence of fathers is well attested to in Scripture.

The musical Fiddler on the Roof pokes fun at tradition and in the process shows just how powerful it can be. But what is the power of tradition?

If it's not this very thing. The powerful shaping influence of a father upon his son. And his father upon him. And his father before him upon him.

[9 : 26] For several generations of fathers. Tradition is the cumulative effect of several fathers shaping influence. And it multiplies the effect.

We see its power operative in that immoral Samaritan woman that Jesus met at the well. Here she is. She's a Samaritan. And she says to Jesus, Our fathers worshipped on this mountain.

Mount Gerizim. You Jews say that you're to worship on Jerusalem. But our fathers worshipped here. And so we do too.

Centuries of tradition handed down by fathers. Overpowered God's own word that said, Jerusalem is the place I have put my name.

Worship me here. The power of tradition is the shaping, powerful influence of a father.

[10 : 25] Now so far I've been citing references of a father's negative example followed by his son. A father sins grease the slide for his own son to follow in suit.

But we also find scripture mentions the powerful shaping influence of a father's positive example to his sons. That a father's influence works both ways.

That his virtues as well as his vices have a powerful pull upon his son to follow in his wake.

And the record of the kings of Judah and Israel reflect this same idea. So Asa, king of Judah. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

And his son Jehoshaphat? Well he was 35 years old when he became king. And in everything he walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them.

[11 : 29] He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Amazing. In everything. Just like his father. Amaziah, son of Joash, became king.

And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. In everything he followed the example of his father, Joash. A father's positive example is a powerful thing in the hands of God.

And his son, Azariah, or Uzziah, became king. Reigned 52 years. And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Just as his father, Uzziah, had done.

Or Amaziah had done. And Jotham, son of Uzziah. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Just as his father, Uzziah, had done. We're being given a history lesson here. On the power of a good example. Especially when it comes from a father. So a Christian wheat farmer in one of the plain states had a most promising year.

[12 : 37] Ripened fields of golden grain. But just before harvest, a storm blew through with a tornado and damaging hail. And the farmer took cover in his basement along with his family.

And after the storm was over, he came out. And he's standing on the back porch holding the hand of his young son. Surveying the damage. And as far as he can see, it's flattened fields.

Total loss of the year's crop. And the little boy looks up and he sees tears rolling down his daddy's cheeks. And then he hears his father singing.

When peace like a river attendeth my way. When troubles like sea billows roar. Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say.

It is well. It is well. With my soul. What do you suppose the effect of that kind of father was upon that son?

[13 : 43] To have a father who, in his greatest loss, is giving thanks in all circumstances.

For this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. To have a father who had learned to be content in any and every circumstance.

To see a father who, in his times of trouble, takes refuge in his God. A father who treasured the forgiveness of his sins.

Not in part, but the whole. Being nailed to the cross such that he bears them no more. As being worth more than a whole year's harvest. A father who could glory in the cross, even through his tears.

There was power in that example to that son. So far, what have we seen? We've seen that a father's example is a powerful influence in shaping sons.

[14 : 47] And it works both ways. Positively and negatively. But we must go on to say that a father's shaping influence is not determinative.

It is not determinative. It's not the only factor that determines the outcome of the son. If it were, then that would mean that every good father would have all good sons, wouldn't it?

And that every bad father would have nothing but bad sons. You would be locked into becoming just like your father. Whether he was good or bad.

But that's not the case. And we see it's not the case in the record of the kings. There are exceptions. Sons do not always follow the examples of their fathers.

Sometimes that's good. Sometimes it's bad. But they don't always follow that example. So, for instance, we read that Solomon, David's son, did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

[15 : 49] He did not follow the Lord completely as David, his father, had done. David followed the Lord. Leaving a trail behind.

A trail of footprints behind. For Solomon to walk in. And Solomon says, I'm not going that way. I'm going a different route. He did not walk in the steps of his father, David.

