

HOW TO RECOGNIZE YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

…TRANSCRIPT OF A WORDFEST 2019 TEACHING ON LIVING STONES BY SIS. DEBORAH MERIBOLE

Good evening, Living Stones! It is an honor to be given this opportunity. I give God all the glory. I would like to thank my Spiritual Father, Rev. Temilolu Aliu for this privilege to share on Living stones.

God bless you, dear brothers and sisters as we dive into His Word. May we be forever changed, and never be the same again.

Let us pray

Dear God, we love You. We love hearing about You, getting to know You, and doing what you say. We thank You for loving us first, so deeply. We commit today's word into Your hands.

It is Your Word – may it accomplish all You have sent it to do. Open up our minds to see what You are saying to us. Grant us divine understanding of Spiritual principles. May we be forever changed to be more like You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Our topic today is: **HOW TO RECOGNIZE YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER**

Until 2017 ending, I had no idea what spiritual fathering meant, much less how to recognize one. I had no idea it was in the Bible. I am a baptized, Holy Ghost-filled Christian who could hear the voice of God, with parents in ministry. My primary confidence was that I didn't "need" spiritual fathering.

And, more seriously of all – why would I need to open my personal life to someone else?! God is enough! God will teach me all I need to know! I count it one of the greatest mercies of God that He led me to Rev. Aliu; my Christian walk has not been the same.

I hope that the Holy Spirit through this teaching opens your mind to the importance of Spiritual Fathers and how to recognize your spiritual father. Even more, I hope that in recognizing your spiritual father, you will be given the grace to submit to his fathering as faithful sons and daughters.

Let's dive in!

There are different kinds of Fathers:

- **Heavenly Father:** God. NOBODY can replace him.
- **Biological fathers –** dads

- **Surrogate fathers –** they step into fathering as needed.
- **Father figures –** godfathers, guardians in school, etc.
- **Ministerial fathers –** they are older in the ministry. They usually only help in ministerial affairs.
- **Fathers of faith –** Any man of God genuinely serving. You can listen to Bishop Oyedepo or Bishop TD Jakes on YouTube**.**
- **Fathers in faith –** they are fathers in the faith because they help you personally in your faith. It could be your pastor.
- **Seasonal fathers –** they stay through a season of your life. Most of the Fathers above (except Our Heavenly Father and biological father) may fit into this category.
- **Spiritual fathers –** forms a lifelong relationship. This is what we will discuss today.

My father likes to say – "the church is full of orphans because it doesn't understand the concept of fathering." God put in 3 major institutions through which He will primarily lead, like Rev. told us a few days ago –

1) The Family, headed by the Father. Sin has corrupted it so deeply that there are many DNA donors and few Fathers.

2) The Government – sin corrupted that too, kings misbehaved, so the order shifted to priests, kings, prophets. We see that in the Old Testament.

3) Lastly, God made the Church.

God is so merciful – Sin has corrupted everything else, so He made a new institution where Blessings would reside. And Spiritual Fathers were placed, from which the blessings would flow.

Spiritual Fathering has a long Biblical history, but sadly it is one of the principles grossly downplayed and under-preached in the body of Christ! After all, you can get to Heaven without a spiritual Father. You can live a good, stable Christian life without one. But, beloved, there is a limit to the grace, wisdom, revelation, impartation and blessings in your Christian walk without spiritual fathering.

Join me on a brief look at Biblical history:

Genesis 1:26 – 27

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over [a]all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them.

God created Adam, the first father. Verse 28 of the same chapter tells us in greater detail about the generational blessings that God placed on Adam, and us – his descendants. God said "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it."

Adam was a father, and a son – Luke 3:38 calls him the son of God. This is our first example, in the first book and chapter of the Bible, about a Father-son relationship highlighting blessings! We all know the story – Adam sinned, and we lost the right to the generational blessings that were our birthright.

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." Romans 5:14

This verse is exciting!

Adam, the son of God and the Father of humanity messed up, so God in His gracious mercy sent us a type, the Last Adam -

1 Corinthians 15:45

And so it written, The first Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Jesus came, fully man and fully God, the Son of God. Jesus only became the Son of God when he came on earth as a human being.

1 John 5:7

For these three bear witness in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and these three are one.

Before Jesus came as a human being on earth, He was known as the Word of God. Jesus came as the Son of God, redeemed our son-ship and blessings that was lost through Adam, the first son of God. Thus, Jesus is known as the only begotten son, and Adam is the created son.

Jesus the begotten son of God came to bring many sons to glory. (Hebrews 2:10). In redeeming our son-ship, he showed us a Father-son relationship with God as a Father firstly, and then by being a Father-figure to the disciples.

