From the bestselling author of Loyalty and Disloyalty

My Father *my* Father



DAG HEWARD-MILLS

My Father, My Father

By **Dag Heward-Mills**

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Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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Dedication

To my daughters: ***Daniella*** and ***Paula Heward-Mills***

I pray that you will become daughters of destiny.

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Chapter 1

Ye Have Not Many Fathers

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Corinthians 4:15

Dad, as I was growing up,

You always made my world feel safe.
The dear calm of your voice, calmed me...
And the strong circle of your arms circled me.
I never felt vulnerable or afraid,
Because to me, you seemed unshakable.
As I got older, though,
It dawned on me that the world you faced everyday
Was a lot bigger and scarier
Than the one you had created for me.
And I wondered, sometimes, if you felt
Like relying on someone else's strength for a change…
Now that I am an adult and living on
The outside of your safety net,
I finally understand what sacrifices
You made to make sure "my world"
Felt alright all the time.
Growing up in the sanctuary of your love
Is something
I will always cherish and a memory
I could never forget.

Dierdra J. Brown

The gift of a "father" is a rare gift. Not every man of God is a father. Not everyone who teaches well is a father. Paul pointed this out to the

Corinthians. Not all the visiting preachers and teachers were fathers.

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Corinthians 4:15

There will be many people who will make an input into your life. Instructors and teachers abound but these are different from fathers. A father's input is comprehensive. It is a total package that cares about you more than just giving you a good teaching. Whereas a father's heart is concerned about your total welfare, the teacher's heart is only concerned about completing the lesson.

As such, there are not many fathers! It is easier to go through the prepared notes than it is to give total care. People are so ungrateful that it takes the higher grace of fatherhood to patiently escort a person through the darkness of life.

There are many, many pastors, evangelists and prophets, but a fathering prophet–who can find? That is why Paul said: "You can have ten thousand instructors but you do not have many fathers."

The key characteristic of a father is not his age but his ability to produce after his own kind. Contrary to some opinions, there are many young people with a father's heart.

In the natural, people often become fathers at a young age. The proof of fatherhood is in *the children* who are produced by the father. It takes love, commitment and patience to bring up children. In the end, *the children* attest to your fatherhood.

If you compare the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, for instance, you will find the differences between a fathering prophet and a non-fathering prophet. These differences become quite clear when you study their ministries. By comparing the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, you quickly see the differences between a man who has a father's heart and one who does not.

Both Elijah and Elisha were excellent prophets. But Elijah had an additional gift of being a father. That is why he had a successor. Elisha had no successor. He cursed Gehazi who was next in line to him. He

cursed Gehazi when he made a mistake with money. The father's heart does not curse his only child.

The fathering spirit is that thing which causes a man of God to produce people just like himself in the ministry. Very simply put, the fathering gift is a manifestation of God's love. It takes love to bring up people who don't understand what they are being brought up for.

It takes love to bring up people who will not understand you for many years. These people will have a wrong perception of you until they get to a certain stage of maturity. Everybody wants to look good all the time. Most people are not prepared to be misunderstood for many years.

Truly, God sends many, many teachers who minister to our lives. They will minister the lessons and the points that make up the doctrine. But a father will go many steps further. *In addition to teaching you, he will minister the love and the patience that are needed to bring us into God's perfect will.*

Idealism in a minister makes him look for perfection all the time. Idealists and perfectionists are not usually good fathers. They often do not appreciate how the grace of God is working in someone's life. They insist on perfection all the time and that is not possible with human beings.

There are many people who receive me as a good teacher. Not as many are touched by the Lord to receive me as a father.

May you find a father in this life! May you receive the capacity to love and to become a father yourself!

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end.

Chapter 2

The Fatherhood Relay

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Corinthians 4:15

In this life, God is going to send a number of people to father you. The first of these is your earthly father whom you must receive as your father and not as some elderly outmoded person who is out of touch with the realities of modern life. This biological father will have his limitations as far as fathering you is concerned.

Soon the relay will have to begin and the next person sent by the Lord to father you will arrive on the scene. Through his ministry, you will receive the fatherly care that you need to go through the next stage of your life. In a sense, a relay in which the baton of fatherhood is handed over from father to father has begun.

There are many things that your biological father doesn't talk to you about. Maybe he should talk about everything, but he doesn't. For many of us, our parents did not give us step by step counselling on choosing a wife or a husband. Most biological parents just cast insinuations about different tribes and their idiosyncrasies. That is often as far as their marriage counselling goes. Thank God for the pastors who often take up that role and guide children into marriage. Pastors often become the next father in the relay.

One day, my daughter asked me a question, "Daddy, how do people become pregnant?"
I was taken aback by the question but I answered, "God makes them pregnant."
But she insisted, "I know God makes them pregnant but how does it happen?"

I mumbled some answer and managed to change the topic.
Later my wife said to me, “You have to talk to your children about sex.”
I answered, “Why should *I*? *You* talk to them about it.”
We began to argue and she said, “You are the head of the house so you are the one who must talk to them.”
But I answered, “*You* are their mother and you are always talking to them, so why don’t you talk to them about this as well?”
She continued, “It is your duty and you must play your role.”

But I didn’t agree. I used my authority as the head of the house and delegated her to talk to the children about all these things.

You see, we had reached the place where our fathering abilities were wavering. We wished that God would send others to minister to our children as we had ministered to other people’s children. We were praying that the next father in the relay would appear on the scene and help guide the children to safety.