At significant points, he took a different route. But his father's shaping influence, you see, was not determinative. Ammon did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. He walked in all the ways of his father. He worshipped the idols his father had worshipped and bowed down to them. But his son, Josiah, became king and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

Wicked Ammon had a godly son, Josiah. And then Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, did evil in the eyes of the Lord. You see, these sons did not follow the examples of their fathers.

[16 : 55] Three generations of sons flip-flopping back and forth. Evil king. Righteous king. Evil king. What's up? What happened to our proverb?

Like father. Like son. Well, a father's shaping influence may be powerful. But it's not determinative. It may be that often, sons turn out like their fathers.

But not always. A father's life does not determine the outcome of his son's life. Not all sons are like their fathers.

And that works both ways, too. Good fathers can have bad sons, like Josiah and like David. And biblical theology would prepare us to expect, to find that.

That good fathers can have bad sons. Because though fathers may give their sons a positive example. Example. And set before them an example of a holy life. The Bible teaches us that we as fathers have given to our sons a sinful, rebellious heart.

[18 : 05] That they weren't born with neutral hearts, just waiting for the best examples. And whichever was the most powerful in the way of examples determines the way that our sons turn out.

No, they were conceived in sin. Psalm 51. And so from the womb they go astray. Speaking lies. They're born sinners with wayward hearts already bent on going astray from the right way. That which is good in the eyes of the Lord. They have wandering feet.

That transgress God's boundaries. They're born with folly. Bound up in their hearts. They're born desiring foolishness over wisdom. Self-gratification over self-control.

Pleasure over purity. Preferring self and sin over Christ. So though the father walks ever so closely to God's ways, this does not ensure that the son will.

[19 : 08] Good fathers can have bad sons. But bad fathers can have good sons. Because the influence of father is not determinative.

Sons are free moral agents. They don't have to choose to be like their father. They don't have to choose to follow in his example. You know, I've talked to many sons who had a bad father and they learn from his bad example.

And they say, I don't want to be like that, so I'm going to do it the right way. Isn't that something? We're not doomed, decreed to be like our fathers.

Is that we can take a different route by God's grace? Ezekiel chapter 18 talks about a righteous man who faithfully keeps God's laws, who nevertheless has a violent son, who sheds blood or does other vile things, though the father had done none of those things.

And then it says in verse 14, But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things.

[20 : 19] You see, that's what I'm referring to. Sons can see the evil in their fathers and say, I'm not going to do that. And by the grace of God, there can be drastic differences.

Even without saving grace, by common grace, you can see changes in sons, even unconverted sons who did not follow in all the evil ways of their father.

So, wicked Amon had a godly son named Josiah. He was obviously more than what his father made him.

More was involved in shaping Josiah than just his father's bad example. And again, biblical theology would prepare us to expect such, teaching us that God's sovereign grace conquers sinners and makes them new creations.

It finds us rebelling far from God, lays hold of us, changes us from the inside out, so that though the father's example was evil by grace, they themselves now follow after Christ.

[21 : 27] They've been given a new heart to love God in his ways and to hate evil. God-taught wisdom is replacing their inbred folly. Jesus Christ has redeemed them with his precious blood from that empty way of life.

handed down from their fathers. Set free from a father's negative example. So, what we're seeing is that a father's shaping influence is powerful, but it is not determinative.

Due to the grace of God in the one hand that can save a son from a bad father, reverse and overcome and overpower the effects of a bad father.

Such is the amazing grace of God in conversion. You see, there are at least two sides to the equation of a father-shaping influence.

There's the father side. And there he is. There's his example. His instruction and discipline during those most formative years of character. Applying the proper pressure of love and of the rod, of discipline in the home.

[22 : 43] That's the father's side of this shaping influence. But there's another side to it, isn't there? There's the son's side. Sons are just not passive clay.

That you just shape in any form that you want. Or the father would have his way and it would be determinative. But children are not passive clay. They have minds of their own.

Wills of their own. Desires of their own. And so, there's this side of the shaping influence. And there can be pushback, can't there? There can be rejection of what the father is wanting to do.