Romans 5:18-19
Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

It took many years before the prophesy of Jesus came to fruition. We couldn't have stayed without the Father's blessing for that long. God brought up Abraham, and channeled generational blessings through him – Romans 4:18.

We know that Abraham himself was very blessed, and while he had offspring, there were only so many he had genetically. But Jesus, the author of the new covenant, a genetical descendant of Abraham, made the generational blessings available to all spiritually. Praise the Lord!

Jesus is famous for following his Father closely. Although fully God, he constantly replied – "my will is to do the will of the Father who sent me." He was always fully following and watching His Father's workings. He is the pure picture of obedience, contrary to the spirit of Adam.

And He told his disciples in John 15:1 **–** *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."* He is in complete submission to the vinedresser, God the Father. He explains in verse 5 – *"I am the vine, you are the branches."*

And further explaining what that means in verse 10 – *"if you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."*

In short – He is saying as you have seen me imitate my Father **as a son**, imitate Me too!

When Jesus gave the great commission to the disciples, who later became apostles, guess what His command was?

Matthew 28:19 -20 – *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you.*

Disciple means follower. In other words, as you imitate Me, let them imitate you.

Why? What is so important about imitation? Let me ask you a question. Why do babies learn to walk and not keep crawling all their lives? They see adults walking on two legs, and not on four!

In cases where the baby is the last born by a large age gap, they learn to walk faster, at an earlier age! We human beings learn things firstly by imitation.

God, knowing how our nature is, created a system where **fathers who imitate Him** are there for us to imitate, and in doing so, have a richer walk with Him, our Heavenly Father.

Before we go further, let's do a brief recap on what we've learned about Father-son relationships:

1. Father-son relationships have divine blessings.
2. God gave Adam the blessing and Adam lost it in sin.

3. Abraham carried the blessing of Fatherhood.

4. Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, came in flesh to redeem the sonship Adam lost, and make available the blessings of the Father available to ALL.

5. Jesus showed us the value of Fatherhood by his commitment to His Father, God.

6. Jesus told his disciples to imitate him as He does the Father's will.

7. Jesus told his disciples (later apostles) to teach the ones who come into salvation (us) to imitate them as they followed Him.

The blessings of a Father is a deep, old covenant between God and man that is as valid now as it was in the old times.We can see it in the Old Testament with Abraham and Lot, Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha.

In the New Testament, we can see this relationship with Paul and Timothy, in the book of 1 John, 2 John, 3 John. We don't have time to review all the Father-son relationships the Bible tells us about in depth.

Here are some very important answers we need in recognizing Spiritual fathers

Firstly, who is a spiritual Father?

1 John 2:13
I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.

Spiritual fathers are men who have a relationship with God that has spanned and stood the test of time. They know who God is. They have experience in the things of God. They have attained a certain degree of spiritual maturity.

So is every "old" Christian a Spiritual Father?

The answer is NO.

1 Corinthians 4:15 –21 teaches us a lot about Spiritual Fathering:

Vs 15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.

There are a many things we can understand from that verse

1. Paul didn't say we have begotten you in Christ. He said I. You can only have one Spiritual Father.

2. Not every Christian is a Spiritual father.

Vs 16 Therefore, I urge you, imitate me.

In chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians, we see why Paul qualified for imitation, and could tell his spiritual children to imitate him: He imitates Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1; *Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.*

Spiritual fathers help form Christ in you. Spiritual fathers are people who live transparent lives that we can learn from. It is a personal relationship. Pastor Adeboye cannot be your spiritual father just because you watch him on television. He doesn't know you. You do not know him personally, so how can you imitate him?

Vs 17 – *"Timothy, my beloved and faithful son." Spiritual fathers encourage you.*

Vs 21 *What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and a spirit of gentleness?*

Paul was correcting and disciplining his spiritual children. Spiritual fathers correct you, mentor you, and they discipline you when necessary! Spiritual fathers provide Incubation, impartation, heritage – questions you should ask are:

Is his life something you want to emulate?

Do you want to be like him?

When you get joined to the calling of a Father, his vision and mandate becomes your own. You start to look like him, the same way you resemble biological parents.

When you're joined to a spiritual Father who imitates Christ, and you submit in obedience, the richness gained from such heritage is divine. God honors those relationships. He instituted it.

Let us briefly talk about spiritual father-son relationships starting from the story of Lot and Abraham. Abraham was Lot's uncle and spiritual father. Lot followed Abraham in obedience to the call of God on Abraham's life - Genesis 12:4.

God blessed Lot as a result of that relationship - Genesis 13:6.

Lot did not honor Abraham, as his herdsmen had the audacity to disrespect Abraham by arguing over silly things... Their relationship was strained as a result, and Lot chose to move away… the start of his sad story of destruction.

He chose to live in Sodom and Gomorrah. He lost the blessing of Abraham shortly after – Genesis 14:12.