Among the hundreds of instructors and teachers, it is always important to recognize who the fathers are. Fathers have a wider scope of concern for your life. Their input goes beyond even what they say. You will discover that their ministry cares for you totally. Their ministry has an uncanny wide-ranging effect on your life.

One of the keys to recognizing a father is to recognize the love, care and direction of our Heavenly Father being transmitted through him to your life.

Many people mistakenly think that the verse says you have ten thousand teachers but you have one father. The Scripture says that you do not have *many fathers*. It says in other words that you have *a few* fathers.

Jesus said, “Don’t call any-one father.”

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Matthew 23:9

This is because no human being could truly be all that a father is supposed to be. All men fall short of this role and only the Heavenly Father truly exemplifies what a father is.

Have you not noticed how earthly fathers often compete and fight with their children? Even biological fathers can inflict a lot of pain and suffering on their children.

There are many who hate their fathers. And there are many whose lives are distorted because of their fathers. This is ample evidence that fathering by the natural man is fraught with imperfections.

This is the reason why there is a need for what I call, “the relay of the fathers”.

The relay involves God sending one person after another for different phases of your life and ministry. It is important to recognize the different people as they walk into your life.

This is what Jesus was illustrating with the parable in Matthew 21. We will be judged by the way we received God’s servants who were sent to us.

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

Matthew 21:33-39

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Chapter 3

I Sent You a Father

Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

Matthew 21:36-37

God sends fathers into our lives who we often do not recognize. People even fight with their fathers! We must learn to receive the fathers God sends into our lives.

What Is the Difference between Receiving a Father and Receiving an Instructor?

Receiving an instructor involves receiving the lessons he gives from the Word. Receiving a father involves receiving an all-embracing ministry from someone.

In the natural, your biological father affects you in many ways. He teaches you how to eat, how to dress and how to live. He gives you wisdom, advice and little lessons for life. He sets an example for you to follow and serves as a source of inspiration and direction.

Compare this with your school teachers. These instructors often do not guide and inspire us as our fathers do. When you come across someone who seems to have this wide-ranging influence on your life, you have probably met one of the fathers that God has ordained for you.

Don’t Make the Mistake of Receiving a Father as a Mere Instructor

Some people make the mistake of receiving their fathers as mere teachers. They do this by not embracing all the fatherly input coming their way. By receiving only a part of the input of these fathers, we often reduce the role of fathers to mere instructors. There are people God has called me to father. But I relate with them as an instructor because that is what they want.

The parable in Matthew, Chapter 21, clearly shows that God will judge us for the way we relate to the people He sends to us. There are fathers that God has sent to me.

One day, I was enjoying the message on tape by a man of God and the Lord said to me, “I sent this man to you as a father.” From that moment, I regarded those tapes differently. I opened my heart to receive all aspects of the ministry that were offered to me through this minister.

Suddenly, all his books and tapes were of interest to me. At first, I just enjoyed some of his teachings but now I wanted everything. I knew that I was to be birthed into a new level of ministry through this man. That was really when I understood that you can receive someone as an instructor but then you can go higher and receive him as a father.

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Chapter 4

The Nine Fathers of Your Life

1. Your Heavenly Father

…When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven…

Luke 11:2

Most of us have the impression that the Heavenly Father is an angry God who would have burnt us all up, if it had not been for the intervention of Christ. We often have **the feeling that He still wants to burn us!**

Most of the revelations that people have had of God speak of His indescribable love. Our Heavenly Father cares for us. A close look at the story of the prodigal son shows the attitude of the Father towards His sinful children.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Luke 15:20-24

He loves us. Although we sin a thousand times, He still loves us.

2. Your Father in Christ

This is the person who brought you to the Lord. He or she is the one through whom you gave your life to Christ and became a born-again Christian. God sends people to us who birth us into the Lord. We must always cherish and honour them. It is because of them that we will one day go to Heaven.

3. Your Father in the Ministry

This is the person who birthed you into the ministry of the Lord. Through him you find yourself involved in the work of the Gospel. Often, fathers in ministry are lumped together with our fathers in Christ. We generally call them spiritual fathers.

God has blessed me with wonderful men of God through whom my life has been totally transformed. I have become a pastor and a minister through their fathering grace. In recent times, the Lord has blessed me by sending another father to lift me into the next phase of ministry.

4. Your Biological Father

This is the father from whose seed you were born. This person is often the only one who receives the recognition of a father. This is a great mistake because he is not and cannot be the only one who fathers his children. I always pray that God will send fathers into the lives of my children to help them at different stages of their lives.

One day I was praying for some young ladies at a revival. I prayed for them with all my heart. Then it struck me: “Will there be somebody to pray for my daughter when she is twenty-one years old?” I prayed that God would send people into the lives of my children so that they would be blessed and cared for at the different stages of their lives. Jesus said, “Call no man your father!” He knew that no earthly person could single-handedly father anyone.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Matthew 23:9

5. Substitute Father

This type of father often replaces the biological father. The biological father may be unavailable because of death, divorce or abandonment.

Many homes are not ideal and God raises people to do the work of fathering. One day, I stood in grief over the dead body of one of my pastors. I was holding his trembling wife, desperately trying to console her as she looked at her dead husband’s body. Shortly after this, one of the doctors on the ward spoke to me. I will never forget what he said.

