

Welcome to the celebration of our Fathers today. Let us acknowledge that fatherhood, a role often compared with motherhood, is indeed a challenging task. Unlike a mother's innate bond with her children, a Father must continually prove his love and dedication. This morning, we delve into Paul's concept of the hope of a Father's Joy – be in a good relationship with children!

I. The first trait of a father is the ability to express genuine love. In verse 8, Paul says, “We loved you so much.” “So deeply we care for you.” Paul wrote those words to express an intensity of love that gives over and over again. Paul is saying, “It's hard even to find words to express how much—but we really do love you.” This is an important character trait for fathers because expressing love does not come naturally for most men.

There are two incidents to illustrate this intensity of Father's Love.

First, on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, Hunter Biden, the son of President Joe Biden, was convicted of three federal felony gun charges. CNN reported: “In his first statement since his son Hunter Biden's conviction on federal gun charges, President Joe Biden on Tuesday **sought to reiterate his role as a father seeking to support his son through his struggles.**”

In the brief statement, the president underscored his pride in his son for overcoming his battle with addiction. **Biden said, “As I said last week, I am the President, but I am also a Dad. Jill and I love our son, and we are so proud of the man he is today.** So many families who have had loved ones battle addiction understand the feeling of pride seeing someone you love come out the other side and be so strong and resilient in recovery,”

Second, “At the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, the world watched as a parable of the father's love was played out on international television. As the gun sounded for the 400-meter race, Great Britain's Derrick Redman knew that his lifelong dream of winning the gold medal was in view. But as he entered the backstretch, the ripping pain of a torn hamstring sent Redman sprawling. By an act of sheer will, he struggled to his feet in excruciating pain and began hopping toward the finish line.

Suddenly, Derrick's father bounded out of the stands, past a security guard. He threw his arms around his son. In a voice choked with emotion, **he whispered, “Come on, Son, let's finish this together.”** The crowd cheered and wept as they watched the father and his wounded son jerkily down the stretch and across the finish line.”

II. The second trait is the longing to see them. What is hindering you today as a father from having that relationship with your children? Is it their disobedience, embarrassment, or failure to live up to your expectations? Remember that we are like that before our heavenly father. Yes, God gets angry. But God puts up with a great deal before reaching his boiling point. Even then, he forgives us and gives us a path of reconciliation! Psalm 103:9 says, “He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever.” A guy complained to his buddy that his wife got “historical” whenever he argued with his wife. His friend said, “You mean hysterical.” He said, “No, historical. She dredges up the past and reminds me of every time I've failed her in the past.”

We do that with our kids sometimes, don't we? Our kids do something wrong, and we remind them of the previous times when they did the same thing. Father God will not always accuse or harbor his anger forever. Psalm 130:3 tells us that if God kept a detailed record of our sins, we would never be able to stand before him. So, can't we find that reconciliation today before it is too late?

III. The third trait is offering prayers for them. “Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith” (v. 10).

Note these four facts about the way Paul prayed:

1. His prayer was constant. Paul says he prayed day and night. When was the last time you lost sleep because you were praying?

2. His prayer was earnest. Paul cared so much for these young Thessalonian believers that he couldn't help but pray earnestly for them. Prayer must be earnest to be effective. When anything becomes life or death to you, you'll pray fervently, and it won't matter how long or short you pray. Fervent prayer comes from the heart! We should do the same for the people we love

3. His prayer was practical. He said he was praying “that we may see you again.” Do you pray about your everyday affairs? If you are a salesman, you should pray about your appointments. If you are a doctor, you should pray for your patients. If you are a teacher, you should pray for your students. You should pray for your fellow workers if you work in an office. Nothing is too small to bring to God's attention. If it matters to you, it matters to him.

4. His prayer was purposeful. Paul had a particular goal in mind. He wanted to supply what was lacking in their faith. The word “supply” was used for mending torn nets and setting broken bones. It is not too late to offer supply to the broken relationship.

IV. Finally, there is the trait of positive influence. Paul writes, “For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory” (1 Thess2:12). That is what a father does. He encourages, comforts, and urges his children to live lives worthy of God.

Happy Father's Day! May we continue to enjoy our heavenly father's love and grace!