

“What a Dad”  
By Parrish Lee  
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*Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

*Genesis 2:7 ...and man became a living soul.*

In preparing this message I thought, “Let me use the examples of some of the great fathers in the Bible. I thought, “I’ll use Abraham,” and then I thought of how he had not only Isaac, but also Ishmael, too, and, though Abraham loved Ishmael, and Ishmael loved his father, I’m sure that they would confess that their relationship was less than ideal. So I thought, hey, I’ll use Moses, and then I remembered how he forgot the covenant of circumcision with his son, and so Zipporah had to do that. “So, hey, what about David?” and then that whole thing with Absalom and Amnon got in the way.

So, you know what conclusion I came up with? It ain’t easy being a dad. It’s hard to live up to the standard when your example is God Himself, but, as the Bible says, He gives us these things by His Spirit. Now, that’s what I call a Father—gives you the ultimate example to follow, and then gives you His Spirit to help you to be successful in it. Please don’t anyone think that I’m saying we don’t have good fathers these days—I don’t have to look any further than this room to see men who are standing in the gap and making up the hedge as examples and providers and protectors. There were of course good fathers back then, but my point is that our Heavenly father is the ultimate Dad.

*Isaiah 9:6 ...The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*

**Wonderful**—wonder, marvel.

**Counselor**—to advise, consult, give counsel, counsel, purpose, devise, plan.

**Mighty** God—strong, mighty (also sometimes translated as champion or chief).

**Prince**—...captain, general, commander (military) chief, head, overseer (of other official classes)...

of **Peace**—welfare, health, prosperity, peace...

the **Everlasting**—perpetuity, for ever, continuing future, ancient (of past time)...

**Father**—to open up on that a little more: In the Old Testament, the Father had two specific responsibilities: to provide leadership, guidance and authority, to be a provider for his family’s needs, and protector of his family. So they understood that God would guide them and take care of them forever.

Some years ago at a Men’s Fellowship meeting we did a, what you might call, exploration on a project called Wild at Heart. We watched a video where there were several guys in their twenties and thirties, and some in their fifties and sixties, and they talked about what was handed down to them by their fathers and to a man, they expressed how, either they were unable to measure up or there were standards that they just couldn’t meet, or they also had to deal with their dads having to deal with their own problems. They spent time together and afterwards, we, as men, sat down at different tables and we went on to have our own discussions.

I learned three main things from that: 1) Being a dad isn't necessarily easy, 2) A father's love is very special, and 3) When the role of a father is not filled, it can remain that way for a lifetime.

Usually your model for a father is going by what you've seen your father do and usually children, when they get older, specifically boys, as far as their father goes, had those that either emulate what their father was doing, or try not to repeat a bad example. As I sat at the table and listened to several brothers talk about issues, hurt feelings that maybe they had never voiced in public, it just opened my eyes to the needs some of us need filled by our Heavenly Father and how we should give those needs to Him.

*Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our Father...*

*1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us...*

I want to say something about the love of God: It's unlike anything you have ever come in contact with. Before I got saved, I used to hear those songs on the radio of this great love that people talk about, and I'd hear some about, "How my man, he done me wrong," or "Oh, how my girl, she done me wrong"—but if there is any question, let me put that to rest right now: you don't have to worry about any of that with the great God our Savior. Some might say, I've got good love with my husband, my wife, my family, my kids, my job, my comforts—to that I say, "Hallelujah!" but God said to prove Him—out of all the loves you could know, there is none greater than God's love. I'm talking about the God who makes a way out of no way, turns your frown upside down, and changes the situation into a celebration.

Sidebar: On one of my fast days, while I was trying to focus and concentrate on me and God, I got a couple of songs stuck in my head. You ever try and spend time with someone and the phone rings, or a song comes on the radio, or there's a game on, and when your attention is divided, they get offended? What about God when He wants to have some time with us; how must He feel if we give in to everything else that comes along. Sometimes we've just got to tell everything else **NO**.

*Romans 8:15 ...ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Adoption is a process whereby a person assumes the parenting for another, and, in so doing, permanently transfers all rights and responsibilities from the original parent or parents.

*Matthew 6:9-13 ...Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name...*

Some years ago, a single mom took her little boy to an old-fashioned altar to be prayed over. I don't know what the prayer was, but it must have been something like this: "Lord, watch over this family, raise this child, and watch him through his life. When he makes mistakes, Lord, help him; when he goes out and does things in the world, Lord, help him, and God bring him to you and show him how good you can be. Bless this mother, Lord, and her parents and her sister." I say that because, as I look over my life, there's one thing that I can say for sure: God has been good to me. When I was in the second grade, a teacher asked us to write about how our life was going to be, and I wrote that I would be a scientist, that I would be married, and that I

would make about \$100 a month, and somewhere along the line, I didn't know where, I was going to find God.

When I look back, and I see the times that I was such a sinner, such a spiteful person, lost in pride, and I wasn't looking for God, He was in my thoughts. I thought there was so much more fun in everything else. I blamed this person or that person, when I thought I was right, when I didn't want anybody's correction. God kept me through all of that. When I decided to join the Navy, I couldn't tell anybody why I was going into the military; I just had this strong feeling that I should. One night that changed my life was when my best friend in the military asked me to go out clubbing with him. I couldn't tell you why, but I just didn't want to go, and chose instead, on a Friday evening, to go to school and study. On that night, my friend got in a car accident that, a few days later, took his life. Before he passed, while he was in the hospital, I prayed to the god that I was accustomed to, that he would show his power, that they would show all around that there was no god but Allah, and my friend died.

That didn't stop me from praying, in fact, it only made me more determined to get closer to Allah. After several weeks of praying, Almighty God spoke to me, and told me that I was praying to a god that could not save. I made up my mind at that moment to find the God that could. Two and half years later, He brought me to a little house on Hillside Avenue, and a young preacher stepped up there to talk about the God that he knew. As God dealt with me, I told Him to make me receive it, because I know that I am a stubborn, hard-hearted, selfish person full of faults and failures; full of things that I just want to be done my way. I got born again that same night. That was several years ago, and since then, my Heavenly father has been both a bridge and an answer to me, He's been a light in the dark place for me, He's been my peace in the midst of the storm, He has been my way when there was no way, He is my healing over sickness, he is my strength when I am weak, and I bear witness right now, he has been Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, and Everlasting Father, and my Prince of Peace. Happy Father's Day, Jesus