He said to me, “Don’t worry. I know you will be thinking: “Why did he die? Why should such a good person leave us now?”

He continued, “People will say, “God must be angry with the church for a pastor to die.”
He went on, “But you see, death is part of life. We do not understand everything that God does.”
Then he said something that surprised me, “My father died at the age of twenty-five when I was in my mother’s womb.”
He said, “It must have been very sad for my mother. I never saw my own father.”
He continued, “Perhaps I would not have become a world famous surgeon if my biological father had been alive.”
This man had become a world-class surgeon and was greatly respected all over the nation. He had achieved this great feat, not through the help of a biological father, but through the help of a substitute father.

A substitute father is someone who steps in to father a child when the real father is not around. Sometimes, substitute fathers are even better than biological fathers. There are two lessons we can learn from this:

a. *Don’t be afraid to die*. God will take care of your children. He will raise up substitute fathers who may be even better fathers than you are.

b. *Don’t hold back*. If you have the chance to adopt or care for a child, go for it! You may be the substitute father that God is raising to care for a fatherless child.

6. Your Father-in-Law

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

Exodus 3:1

Your father-in-law can be another kind of biological father. Moses was greatly blessed through his father-in-law. He received important advice through his father-in-law.

My father-in-law has been a great blessing to me. He inspired me to be debt free and to believe in real estate. Apart from my biological father, my

father-in-law has really been an inspiration to me. There are many times I have pointed out to my wife how blessed she is to have such a father.

7. Father of a Church

The father of a church is the founder of the church. He is the father in the sense that he gave birth to the church. Through his ministry, the church came into existence. Like Paul said to the Corinthians, “I have begotten you (given birth to you) through the gospel.”

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Corinthians 4:15

8. Father of a Movement

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Galatians 3:7

There are also fathers of movements. For example, Abraham is seen as the father of the Faith Movement. Such people are recognized as those who gave birth to generations of similar people. Kenneth Hagin is seen as the father of the modern Faith Movement.

John Wesley is the father of the Methodist Church Movement.

Fathers are special. Sons may do greater works than fathers, but they are still not recognized as fathers. For instance, in the ministry today, there are great healers and pastors, but the fathers always stand out as fathers.

Elisha did greater works than Elijah did. Elisha’s miracles were often twice as powerful as Elijah’s and he did twice as many miracles as Elijah did. Joshua entered the Promised Land. He conquered a land which Moses was unable to enter. He accomplished Moses’ dream with a great display of power. But neither Elisha nor Joshua had a successor. They were great ministers but not fathers.

On the mount of transfiguration, neither Elisha nor Joshua was present with Jesus. The fathers were those who appeared in the vision.

Never forget that fathers are special to the Lord. Young people should not be deceived by their accomplishments. Do not think that you are greater than your father! All that sons and daughters do is to build upon the advances already made by fathers.

9. Father in Sin

A father in sin is the one who introduces you to many evils. Some of us would never have known the depths of sin if it had not been for those who virtually took our hands and led us into evil. Some of us would never have known about fornication, had it not been for those who well and truly baptized us into this practice.

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end

Chapter 5

The Power of a Father

Honour thy father…that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Exodus 20:12

Fathers have the power to bless and to curse. They occupy a seat of authority given by the Lord. There is tremendous power released when a father speaks a blessing over a son.

There are three groups of people on earth that have been given divine authority. In the family setting, the father has been given authority. In the nation, the government has been given authority, and in the church, the pastor is the authority figure.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Romans 13:1-2 (New International Version)

Your relationship with any of these authorities is vital for your existence on this earth. Any kind of father assigned to you by God is an authority in your life.

If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

Ecclesiastes 10:4

One day, I was in a lobby having a chat with some pastors. I overheard another pastor describing his woes. His child was in a coma and he had spent all his money trying to save the life of his child. He was now broke

and desperate. In his own words, he described what he felt had led to his predicament.

He had had a disagreement with an authority in his life and as he walked away from this authority, the father declared, “My covering has been removed from you.”

“That was the beginning of all my troubles,” he said.

You see, spiritual people understand spiritual principles. Strive to get the blessings rather than the curses of an authority figure.

Jesus and His Father

Jesus understood the power of His father. His very last words on the cross were to entrust Himself into His Father’s care. “*Father*, into thine hands I commend my spirit.”

With those words He plucked His soul out of the jaws of death and placed it into the hands of His father.

He trusted His father and even when the terrors of death were closing in on Him, He knew who had the power to rescue Him. That is the power of a father, which Jesus respected. Is it not amazing that His very last words on earth shed such light on the power of a father?

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Chapter 6

Your Daddy's "Devil"

Be careful how you criticize your daddy because the devils that fought your daddy will one day fight you. They are just waiting for you to grow up.

Whether you like it or not, one day, you will have to fight "your daddy's devil".

One man of God said to me, "People want to retire me! They want me to be removed from my position in this nation. They think I have too many problems."

He said something I will not easily forget: "When I am gone, the 'thing' that was fighting me will begin to fight them."

This is an eternal principle and it will be wise to grow up and understand it quickly. Many sons have had to swallow their words as they walked into their father's footsteps and made his exact mistakes. Notice how this happened with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon.

1. Daddy Abraham disowned his wife and his son Isaac did the same.

Abraham

And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister…

Genesis 20:1-2

Isaac (son of Abraham)

And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister….

Genesis 26:6-7

2. Daddy Abraham set aside his first-born son and his son Isaac and grand-son Israel found themselves doing the same thing.

Abraham

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

Genesis 21:14

Isaac (son of Abraham)

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

Genesis 27:34-35

Jacob (son of Isaac)

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

Genesis 49:3-4

3. Daddy David had problems with women and marriage and so did his sons Absalom, Solomon and Amnon.

David

And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

2 Samuel 11:2,4

Absalom (the son of David)

So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

2 Samuel 16:22

Solomon (the son of David)

…Solomon…had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines:

1 Kings 11:2-3

4. Daddy Abraham slept with his wife's maid and his grandson Jacob did the same.

Abraham

And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Genesis 16:3-4

Jacob (grandson of Abraham)

And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel:… she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.

Genesis 30:2-5

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end

Chapter 7

The Signs of Sonship

One day, a couple sat before me at the counselling table. The lady said to me, “Oh Bishop, I am your daughter.” But I corrected her and said, “You are not my daughter, you are just a church member.”

She looked hurt but I continued, “You are a very nice church member who is always smiling around and encouraging us but that doesn’t make you a daughter. You are a *VNP* but you are not a daughter.”

(There are five types of church members: very nice people (VNPs), very encouraging people (VEPs), very important people (VIPs), very significant people (VSPs) and very dangerous people (VDPs).

I went on to explain to this very nice lady.

I asked her, “When you see my children running around in the church, how do you know that they are my children?”

She didn’t answer so I answered myself, “They look like me. Can’t you see that my children look like me?”

She nodded.

Then I asked her, “What similarity is there between you and I? You are not involved in the work of ministry. You are not a shepherd, you are not involved in the ministry and you do nothing in the church. You are a nice person but not a daughter.”

She finally understood the point I was making. Just being around and being nice does not make you a son or a daughter. On that day, there were many children playing around after church, but only two of them were my sons. Being around doesn’t make you a son. There are certain things that make you a son or a daughter, and that is what I want to share with you in this chapter.

Seven Signs of Sons and Daughters

1. A son/daughter resembles his father.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;…

John 14:9

When you see my sons and daughters in the ministry, you will find that they have some resemblance to me ministerially. The similarities between sons and fathers are the great telltale signs of the relationship.

In the natural, the colour of my sons' skin tells everybody that they are related to me. Spiritually and in the ministry, there are many similarities between my sons in the Lord and myself. Jesus said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father."

The reason why I don't have to run around all the different churches preaching is because my sons and daughters are ministering powerfully. If you have seen the son, then you have seen the father.

A son is not a clone or a photocopy of the father. But he has very important and essential traits that he received from his father. Every son has his father's genes, blood type and DNA. However, some sons have even more similarities and look exactly like their fathers.

A close look at my daughters and sons in the ministry will reveal some essential traits that have passed on to them.

2. A son/daughter is forever.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:35

Real sons and daughters will always belong to the house. No matter what your natural child does, he always belongs to the house. He may even live elsewhere, but he belongs to the house. In his heart he knows where he belongs, he knows who brought him up and how he came to be what he is. Although it has happened before, a true son will rarely rise up against his own father.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

1 John 2:19

3. Sons and daughters trust their fathers for everything.

…Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil…

Matthew 6:9-13

The real sons are filled with lots of trust. At a normal work place, there is a lot of mistrust. The junior staff do not trust the manager. But in a family, the children usually trust their father absolutely. I have never heard of children going on strikes or demonstrations against their parents.

The constant exhortation to us as children of God is that we may have faith in our Heavenly Father. The more we trust Him, the more of His blessings we will experience. Differences between children of the same family usually stem from different levels of trust that they have shown for their father.

In the ministry, I notice the same thing. More of God's blessings and anointing flow through me to sons and daughters who are more trusting. Some sons and daughters are weary, suspicious and cautious. Others are more trusting and faith-filled. These always get more of their father's blessings. These differences come from the different extents to which they trust me and what I say.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children…

Luke 11:13

4 A son honours his father.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour...?

Malachi 1:6

Don't expect honour from servants or employees. You can only expect lip service and unreal smiles from employees. You can expect honour from

a real son. Ministry should be made up of sons, daughters and their father.

One mega-church pastor said to me, “I have had many bad experiences by appointing pastors from other churches and Bible schools. Now I only have my spiritual sons and daughters working with me in the ministry.” That is the way it should be! Your true sons and daughters will only bring honour. Apart from a few prodigal sons, most sons and daughters bring honour and joy to their father.

God has often led me to honour people who have been fathers to me. I have tried to honour them in private and in public. I have honoured them with my words and with my substance. True sons and daughters honour their father with their substance. It is a shame for your father or mother to struggle financially when you could help them. Do you want your parents to beg you for money? That is not honouring your father! That is humiliating him. Even when your father and mother do not need anything, you must honour them with your substance because that is what the Bible teaches.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 1:6-8

5. Sons obey their fathers.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise ;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Ephesians 6:1-3

True sons obey their fathers. I never try to exert authority over people I perceive are not my sons or daughters in the ministry. When I sense that someone is not a son or daughter, I am very limited in what I tell the person to do. It is only true sons and daughters who obey.

6. Sons and daughters do what they see their fathers do.

…The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 5:19b

A true son is looking out for what his father does. He is interested and feels that his father knows the way. This is what Jesus did. He healed only when He saw His father healing and He preached only when He saw His father preaching.

Sons are rarely wiser than their fathers. Why didn't Jesus heal the whole multitude by the pool of Bethesda? He healed one man and left the rest untouched. It is like going into a hospital and healing only one person. It doesn't make sense but that is what the Father did. Jesus was content to do what He saw His Father doing.

I have noticed how my sons and daughters in the ministry flourish when they do what they see me doing. They preach what I preach and they teach what I teach. They see me healing the sick and they start to heal the sick.

They are not mindless clones; *they are simply good sons and good daughters*! Of course, any human father (like myself) is imperfect and his life will never be the perfect example of things to follow. Our ultimate example is Christ! But God gives fathers on this earth that we may have practical examples to benefit from.

7. Sons believe in their fathers

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Luke 23:46

Jesus believed in His Father’s ability. Jesus believed that His Father was powerful. Jesus understood the power of His Father. His very last words on the cross were to entrust Himself into His Father’s care. “Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.”

With those words He plucked His soul out of the jaws of death and placed it into the hands of His Father.

He believed in His father and even when the terrors of death were closing in on Him, He knew who had the power to rescue Him. That is the power of a father, which Jesus respected. Is it not amazing that His very last words on earth shed such light on the son’s belief in His father? Stupendous!

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end

Chapter 8

Fathers and the Highest Kind of Blessing

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Ephesians 6:1-3

One of the highest blessings is that it may be well with you. Who would not like it to be well with him? However, it will never be well with you if you are disobedient to your father!

The greatest blessing for sons is hidden in their obedience to their fathers. There is something I have noticed in large families with five or more children.

The sons or daughters who are very obedient to their parents turn out differently from those who are rebellious, independent and resistant. It is a pattern you will discover for yourself.

One pastor told me how she had noticed this phenomenon. She described how some of her father's children had constantly resisted their father's advice. "It is not easy for them today", she said. "Marriage is not easy. And financially, it is very difficult for them."

She continued, "I can see a clear difference between those of us who obeyed and those who rebelled."

The Difference Is Clear

Another pastor said to me, "I have a big family with many brothers and sisters but the difference is clear."

He described how his father was cared for by one of his daughters.

He said to me, "This sister of mine cared for my father all the time. She did what he wanted and he was always pleased with her."

“In fact”, he continued, “my father died in her arms. She was nursing him when he died. Even my mother was not around when he died but she was there.”

Today, her life is very different from some of her brothers and sisters. He began to describe horrific conditions of the cancer and poverty which had struck some of his other brothers and sisters. He mused, “There is certainly a difference between children who love and honour their parents.”

One day, a father went shopping with his two sons. As they walked through the department store buying clothes, the father suggested to his sons, “Take this pair of trousers, it will suit you, it is nice.” But there was a clear difference in the response of the sons to their father’s suggestions.

One of them constantly had a different opinion. He didn’t like what his father liked. He always wanted something different. He even became grumpy and angry because he couldn’t have some things.

However, the reaction of the other son was very different. He would say, “Whatever you choose for me is okay. I like what you like for me. *I want what you want for me*.”

You see, these two attitudes can grow up and result in two different outcomes. The highest kind of blessing is that it may be well with you. It will be well with daughters who trust and obey their fathers! It will be well with sons who trust and obey their fathers. This principle applies to all kinds of fathers whether natural or spiritual.

Become a son who wants what his father wants for him. Become a son who likes what his father likes. Christianity is based on this principle: the principle of submitting your will to the will of your father. The principle of *accepting the father’s will* instead of your own will.

Do not be self-willed. Be subject to your father’s will. It is safer and easier to say, “ Father, into thine hands do I commit my life.” Let’s follow Jesus; He is the best example for us all.

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end

Chapter 9

Fathers and Longevity

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Ephesians 6:1-3

One of the sure ways to shorten your life is to dishonour fathers and mothers. Look around carefully and you will find this to be practically true.

In the ministry, your longevity is also determined by your relationship with your fathers. Longevity speaks of how long you last in the ministry. You will always meet people ahead of you. It is important to honour these people as fathers. Even when you have a different ministry, you must respect the fathers for who they are.

Two examples of long-lasting ministries are those of Jesus and David. Jesus' ministry has spanned thousands of years and is getting stronger. The ministry of King David is still being felt through the Psalms he wrote and the life he led. If you want to survive and persist through the years, learn this principle now!

1. Jesus respected John the Baptist. He acknowledged him and went to his church. Jesus submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Matthew 3:13-15

Jesus spoke highly of John the Baptist even though He did miracles which John the Baptist didn't do.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Matthew 11:7-10

Jesus preached a different kind of message from John but acknowledged the greatness and relevance of John the Baptist.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11: 11

After Jesus had submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist, a voice from Heaven said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Jesus had not won any souls when He received this appellation–"this is my beloved son"! All He did was to submit Himself to someone ahead of Him in ministry. This is an important point for those who love to fight anything older or bigger than they are.

King David acknowledged Saul as being the anointed king before him. Even though Saul had many problems, David did not attack him. He called him "father" and not "the mad man of Jerusalem". He called him the Lord's anointed and not the "demonized daddy". That is why his throne is established forever.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:32

2. There are four things about Saul that would have driven any normal son to rebel against his father. But not David, he knew better.

He knew the verse in Exodus 20:12; that his longevity depend on how he related to the fathers.

Four Reasons Why David Could Have Rebelled Against Saul

1Saul was rejected by God through the prophet Samuel.

...Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

1 Samuel 15:23b

2. Saul was demon-possessed. He came under the influence of evil spirits and David knew it.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.

1 Samuel 18:10

3. Saul killed pastors. He had become a murderer and his victims were none other than God's priests.

And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

1 Samuel 22:21

4. Saul was into witchcraft. His last night on earth was spent in a witch's house.

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

1 Samuel 28:7

In spite of great provocation, David maintained his stance toward Saul. He refused to see him as anything other than a father. There are many ignoramuses who launch furious attacks against fathers because of the faults they see in them. Why not learn from David whose throne is established forever? Surely you do not have more good reasons than David did, to rebel against a father!

Moreover, *my father*, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

1 Samuel 24:11

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end.

Chapter 10

The Frightening Rebukes of a Father

The curse of a father is deadly! A father is an authority figure and his words have heavenly backing. Fatherhood is actually a spiritual position. Words coming from this position contain power and must not be taken lightly. The Bible is full of examples of curses and blessings.

Noah was a type of Adam in the sense that he was the only man on earth and had to repopulate the earth with his children. Noah built the ark and escaped the floods. He and his family were the only people alive on the earth after the flood.

However, one day something happened that changed the course of history even more than the flood itself. This was the day Noah had too much to drink and lay naked in his tent. One of his sons, Ham, the dark-skinned fellow, exposed his father's nakedness and told others about it. However, the other two children covered their father's nakedness.

When Noah arose, he delivered one of the most frightening rebukes of all time. He pronounced "the curse of the servant of servants" on his son. This pronouncement, directed at the dark- skinned son, has had an effect that is felt up till today.

All over the world, black people are treated as second-rate beings. Billions of dollars are spent to fight wars and free oppressed people in Iraq. But there is no motivation to help the slaughtered sons and daughters of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

A *twenty-million dollar* reward was offered for information leading to the capture of Saddam Hussein or his two sons. But in Africa, only *twenty-thousand dollars* was offered to capture the African terrorist Mohammed Farrah Aideed.

Black people all over the world are suffering from the frightening rebuke and curse of Noah. The continent occupied by black people is generally seen as a sub-standard place occupied by inferior people. Yet, it is the

continent with the richest mineral resources. Some of the largest gold mines in the world can be found in African countries like Tanzania, Ghana and South Africa.

Even within each continent, the parts occupied by black people are seen as second-rate zones. Whether it is black people in North or South America, black people in Australia or black people in Europe, the picture is the same. It is the picture of the servant or the servant of servants.

How could such a unique pattern be established throughout the world? It has been shown that black people are as intelligent as white people. The American space shuttle that crashed had a black astronaut on board. Black people have achieved equally great heights in education as white people. The best golfer, the richest woman, the best basketball player, the fastest male and female athletes, the best and richest boxers in the world are all black people. The king of pop music and the best-selling Christian musician ever, are both black men.

Still, the curse and the rebuke continue to daunt the black man. The words spoken by the father against his son, echo through the centuries, producing an unmistakable pattern of servanthood.

Manage Your Relationship with Fathers

One of the wisest things on earth is to carefully manage your relationship with fathers.

When young people fall in love, they often forget the importance of honouring and obeying their parents. Some time ago, I did not recognize this principle to its fullest. But I appreciated it when two young ladies died in the midst of their years after marrying against their parents' wishes.

One husband described how his wife's family was totally against his marriage. But he insisted and went on against his parents' wishes. The young lady developed a strange form of paralysis. When she died, she left behind little children for her husband to take care of.

I remember sitting on the hospital bed of a dying twenty-five year old girl. Her father was against her getting married but she had gone ahead and married without her father's knowledge.

Because of my medical experience, I know when somebody is dying. I can tell by just looking at their faces. I was petrified as I sat on her bed.

She put her hand on my knee and said to me, “Bishop, are you afraid?” Unfortunately, I lied. I was scared out of my wits. But I said I was not afraid.

Then she told me, “Don’t be afraid, I am not going to die.” But I knew she was dying. I put my hand on her head and palpated several bumps, which seemed to be metastatic cancerous lesions to her skull. She had a rare and terrible cancer, which had spread all over. The disease was so strange that it was only diagnosed fully at her post-mortem.

She died in a horrible and frightening way, which I have never forgotten. Throughout the ordeal, my mind was constantly on how she had gone against her father’s wishes. Truly, the curse of the father must be avoided at all costs. Obey, flow in peace towards the fathers that God gives to you. They are given for your good.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

Romans 13:1-3 (NIV)

The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

Proverbs 30:17

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end.

Chapter 11

Deceived, Blind and Sick Fathers

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see... And his father Isaac said unto him (Jacob)… Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

Genesis 27:1,26,28,29

And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick…And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless...

Genesis 48:1, 20

Unfortunately, natural men have mistaken physical weakness for spiritual weakness. They presume that old age, sickness and problems reduce a person's spiritual authority. That is one of the highest kinds of deceptions.

Isaac was an *old blind man*. He could no longer see the difference between his two sons, Jacob and Esau. Isaac was deceived by Jacob and in his deception, he spoke a blessing over Jacob and it came to pass.

And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he {Jacob} and said, I am. And he came near, and kissed him…and blessed him, and said, See…the LORD hath blessed; Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

Genesis 27:24,27-29

Do not be misled by the blindness and weakness of your father. He is still a father and that is the main lesson of this chapter. If a blind father can speak a blessing for it to come to pass, then we must fear the words of fathers.

You often hear people speaking against their fathers. They describe them as irresponsible men who didn't look after them. They don't want to have anything to do with their fathers. Sometimes in our youthful healthy state, fathers are seen as short-sighted, eccentric men, whose contribution is irrelevant.

Unfortunately, some young people take up the hurts of their mothers and champion the fight against their fathers. This is a terrible mistake for which they pay a high price. Some pay the price of barrenness; some pay the price of death. Yes, he may be blind, irresponsible, and deceived, but he is still a father.

Many men of God in their latter years look battle-weary and drained. They are often presented as fallen heroes, men of the past, forgotten ghosts! No one wants to have anything to do with them. But it is these "blind and deceived people", who brought you forth and gave you the heritage you have today.

When Ham exposed the nakedness of his drunken father, he forgot one thing. He forgot that if his father hadn't built the ark, he would have drowned. He would have drowned with the rest of the world. His body would have been eaten by sharks, barracudas, herrings, tuna, piranha and red fishes!

What he did not know was that through his father's single act of faith, the whole world was saved. What he did not know was that God had recorded that act of faith and imputed it to him as righteousness. *Ham was disgracing someone that God had honoured*.

May we never be part of the team that dishonours the fathers that God has honoured!

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end

Chapter 12

The Inheritance of a Father

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints

Ephesians 1:18

There is something known as spiritual inheritance. A “spiritual inheritance” is something that passes from fathers to sons.

Only when you receive your man of God as a *father* do you receive the benefit of an inheritance. An inheritance will only flow from the *fathers* to their *sons and daughters*.

You will notice from the story of Elisha that he had an earthly father called Shaphat.

…**Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat…**

2 Kings 3:11

However, at the time Elijah was being taken away, Elisha referred to Elijah as his father. He did this effortlessly and naturally.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father…

2 Kings 2:12

Why is it important to receive your man of God as a father? This is because fathers leave behind an inheritance for their children. People usually do not leave an inheritance for servants, employees, friends and colleagues. *The inheritance is meant for the children*!

A person with an inheritance is very different from someone without it. A person with a father receives guidance and direction for his life. A fatherless person has a life full of struggles.

I never worked while I was in the university. My father provided for me fully until I became a doctor. The money he gave me each month as a

student was more than my salary when I became a doctor. My father bought me a brand-new car when I was in the fifth year of medical school. I was really blessed to have a good father looking after me. *My life as a student was "struggle- free" because I had a father*! However, the same cannot be said for many people.

I have met countless people who did not receive guidance for their lives. They threw away their talents and became non-entities because there was no father to guide them. I know many people who do not even know their fathers.

The situation is even worse for orphans! **Struggles abound for orphans**. The future of an orphan is very uncertain. It is the same in ministry. When you have no one to influence you in the right way, your ministry is full of struggles. Although I have had different fathers in ministry, there are times I have been fatherless as far as developing into a pastor was concerned.

I have had fathers in ministry from afar. I have gone through various struggles because I have not received support from nearby fathers. Many of the struggles and frustrations I've experienced in ministry are because I had no one to help me.

In fact, people who should have been fathers to me when I was beginning my church were more of outright enemies. They opposed my cause and fought against me. Today some of these people are always eager to claim fatherhood over my life because I am successful in ministry.

Inheritance flows naturally from a father to his children. In the ministry, spiritual inheritance flows naturally from the fathers to the sons. When my father died, his Will was read in Court. He left his properties to his children. Although he had many employees and friends he didn't will anything to them —everything went to his children. Dear friend, that is the reality of life. Inheritance goes to children and not to colleagues or equals.

There is something known as spiritual inheritance. **This spiritual inheritance of anointing and gifts passes naturally from fathers to sons.** It does not pass from father to equals, colleagues and friends. It

does not even pass from father to servants. It passes from *fathers to sons.*

Hello “Boss”

I used to have a junior pastor who preferred to call me “boss”. I always felt uneasy when he called me “boss”, but I didn’t know why. You see, when someone calls you “boss”, it means that he sees himself more as a hired hand. A few years later this pastor departed under unpleasant circumstances. Then I realized why I had felt uneasy. A servant or an employee does not stay around forever. He’s only there for a while and will leave when it suits him.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:35

If you have a relationship with a man of God, which becomes a father-son relationship, you can expect a spiritual inheritance of anointing to flow effortlessly from him to you.

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end.

Chapter 13

Turning the Hearts

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Malachi 4:6

There is a time when sons are not interested in what their fathers do. These sons are interested in the exact opposite of whatever their fathers desire. This is a condition that leads to a curse. There are many examples of this.

For instance, if a father is a university lecturer, the son may say in his heart, “I do not want to be a university lecturer.” If the father is a politician and the heart of the son is turned away from his father, the son may grow up secretly deciding never to have anything to do with politics.

Similarly, the father may be a pastor in the ministry and the son will say things like, “I want to be a lawyer or an astronaut but not a pastor.” All these are as a result of the hearts of the children being turned away from the father.

It is important to pray for your child so that his heart will be turned to his father. When children’s hearts are turned away from their fathers, they become independent and rebellious.

The Turning of a Daughter’s Heart

Once, I was with a pastor’s family and I got to talking with his daughter. As I chatted with her, she related how she was studying for her law degree. Her plans were for a corporate job in the corporate world. Meanwhile, her father was pastoring a great church with thousands of people but she had no interest in what he was doing.

A couple of years later, I came back to that city and was chauffeured around by this same pastor’s daughter. This time all she talked about

was the ministry. I wondered where her legal dreams had disappeared to. There was no more talk of the corporate world. It was just God and His work.

So I told her, “You have changed! I think a real change has come over you in relation to God and the ministry.” So I asked again, “Have you changed?”

She responded, “Yes, I have.”

I told her, “I noticed it the moment I interacted with you. The last time I was here, you were very different from what you are now.”

She nodded, “That’s true.”

Then she confessed to me, “I have always wanted to stay away from ministry life. Our family suffered so much because of the ministry and I never wanted to be in it. I can’t even understand why I have changed so much.”

She added, “I am scared of my new interest in ministry. All I want to do is to travel with my father and help him in the ministry.” But I understood what had happened to her. God had turned the heart of the child towards the father to avoid a curse. The turning of the heart is a spiritual thing and only God can do it. It is important for parents to pray for their children otherwise their hearts will be turned away from all that is good and recommended by parents.

Turning the Father’s Heart

There are also times when the father loses interest in his sons. This usually happens when the father is hurt or disillusioned with his children. It brings a curse on the children because they are left without any fatherly input.

One day, one of my lay pastors who had been out of the country for some years came home. Before he left the country, he confided in another pastor. He said, “I think the Bishop has lost interest in some of us.” I just feel that he is not as interested in us as he used to be.”

I was surprised that he was able to quickly pick that up because he was right. I had been so disillusioned and disappointed in some of the pastors that I had lost interest in them. I wouldn’t call them for meetings and I wouldn’t say much to them. I would just smile to everyone and say, “You

are blessed!” But I wouldn’t engage in a deep and substantial discussion with any of them. You see, my heart had turned away from these pastors.

But God began to turn my heart back to them. He made me pray for them and gradually, I regained the love and interest for these pastors. I then understood first-hand what it meant for the heart of the father to be turned away from his children. It is indeed a dangerous thing and it does bring a curse. Pray that your father’s heart will not be turned away from you.

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end.

Chapter 14

Is Every Man of God a Father?

Not every man of God is a father. There are pastors, apostles, teachers and evangelists who are not fathers. On the other hand, there are pastors, teachers, evangelists and apostles who are fathers.

Any of these callings can take on the cloak of fatherhood. Fatherhood adds an extra dimension of love to whichever calling of ministry you have.

Marks of a Father

1. A father has the ability to produce sons and daughters.

The cardinal sign of a father is not his age. Unfortunately, most people equate old age to fatherhood. The opposite is true. Most of us became fathers when we were young and in our twenties.

We develop and perfect the art of fathering as we grow older. The cardinal sign of a father is his ability to produce offspring. A classic example of this truth is seen in the lives of the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha. Even though Elisha had a greater anointing than Elijah, he had neither successor nor son in the ministry. Elisha had earlier cursed the only son God had given him (Gehazi). Instead of Gehazi becoming a son in the ministry, he became a leprosy patient! Elisha had also cursed some little children for laughing at him. Apparently, he had no time for children.

The double portion of anointing on the prophet's life didn't transform him into a father.

2. Fathers have large hearts of forgiveness.

Notice how Elijah was deserted by his first servant but still took another servant (Elisha). He had the heart to try again.

And the LORD said…go…and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

1 Kings 19:15-16

When Elisha disobeyed and refused to stay in Jericho, Jordan, Gilgal or Bethel, Elijah did not become angry with Elisha and curse him. Instead, he was open to Elisha's request for a double portion of the anointing.

Men of God who are unable to become fathers often suffer from idealism and perfectionism. These are delusions which keep us from the grace of fatherhood. No one is perfect and people with this delusion attack God's children who are making an effort to improve.

They have no place for imperfections and lapses of any kind. This delusion frustrates the grace of God. God's grace helps us to climb the mountain until we reach the peak of perfection. If God had to wait until we were perfect, He would never be able to use anyone. None of the apostles and none of us would have qualified under such conditions.

Fathers have space in their hearts for all sorts of people. They can see that after several falls, a shining star will be born.

That is why the prodigal son's father called for the best robe and for a ring to be brought out for the wretched returnee. Notice how the elder brother, who had no fathering abilities, was angered by the return of his brother!

The fathering heart has big latitude to accommodate all sorts of excursions made by potential sons and daughters. If our Heavenly father did not have this heart of love, which of us would be a son today?

3. A father provides for his children.

This role of a father is seen in the Lord's Prayer, where we ask our Father to give us daily bread. We also ask Him to deliver us from evil and to help us. A real father helps and provides. Unfortunately, some people misunderstand the role of a father to be that of a "receiver-general".

Receiving honour and gifts is not the main function of a father. It is the opposite. Providing for children is the main duty of a father.

If you are fortunate, *some* of your children will remember and honour you. Receiving honour and gifts is simply a privilege that you may or may not receive as a father.

Fathers must provide direction! Fathers must provide protection! Fathers must provide for the needs of their children.

Furthermore, by these few pages, my son, be admonished because of making many books there is no end.

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