

Discuss this definition of love: *A personal affection that acts to ensure the well-being of its object at great cost to the lover.*

How does this definition of love differ from the way we talk about love to describe our romantic relationships?

1. Earthly fathers paint imperfect pictures of the fatherhood of God. (Malachi 4:6)

What one word comes to mind when you think of your father? Why?

Circle the words below that best describe your father.

- Present or Absent?
- Affirming or Critical?
- Humble or Proud?
- Verbal or Quiet?
- Patient or Quick-tempered?
- Affectionate or Cold?
- Available or Busy?
- Self-controlled or Indulgent?
- Responsible or Irresponsible?
- Faithful or Careless?
- Graceful or Demanding?

To what degree is your view of the Fatherhood of God misinformed by the influence of your earthly father?

We don't get to choose our heritage but we do get to choose our legacy. What one word would come to your children's mind if asked the same question? Which words on the above list would your children use to describe you? Are those the words you want them to think of?

What are you doing (or have you done) to shape an accurate picture of the fatherhood of God in your children? What can you do this week to give your children a better picture of the Fatherhood of God?

Every human heart was made to be the object of a father's love. How does this reality impact your motivation to prioritize your marriage and parenting?

2. My heart is the object of a perfect Father's extravagant love. (1 John 3:1-3)

Read the following verses out loud but replace the pronoun "you" with your name.

- Jeremiah 31:3
- Isaiah 54:10
- 1 John 3:1

Do you delight in having God as your father as much as He delights in having you as his child?

Psalm 68:5 says God is a Father to the fatherless. What hope does this bring to those who may have been abandoned by their father?

3. Jesus is the only way to the Father's eternal home. (John 14:1-11)

Our finite minds cannot fully comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity. But Jesus says, "whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus looks exactly like his Father. Jesus does exactly what his father does. (John 5:19-20)

Is your relationship with Jesus characteristic of a child who is dependent on his Father for protection and provision?

How are you showing your dependence on your Father? How are you demonstrating honor and obedience worthy of a Father?

Do you look forward to living in your Father's house?

How would your relationship with God, your spouse and your children change if you continually meditated on the Fatherhood of God?

Do you have complete confidence that you will live forever in the eternal home of your father?

Additional Scripture

- Deut. 7:7-9
- Eph. 3:17-19
- Psalm 119:64
- Psalm 36:5
- Psalm 103:11
- Romans 8:15-17
- Romans 8:31-32
- Hebrew 1:3
- 1 Cor. 8:5-6
- 2 Cor. 6:18