There's natural God-given desire early in life for a child to please his father. That's why you see little kids tromping around the house in daddy's shoes. He wants to be like daddy. Or wearing shaving cream all over his face.

There's this input. There's this God-given desire to follow in the footsteps of father. So, that's on the son's part. It doesn't last real long.

[23 : 49] But there's more operating on the son's side than a desire to imitate and please father. There's a sinful heart. Which, unless the Lord arrests it, will choose to reject a good example and choose to follow a bad one.

And hopefully, there's a third side in all of this, God's side, that makes the difference in the outcome of both a father's shaping influence and the son's response to it.

So, the full picture on a father's shaping influence.

It's a powerful thing. It can be used for good or evil. Good examples can be rejected by children due to their own sinful hearts. Bad examples can be rejected due to God's recreating grace of conversion.

God can work without a father's example. He most often works through it. Now, fathers, what has been given you then?

[25 : 00] This power, this influence over your children. I don't think we'll properly appreciate it unless we see its source. Where did this come from? It's not a hangover from the monkeys.

It's not just something that just happened. No, this is the plan of our all-wise creator. To put into the hearts of young children a desire to imitate their father, their mother.

This is God's idea. His plan. God created us this way. It's a gift from him.

To grow up under the shaping influence of a father. That's his plan. We see it in Genesis 2.24. We just used it last week in a wedding. That for this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.

I wonder if it ever hit you. The picture there is of a young man still with mom and dad until he leaves to be with his wife. I'm not laying that down as a legalistic rule.

[26 : 10] I'm just saying that there it is. God's plan, obviously, is not for the 10-year-old to be kicked out of the nest to fend for himself. God intends for him to spend lots of time, years and years and years, in a family with a father.

That's his plan. And it's his plan for the good of humanity, for the good of every child, the good of society as a whole.

It can be seen from a purely statistical basis. Generally speaking, children are far better off with a father in the house.

Children from fatherless homes are nine times more likely to drop out of school, 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders, 32 times more likely to run away from home and be homeless, 20 times more likely to end up in prison, five times more likely to commit suicide.

You see, God made us for families. He made us for fathers. That's his plan. Oh, how good he is to give us such. 43% of children in our nation live without their father, causing some to refer to them as the fatherless generation.

[27 : 31] This is the effect of sin. This is the effect of departing from God and his ways. And the price tag upon our society is huge. But it's far greater in terms of real lives lost for eternity.

You see, fathers are God's gifts to children. And he doesn't just give this powerful shaping influence to anyone.

God gave it to the two people that love those kids the most, to mom and dad. Isn't that something? That's God's plan. That the two people who generally, usually, I'm not saying without exception, the two people on the planet that love those little ones the most, they're the ones that he gave this shaping influence to.

God's good. He wants to do good to all men. And we see it in placing children in homes with a father.

Several lessons. First of all, fathers, appreciate God's wisdom in giving you that shaping influence upon your children. Realize its value.

[28:44] Make the most of it for their everlasting good. You know, dads, we're going to have to give an account one day to God who gave us this influence. We're going to have to account for what we did with it in the shaping of our children.

So early on, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Teach them all of God's commandments. Teach them all of the gospel. Make your life the best illustration of the things that you teach.

If we have children with never-dying souls following after us, following and looking at our footprints, we better be careful how we live.

Are there things about my life that is setting a bad example for those who are coming after me? Then I must repent. I must change.

And leave behind a godly footprint for them to follow. Labor to make this influence last as long as you can. Keep influencing with your love and your words and your life.

[29:53] Fathers, finish well. Finish well. Oh, what a sad thing to see a dad go off the rails at the end. And it puts a big question mark over the life.

Rather, end with a punctuation mark that would just be like a bold highlighter of everything that you lay down for your children throughout your life by finishing the race well.

Well, it's never too late to start afresh. You know, we're always starting over with God, aren't we? I find it comforting that George Whitefield, the great evangelist, he was well on into his years.

