



Father's Day – Message 4

Warm-up

Growing up, who was your favorite sitcom father? What was it about him that most appealed to you?

Overview

Over the last few weeks of the *Unseen* series, we have explored what the Bible says about the spiritual realm - our authority as believers and the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. With over 70 million fathers in the United States alone, today we take a moment to honor and encourage our earthly fathers (and all believers) to walk in the ways of our Heavenly Father. While this message focuses on fatherhood, these principles apply to sons and daughters alike.

Word and Application

Did you know the man who inspired Father's Day was a single dad and civil war vet? William Jackson Smart was a twice-married, twice-widowed father of 14 children. William's daughter, Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington, petitioned for a national Father's Day. The nation's first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, in the state of Washington. However, it was not until 1972 that the day honoring fathers became a nationwide holiday in the United States. (Read more at www.History.com)

Sadly, the loving relationship Senora had with her father is not always demonstrated in many families today. The effects of broken and absent relationships with fathers is reflected in our society. In fact, a revealing statistic indicates that 85% of American prison inmates grew up without fathers.

- What does this statistic reveal to you about the importance of a father's role in the lives of his children?
- *The deeper truth is that most Father's who have wounded their children were also wounded as children themselves.* Why do you suppose this is the case?

Before we dive into who a father is, let's first look from another angle.

Who's Son Are You?

Read 1 Samuel 17:55-58, Genesis 42:2 and John 5:19-20. Each of these passages depicts sons who were sent by their father. In each case, the son obeys his father.

- What does this reveal about the father-son relationships in these passages?
- **Read Exodus 20:12, Colossians 3:20, and Ephesians 6:1-3.** While parents and their children don't always agree, the Bible is clear about what it means to obey and honor them. Is there a difference between obeying and honoring? Can you obey without honoring? Can you honor without obeying? Explain.

- When Father God gives you an assignment, how would you rate how you respond in obedience? Explain.

| | Hardly Ever | | | Always | |
|----------------------|-------------|---|---|--------|---|
| Quick Obedience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Consistent Obedience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Complete Obedience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Eager Obedience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Every Father is Three Things

1. He is a son of a father (earthly father).

In order to truly embrace fatherhood, we must first embrace sonship. When we deny our earthly fathers, we deny part of ourselves.

- **Read Ephesians 6:2, Deuteronomy 27:16, Jeremiah 35:18-19, and Proverbs 20:20.** Scripture reveals the blessing we receive when we honor our parents and the consequences when we curse or dishonor them.
- If someone were to observe you, would they describe you as a son or daughter who honors their parents? If not, what can you do differently?

2. He is a father of children.

To really become a father it takes a lifetime of love, sacrifice, giving, helping, hoping, dreaming, crying and praying. Let's face it, not all fathers demonstrate this commitment to fatherhood. Remember this principle: we don't honor our fathers because they *deserve* it; we honor them because *we're honorable*. Our honor is not based upon how deserving they are, but how deserving God is of our obedience.

- Based upon this principle, how can you practically honor a father or parent that may not necessarily *deserve* it?

3. He is a son of his Heavenly Father.

Jesus did not come to bring us answers, but to bring us the Father. God, Himself wants to be our Father. **Read Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:4-7, and Psalms 68:5-6.**

- Is it easy or difficult for you to view God as your Father? Explain.
- What are your family members, friends, and associates learning about God from watching you?

Life Challenge

Take time this week to evaluate how you are doing as a son, daughter, father, or mother. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal any blind spots you have and ways you can strengthen your relationship with your family.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the family you have given me. Jesus, you are the perfect example of a Son who loves His Father. Show me how to submit my ways to our Father and obey His leading in my life. Holy Spirit, empower me to love and help my family fulfill their purpose in Christ. Pray for the specific needs of the group.