

James Robison: The Solution to a Fatherless Generation

Although many live with an orphan mentality, God the Father intends to restore us to a sense of home

Statistics show that 34 percent of American children live apart from their fathers, and half of all children will be fatherless at some point during childhood.

I grew up without a father figure, but at a young age God took me under His wing. By His power, I escaped many negative effects of fatherlessness but still bore some scars. I never heard, "That's good, son. Nice catch. Nice throw. Nice *anything*."

God created us in His image to be His children. In the garden, Adam and Eve enjoyed intimate fellowship with their Father and lived under His care. Then the deceiver enticed them. The children bought the lie and forfeited the relationship. They were suddenly afraid of their Father and foolishly tried to cover their shame with mere fig leaves. This was the first futile attempt on the part of fallen man to deal with the sinful, adverse effect of being deceived by the father of lies.

God the Father immediately put a plan in motion to restore mankind to intimate fellowship with Himself. He set out to establish a family of faith through whom He could bless the nations of the world. These chosen children of God would reveal the heavenly Father to fallen humanity.

Ever since the fall, the enemy has continually sought to deceive people. Many have chosen to live as orphans without knowing a personal relationship with the only perfect Father. As a result, failure to know the Father has led to fatherless families and nations.

Just like Israel in the Old Testament, America is seeking the wrong solution to a serious dilemma. Fatherless people keep asking for a king because, as with Israel, everyone is doing what is right in their own sight (Judg. 21:25). What we all need is *the* King (Jesus), who will show us the Father. No religion, ritual, tradition or idol can substitute for this King.

In the U.S., millions of citizens attempt to find the missing father by: 1) seeking the approval of others, when only God's approval will suffice; 2) engaging in compulsive behaviors and addictions that prove to be a tragic substitute; 3) becoming pleasure-seekers, only to find themselves still empty; 4) joining something (a team, club, gang, religious group or church) to find a sense of family or belonging; or 5) depending on an over-reaching, out-of-control federal government. But there is no substitute for Father God.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus exhorts us to seek first the kingdom of God above all else and to live righteously, and that He will provide everything we need. In the same chapter, He tells us that if God cares for the birds of the air and lilies of the field, He will surely care for those who choose to be His children rather than live as orphans.

Many churches are filled with people who have an orphan mentality. Jesus pointed to the solution when He said, "I have revealed the Father. If you've seen Me, you've seen Him" (John 14:9). The Father in heaven loves us so much that He gave His own Son to redeem us. He calls us by name!

I personally understand the negative effects of fatherlessness. Being born of a forced sexual relationship to a single woman and living without a father did damage to me as a boy and as a human being. All the efforts to fill that vacuum with any source other than a relationship with God were in vain. When I gave my life to Jesus, He redeemed me, and I began moving from an orphan mentality to understanding what it

means to be a child of God, my loving Father.

The most important contribution parents can make in a child's life is to point them to our Father in heaven. By God's grace, our three children looked beyond this father to see *the* Father and fell in love with Him. As a result, they've been effective parents and have pointed their own children to the Father. Given my childhood background, it's a miracle to see God's hand at work in my family.

There is only one way to fill the gaping hole created by fatherlessness in the human heart, and that's with the presence of the living God. When you put Jesus in charge, you will be fatherless no more.

James Robison is president of LIFE Outreach International in Fort Worth, Texas. He grew up without a father but discovered the joy of knowing his heavenly Father at age 15. In ministry for 50 years, James has written numerous books, including his latest, *God of All Creation*, which celebrates his love for pets and wildlife. To read his weekly commentaries, visit .