He was no new Christian by any stretch. He was known to pray, Oh, Lord, help me today to begin to begin to be a Christian.

You ever felt that? You ever read something in the Bible and it hits you? Like, John, what have you been doing with your life? Oh, Lord, help me to begin to begin today to be a Christian.

[30:59] Dads, we need to begin every day anew, don't we? And that's something the grace of Jesus allows us to do. We have a place to go with our sins and our failures and our bad examples. To go to the cross of Christ and to leave it all under that blood that covers and cleanses from all sin.

wash is whiter than snow. We have a Savior to come to who dispenses power to make us live in a new way. So, make good use of that influence that God has put into your hands and pray that God would add his blessing to it.

That he would bless all that you attempt to do with your children because without his blessing, the natural depravity of your children will prevail over your very best attempts.

Was your father a believer? Father, then you had the benefit of his good example. What have you done with that? Have you followed in that?

Have you even sought to take that head start and improve on it? That's one way we honor our fathers. Making the most of his gift to you.

[32:15] Dads, if you're lost, Jesus Christ promises to forgive you all of your sins if you'll just turn from them and come to him to save you. Come to him as you are.

Let him save you and make you what you could never be in yourself this Father's Day. some lessons for children. Has God given you a godly father then?

I don't mean a perfect dad but one who knows God and is seeking to point you to him. Do you know, children, if you reject that influence of your father, you will have a hard time giving an account on the day of judgment for what you did with that gift of the godly father.

And for all eternity, if you die in your sin, you'll remember the godly influence of your father. You'll remember his prayers. You'll remember his Bible reading. You'll remember his pleading with you to trust in Christ.

You'll remember his holy life. And all those memories will flood your mind for all eternity and condemn you. Because you sinned against greater light.

[33 : 36] You sinned against greater love. You sinned against greater influence. And conscience will give you no rest day or night. It's the worm that, the worst worm that never dies.

And the fire that is never quenched. See your sin against God. And come to him today. Repenting. And trusting in what Jesus has done for prodigals like us all.

And believing children. Realize the rare gift God has given you. You young children. If you've got a daddy that loves Jesus, you are blessed.

obey his commands. Humble yourself under his disciplines. imitate his godly example.

And when you grow up and get married, you pass on the same to your children. So that you've taken from your father this precious, powerful, shaping influence.

[34 : 42] God has blessed it in your life and heart. Now you pass it on. Don't let it stop with you. Don't you be the one to fumble the baton. But pass it on to the next generation.

That they might have that head start. The father's loving, gentle, yet powerful, shaping influence. True fathers are in short supply. Well, what if you did not have a good father growing up? Are you just doomed to the statistics that I read? Is that what's left for you?

Not at all. Let me tell you about a father and a son. The father is God Almighty. And his son is Adam. The first man he created.

You know he's called the son of God in Luke chapter 3. He is where you have the genealogy of Christ. And you have the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

[35 : 45] So here's the father and son. You got the perfect father, the perfect son. God in Adam. But though the father was perfect, the son rebelled.

He rebelled against the perfect father. And he went his own way. He became a prodigal. And his sin plunged the whole human race, all of his descendants, into sin and death and condemnation.

So we're all condemned. We're all under the curse because that first son failed to imitate his father. And then the amazing thing, that this father, in love, determined to save some of those rebels who had turned their backs on him.

And in order to save them, he sent his one and only son. This is a whole different kind of son than what Adam was. This is his son from eternity.

This is the son who, forever and ever, the second person of the Trinity, was always in the relationship of sonship to the first person in the Trinity, God the Father.

[37 : 03] And for all eternity, they enjoyed face-to-face communion, love, and it flowed back and forth. This is my son in whom I'm well pleased.

And God the Father gave up that son to come down to this wicked world and become a man. And the Bible calls him the last Adam because just as the first Adam represented his race, so the last Adam, Christ, represents his people, all the elect, all that repent of their sins and trust in him.