Abraham still rescued him from trouble – Genesis 14:14.

You'd think that by then, sense will enter, and Lot would return and submit to Abraham. He did not. He returned to Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet still, his sonship still saved his life.

In Genesis 18:17 – *"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?"* God wanted to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah but God remembered their relationship and told Abraham because Lot lived there. Abraham interceded for Lot, and God delivered him. But even when God was delivering him, Lot, the disobedient son still disobeyed God again...

After all if he can disrespect Abraham, he could do the same to God. His story ended up with his daughters deceiving him and having children for him. Where did they learn such evil? Is it not from Sodom and Gomorrah?

Lot’s descendants were sinful too – so sinful God’s people, the Israelites fought to wipe them out. It all started with a disobedient son.

On the other spectrum, we have Elijah and Elisha. Elisha followed Elijah so closely, so faithfully, that his reward from God was a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

We have Moses and Joshua. Joshua inherited the leadership of Israel because he was faithful to Moses. Everywhere Moses was, Joshua followed. When Moses was on the mountain with God for 40 days, Joshua was at the bottom of the mountain, waiting - Exodus 32:17.

God saw all of this.

In Numbers 27:18, God describes Joshua as “a man in whom is the Spirit.” What Spirit? The same Spirit of God that was in Moses. How did Joshua get the Spirit? By following his Spiritual father, Moses. His son-ship qualified him as the leader of Israel.

In Joshua 1:7, God tells Joshua to observe what Moses commanded him. Joshua had proven that he was a faithful son. God trusted him because of that. If you cannot faithfully follow your Spiritual father whom God has joined you to, a man you can see and closely interact with, you cannot faithfully follow God whom you cannot see.

For God watches your obedience, and this qualifies you for the blessings of the Father-son relationship.

How do you enter a Spiritual Father-son relationship? Primarily by conviction from the Holy Spirit. This conviction can come through revelation - dreams, visions or a knowing in your spirit, made certain after prayer.

The knowledge doesn't always come in a booming flash from heaven. When you have decided, then, you submit to him in obedience, willingness and desire to be trained. If you’re not obedient, you’re not a true son. Only true sons receive the blessings of a father.

I'll never forget what my father told me the day I told him about my spiritual father. He said: "Learn from him well. Do all he asks you to do." That is what he had learned from faithfully following his own spiritual father.

It was pretty straightforward for me to do so in spiritual matters. Until the day I opened up about challenges in medical school. Ayayaeee. He said send me all your exam grades henceforth. That was hard and embarrassing for me, but doable.

Then he moved on to the next thing: Go talk to the doctor in charge. That was haaaaard. I explained and explained that you don't just walk up and talk to them. I already knew what they will say. They will only tell me to read more. I'll feel worse.

For goodness sake, what if it sparks gossip? In my school there's a special look everyone gives people standing next to her office. But an instruction is an instruction, so I went. I even cried (especially knowing this professor may tell all the others).

But at the end of finals, I passed. That was a miracle of mercy on its own. And to my surprise, at the end, she commended my hard work. She was as glad as I was over that pass mark. The advice of my spiritual father which I was sure will harm my image helped me! God honors obedience.

And I have seen God move the same way over big acts of obedience and small acts of obedience I did not know mattered. Deliverances, breakthroughs, miracles! Life is richer with a spiritual father. Blessings and answers flow and make things easier.

So a quick recap:

1. Spiritual fathers are spiritually mature Christians who imitate Christ.
2. Not every mature Christian is a spiritual father.

3. You can only have one Spiritual father.

4. Spiritual fathers encourage, correct, impart, and *give you a heritage.*

5. You enter into a Spiritual father-son relationship primarily by conviction from the Holy Spirit.

6. God blesses obedience and submission to Spiritual fathers. Only through this do blessings flow.

God bless you all, Living Stones!

To all who already have Spiritual fathers, may He give you the grace to submit appropriately. To those who don't have one yet, may He enable you to recognize and submit appropriately too, in Jesus Name!

Question

Can the Spiritual father be a woman? Let's say a Spiritual mother?

Answer

I'm very glad that you enjoyed the teaching and have questions. Spiritual fathering is a very important teaching close to God's heart. Spiritual mothers are rare. Women who step into it do it together with their husbands. Women that do it alone are very rare.

The Bible does tell us that there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus (**Galatians 3:28**) so we can't say that it is not possible.

However, the truth that we cannot deny is that the pattern the Bible gave us is that of spiritual fathering. There is a blessing of a father - and it exists across cultures. God made Adam in his image, and Eve in the image of Adam. He made man head over a woman and He is Head over a man. The same way He made it about spiritual fathering. A mother can give a child a blessing in rare occasions but it's usually the father who pronounces it.

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