

Chapter 9

CHARACTER OF GOD 4 **FATHERHOOD OF GOD 2**

WHAT IS A FATHER?

He's gentle enough to cradle you in his arms,
And strong enough to catch you when you fall,

He's patient enough to teach you all he knows,
And understands when you think you know it all,

He's wise enough to lead you in the right direction,
But gives you enough freedom to choose your own way.

He's the pastor of his home.
The picture of Christ for his children:

He's not ashamed to shed a tear, or confess a fear:
He's ready to admit when he's wrong.

And he never says, "I told you so!"
He doesn't mind if you call him "Daddy."
Because you'll always be his child.

- I. Some important characteristics of God the Father are revealed as we see Him as a father to the nation of Israel. These characteristics will help us to better understand who God wants to be and is for us His children. (Nehemiah 9:5-38)
 - A. God first of all loved the nation of Israel and chose them to be His own. This is a beautiful picture for us of a father's love. (Nehemiah 9:7-8, 17; Hosea 11:1)
 - B. God always had pity and compassion for the nation of Israel. God had every right to be angry and to judge them for their disobedience and rebellion, but his compassion for them was always stronger. (Nehemiah 9:9, 19, 27-28; Psalm 103:8,13-14; Psalm 116:5; Psalm 86:15; Hosea 11:8-9)
 - C. God was always a God of provision for the nation of Israel. He did not always choose to provide for them in the way they preferred and or would have liked. In the same way we cannot always choose the way in which God will provide for our needs; but He will provide for us. (Nehemiah 9:11-15, 20-21, 24-25)
 - 1. God first of all *"divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground,"* and then He led them by the cloud and fire out of Egypt to begin their

journey to the promised land.

2. While they wandered in the desert, He used the cloud and fire to provide protection and warmth as well as direction. He gave them the food they needed through manna and water from the rock. The clothes they had brought with them did not wear out.
 3. When it was time to go into the promised land, there was a place prepared for them. There were wells already dug, vineyards already planted and fruit trees in abundance.
- D. God is always faithful to His promises and loyal to His children. The nation of Israel became stiff-necked and rebellious and yet God always acted faithfully to them. In the same way God will be faithful and loyal to us as our Father no matter what we do. (Nehemiah 9:17-18, 32-33; Psalms 145:13)
- E. God also rebuked and admonished the nation of Israel in their disobedience. As a Father, he saw the necessity of discipline in the lives of His children. To grow as children of God it will be necessary to receive discipline from Him. (Nehemiah 9:26-27, 30)
- F. God's promises are always conditional. We must obey Him to fully experience the blessing He has for us. He required obedience from the nation of Israel to the conditions of His law. The promises were conditional, but His love for them was always unconditional, as is His love for us. (Nehemiah 9:29)
- G. God was faithful to give instruction to the nation of Israel, just as He is faithful to instruct us in His ways. We see from Judges 2:22-3:4 that God used the Israelites' failure in driving out the Canaanites to teach them the art of warfare and to test their obedience to His commands. (Nehemiah 9:30)
- II. Father God's love is shown to us through the hope of the gospel. Jesus is the way and God the Father is the destination. God so loved us that He gave His only Son Jesus to make a way for us to come to Him. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)
- A. In the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32, we can see and understand our position as a child of God. The father in this story saw the son while he was still a long way off and was filled with compassion for him. In the same way God saw us while we were still a long way off from Him, was filled with compassion for us and made the way through Jesus for us to come to Him.
- ❖ The father killed the **Fatted Calf** which tells us that he saw his Prodigal Son coming back home as a special occasion and a time for celebration. There is always special rejoicing in heaven when a new child comes to the Father.
 - ❖ The father put the **Best Robe** on the Prodigal Son which indicates position, acceptance. We have been given the robe of righteousness with our faith in Jesus

Christ.

- ❖ The father put his **Ring** on the Prodigal Son. With the ring came position and acceptance as well as authority to do business on behalf of the father. We have been given the authority to do business on behalf of our heavenly Father.
- ❖ The father put **Sandals** on his son's feet. Sons wore sandals and slaves went barefoot. We have become sons and daughters of God our Father and are no longer slaves to the world and its ways.

B. He made further provision for us to be adopted as his sons. *"For he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—" (Ephesians 1:5)*

III. What is spiritual adoption and what does it mean to us? Spiritual adoption means that we have been chosen by God to belong to Him; to be part of His family. He has called us by name and we have become His sons and daughters. (Deuteronomy 14:2; Isaiah 43:1; 2 Corinthians 6:18)

A. Through sonship or spiritual adoption we have received the right to become children of God. We have become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. We are no longer slaves, but sons and daughters. (John 1:10-13; Romans 8:12-19; Galatians 3:26-29; Galatians 4:1-7; Colossians 1:13)

B. When a person is legally adopted, they take on the name, the rights and privileges of a natural born son. When we are Spiritually Adopted all that is in Christ is ours. What are some of our rights and privileges?

- ❖ We receive a new name and a new family of brothers and sisters.
- ❖ We receive the right to call God Father.
- ❖ We receive new clothes (robes of righteousness, not filthy rags).
- ❖ We receive authority from the Father and can do things in His name.
- ❖ We receive a position as kings and priests.

C. When we are adopted as a child of God, we have a heavenly father that is all that a father should be.

IV. We need to know Father God for who He is, not who we think He is based on some of our past experiences with our earthly fathers. If we see that we have been hindered in our relationship with God due to some kind of failure of parental love, then we need to take these problems to the Lord. We must find forgiveness in our hearts towards anyone who has hurt us. If we don't, our bitterness will consume us and we will find no peace with God. We need to realize too, that we are not alone.

I have never yet met a perfect person or a parent who hasn't made mistakes. Everyone has suffered some hurts and disappointments in their life. One of the keys for release is found in forgiveness. The important thing is for us to go forward and get to know God for who He really is--not who we **think** He is. He is the Perfect Parent. He always disciplines in love. He is faithful,

generous, kind and just. He loves us, and He longs to spend time with us. He wants us to receive His love and to know that we are a special and unique person to Him.

Can we receive God's love and affection? Can we open up and enter into an intimate relationship with our true Father? He is patiently waiting for us to come. It is my prayer that we will realize His love for us and respond to the heart of God, our Father!

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 9 Character of God 4 - Fatherhood of God 2

1. How can we see rebuke and admonition as a provision of a Father God?
2. Discuss some of the rights and privileges we have as a child of God and how they can relate to our life on a daily basis.