He comes as the last Adam. And whereas the first Adam failed to imitate his Father, the last Adam, Jesus, is the perfect imitation of his Father.

He always does what pleases the Father. He breaks none of his Father's commands. And it's out of that perfection that he has a righteous record to give to who?

To these rebels that didn't want God as his Father. And he gives to them righteousness to make them to stand before Almighty God clothed in righteousness, perfect holiness that presents them before the Father, makes them acceptable.

[38 : 28] And then that Son, that eternal Son of God, went to the cross and there was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He took all that the rebel sons had come into them for their sins. He took it on himself, all the wrath, the separation, the torments of hell for the rebel, that we might not ever know such wrath.

All that we might become the children of God. Isn't it something that God, from the pile of rebels, calls some out to be his children through Jesus Christ?

Not everybody is a child of God. Remember, Jesus pointed that out. You are of your father, the devil, he says in John 8. No, it's only those who trust in me that have the right to be called the children of God.

For as many as received him to those who believed on his name, he gave the right to be called the children of God. So fathers, sons, whoever you are, mothers, daughters, grandparents, the most important thing on this Father's Day is that you believe on Jesus Christ and become a child of God.

[39 : 46] To know God as your heavenly Father. You know, from one perspective, the whole Christian life is just learning to live with God as your Father.

Maybe next year we'll go through the Sermon on the Mount and see the 20 times that Jesus refers to your heavenly Father and the impact and the difference that that's to make in our lives.

But one of the things that he says, if you're a child of God now by faith in Jesus Christ, be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

You see what he's saying? Jesus, be like your Father. Imitate your divine Dad. Be like Him. Okay. What's He like? Well, you need to know this. His love is unheard of. He loves His enemies. I woke up this morning, was out on the patio reading and praying.

[40 : 51] I heard a tractor pulling through the fields on the Lord's Day. Somebody's ignoring the fourth command to rest and worship today.

You know what? God is making His sun shine on that field. And it seems like about Monday or Tuesday it looks like He's going to even cause His rain to fall on that man's field.

Prosper Him. Because that's the kind of love that God has. He causes His sun to shine on the evil and the good. He makes it rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

And so you're to be like your Father. You are to love your enemies. You're to pray for those who mistreat you. And it's not the prayer, Lord, judge them.

No, it's the prayer, bless them. You're to pray blessing on their head. Bless them. Bless them physically. Bless them in their family. Bless them in their job. Bless them with the greatest blessing to salvation.

[41 : 58] But bless them. That's what Jesus, that's what Jesus says the Father's like. Do you just love those that love you? No, you don't belong to the Father if that's true.

He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. So you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

It's not how you become sons of your Father in heaven, but it proves that you are such because you love your enemies like your divine dad does. What a high calling it is to be a son of the living God.

And why? What's driving it? Jesus says, let your good deeds be seen by all that they may see your good works such as loving your enemies and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

And that's why you live. That's why you're a child of God. That's why God's your Father. That in everything you do, every good work, you might cause others to think well of your Father in heaven.

[43 : 10] Matthew 5 and verse 16. So on this Father's Day, is God your Father? Oh, you are blessed. Read Matthew 5 to 7 and see just how blessed.

When you pray, you talk to Father. When you're in need, your Father knows. Your Father cares. You see, on and on it goes. So imitate your Father.

Imitate His love. Is He not your Father? He could be. And that's why I say, if you didn't have an earthly father that was a good man, you're not doomed to these statistics.

Statistics. Because God Himself offers you Himself to be your perfect Father. for you to learn to live upon Him. Who even though your father and mother forsake you, He will receive you.

Let's pray. Open our eyes, Father, by your Holy Spirit to the wonder that we should be called the children of God and that is what we are in Christ.

[44 : 25] Send us on our way rejoicing. And we who are fathers send us home imitating our Heavenly Father. Even in our fathering of our children to father them as He fathers us.

Bring any here who are outside of Christ to long to have such a father. A father whom to know is life eternal. We thank you in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.