



Nuggets 26: When Father is a Bad Word

My dad said his father was the best man he ever knew. I can say the same about mine. Jesus taught us to pray to God as "our Father in heaven." Those of us with good fathers understand what Jesus meant. But not everyone has had a good father. It is hard to talk about a faithful, loving heavenly Father to someone who has been neglected, deserted or abused by his/her father. Tragically, "father" is a bad word to lots of people.

How we feel about God comes a lot from how we feel about our father. Some people grow up unable to trust anyone including God. Some have never known what it means to be loved and valued. Others conflict with every authority because they are still kicking at their parents. Some women hate or mistrust all men because of their fathers. We men have an awesome responsibility to model the goodness and faithfulness of God to our children!

If you did not have a good father, that doesn't mean you have to live your whole life under a curse. Two things will set you free from the past. One is to forgive your father or your parents. That may seem impossible. It may help if you can understand two things: Forgiveness does not mean what your parent did was OK--it just means you cancel the debt. And forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling. You will never be free till you give your resentment up to God. When it comes back, keep giving it up. God will help you because you are doing what he tells you to do. Second, you can correct your concept of God. You may not have had a good father on earth but you do have one in heaven. Time with God in his word and prayer, experience walking with him, and time with godly Christians will heal your view of God. Especially spend time in the gospels. Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12; Matthew 18:6-10; John 8:32; Malachi 4:5,6; Ephesians 6:2,3; Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:21-35; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 5:7; Luke 11:13; James 4:6-8; John 17:3; 14:9

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