

# ASHLAND AM MEN

## SESSION 5 | FATHERHOOD

### **God is Father**

Fatherhood is rooted in the very essence of God. Fatherhood isn't merely an illustration of what God is like. Fatherhood reveals who God is. There is one God who has eternally existed in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God isn't just like a father but is our Father in heaven.

### **God the Father establishes our identity through...**

- *His presence*
- *His promised love*
- *His authoritative grace*

We reflect the fatherhood of God in our home by establishing the identity of our kids through our presence and promised love in the context of authoritative grace.

### **God as Your Father**

- Your role as a father in establishing identity for your kids will only be as effective as your understanding of God as your father. You cannot help establish a healthy identity for others, specifically your kids if you are not working to cultivate a healthy identity as a son in the son.
- Jesus and the gospel writers mention God as Father at least 165 times. There is a clear progression from God as Father Jesus Father to our Father in the following phrases: "My father" becomes "Our Father" and even "Your Heavenly Father."

### **God becomes our Father through the legal act of adoption**

#### **The Father Set His Adoptive Love On Us**

Ephesians 1:5 | *he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will*

## **The Son Fulfills the Demands for Our Adoption**

Galatians 4:4-7 | *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*

## **The Spirit is the Presence of God’s Adoptive Love**

Romans 5:5 | *and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Romans 8:15-17 | *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

## **God as Father is a Reality Through Adoption**

1 John 3:1-3 | *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. [2] Beloved, we are God’s children now...*

Understanding the Father’s love for you, based on the work of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit, empowers you as a father. As Christians, we help one another cultivate a healthy understanding of who we are before God by first understanding who we are before the Father in the Son by the power of this Spirit.

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**Gospel-Centered Fathers:** What does the gospel have to do with fatherhood?

## Understand Authority in Your Home

Ephesians 6: 1-3 | *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”*

**“...in the lord...”**

**“...for the promise...”**

*There is a God-ordained structure for authority in our homes. To deny this is to deny our families the security of living in the Lord and the blessing of living in the promises of God revealed in the gospel.*

## Questions to Guide Authority

- Am I parenting in the LORD?
- Am I parenting in the LORD for the sake of the gospel?
- In obeying me, are my kids obeying the Lord?
- In following me, are my kids following Jesus?
- Am I parenting for Jesus’ glory and the soul of my kids?
- Am I parenting for my reputation, for ease, or to be liked by my kids?
- Are you clearly articulating the gospel for them? (testimony / they sin)

## Use Authority for Grace

Ephesians 6:4 | *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger...*

**“...provoke...”**

**“...anger...”**

We exasperate our kids when we misuse authority as fathers. The misuse of authority tends toward one of two extremes: being overbearing and emotional *or* distant and passive. These extremes skew our kids' identity before God. God becomes an overbearing tyrant or a foreign concept with little to say or do with everyday life.

*The solution is using our authority as grace in their life.*

### **Authority defines grace**

### **Authority is common grace**

### **Authority leads to spiritual grace**

God clearly teaches He is to be our ultimate authority. We are to fear the Lord. But, we understand the One we must fear is for our good. We must cultivate a healthy respect from our kids for their good. We must use our God-ordained authority so that our kids honor us but also trust us and run to us as fathers, like we run to our Father in heaven.

## **Purpose with Your Presence**

Ephesians 6:4 | *...but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

**“...bring them up...”**

**“...discipline...”**

**“...instruction of the Lord...”**

The key to these commands is communication. Preemptively giving instruction, then coaching God-honoring behavior and consistently communicating consequences for sin and obedience. Kids are emotionally insecure and out of control when communication is overbearing, sparse, or emotional and reactionary.

*Gospel identity* is more important than any other identity your kids may seek. Their identity in Christ, however, will be affected by their identity as your child.

*The goal and end of the gospel is God's presence with us. **Gospel-centered parenting is summed up in presence, "I am here for your good."***

- The presence of a dad does more for the identity and security of a child than anything else. From our presence flows gracious authority that leads our kids to the love of the Father in Christ.

## **Questions | Homework**

How would you define fatherhood? What is a Father? What specific responsibilities do you believe a father must have in the life of their children?

Describe your experience with your dad or other father figures in your life. In what ways has your relationship with your father and other father figures affected your identity in the world?

In what ways has your father affected your view of God as your father?

Do you struggle to see God as your father? Why do you think this is?

Do you struggle to believe God delights in you as a son in Christ? Why?

Is there clear order in your home (as a husband or father)? Where do you see this order lacking?

How does your view of God as your father affect your role as a father in your kids' life?

As a father would you describe your presence as overbearing or passive?

The result of overbearing parenting

The result of passive parenting

Do you see insecurities in your kids' life directly related to your “overbearing-ness” or “passivity” as their dad?

How would your presence in love address these insecurities?

Are there certain rules you need to establish in your home as grace for your kids?

Are there certain areas in which you need to be less overbearing and more gracious with your kids?

Are there areas of parenting that have consciously or subconsciously delegated to your wife in which you need to be more involved?

As you evaluate your kid's discipleship, what areas of life do you see them lacking in? (education, work ethic, finances, self control) How can you take dominion by stepping to coach, disciple, and train in these areas?

Write a letter to your kids using pen and paper that communicates three things:

"I love you.

I'm proud of you.

I'm glad I'm your dad."