

Reflecting on Father's Day: From Our Heavenly Father to Earthly Fathers

"There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place" (Deut. 1:31).

Even from early Old Testament law, God's Word illustrates how our relationship with our heavenly Father should be reflected in a father's relationship to his children. As I approach my 11th Father's Day as a dad myself, I'm reminded of both the abundant blessings of being a father and the great responsibility that I'm entrusted with to shepherd, protect and provide for my children spiritually, physically and emotionally.

I've gained a deeper understanding of the Lord's relationship to His people as our heavenly Father only after being a father myself. Being a dad has taught me rich lessons in terms of what it means to love my children unconditionally, sacrifice to provide for them and lovingly discipline them for their own good—all things that our heavenly Father does for us.

Throughout the Scriptures, the Lord teaches us what it means to be a good Father. The Word of God instructs us to have compassion on our children (Ps. 103:13), to guide them on the right path from birth (Prov. 22:6), to avoid provoking our children to anger (Eph. 6:4) and to lovingly discipline them (Heb. 12:7).

All humankind is God's creation, but not all humankind are God's children. Even for those whose faith is in Christ, the Bible speaks of Christians as being adopted:

"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you

live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom. 8:15).

But God didn't only teach us what good fathering is or demonstrate it through flawed believers who He graciously adopted; He exemplified it through His relationship with His own Son, Jesus Christ.

What are fathers to learn from God's relationship with His Son? Here are four important points: