



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

“A PRODIGAL FATHER”

Father's Day Special

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The effects of longing and emptiness created by the absence of a father in the family are painfully felt by many over several generations. Jesus shared with us the image of His heavenly father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) or more appropriately should be called the Parable of the Prodigal Father. Indeed, our heavenly Father has a love for us that is recklessly extravagant that can fill the hunger for a father in us.

1. The characteristics of our Prodigal Father as described by Jesus

- 1.1 He has extravagant love (1 Jn. 3:3). His love for us is absurd and unreasonable compared to how love is defined for us in the world today. We too can love someone extravagantly by doing the following:
 - 1.1.1 Press in and draw closely even if we are offended or hurt.
 - 1.1.2 Choose to constantly see and acknowledge the best in the person we love.
 - 1.1.3 Find out the love language and be intentional in saying or doing it.
 - 1.1.4 Pray and fast constantly for them.
 - 1.1.5 Put our father before ourselves.
- 1.2 He is generous (Lk. 15:12; Mt. 5:45). He gives us what we asked for even if we are undeserving.
- 1.3 He is caring (1 Pet. 5:7). He is concerned for our welfare and interest.
- 1.4 He is providential (Phil. 4:19; Mt. 6:8; Eph. 3:20). He knows and supplies all our needs.
- 1.5 He is consistent (Mal. 3:6; Lam. 3:23).
- 1.6 He is a promise keeper (Josh. 21:45).
- 1.7 He is competent. He is competent in equipping Jesus in His early life and His ministry for His perfect plan to be fulfilled.

- 1.8 He sees everything (Lk. 15:20). He sees the lost soul returning home to make things right.
- 1.9 He feels compassion (Lk. 15:20)
- 1.10 He runs (Lk. 15:20).
- 1.11 He shows loving acceptance (Lk. 15:20).
- 1.12 He restores sonship (Lk. 15:22).
- 1.13 He celebrates (Lk. 15:23-24; 1 Jn. 3:1)

2. A few things to consider regarding our own thoughts about our father.

- 2.1 Where did we get our expectations of what our father should be like? Let us not compare him to other dads because every dad that was assigned to us by the Lord is meant for us.
- 2.2 Are our expectations with our dad realistic? Remember that nobody is perfect and we can't find a perfect father.
- 2.3 We need to understand that it is not easy being a father.

Conclusion:

If our experiences with our earthly Father were mostly negative, we must not allow them to reflect our heavenly Father because it may affect our view of God as a Father; our interaction with Him, and our ability to love and trust Him. He is perfect and never falls short in His fathering of each one of us (Mt. 5:48). Hence, if we still do not have a loving relationship with our heavenly Father, let us start one today by saying a prayer from our heart. We need the prayer of the lost son.

Reflection:

1. What kind of father was or is your father? Was your experience with him positive or negative? Why?
2. Are your expectations for your father realistic?

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