

The Fatherhood of God

Of Him, Through Him, To Him

By George Davis

In our day, the title father invokes images of a remote-control-hoarding couch-potato or bumbling handyman, obsessed with power tools that he doesn't know how to use. He is cast daily on sitcoms as an egomaniacal, emotionally-callused and intellectually-challenged megalomaniac, as caring toward his children as a bull buffalo trampling his young. Though dramatized for comedic value, this sad satire is not altogether fictional. Fathering by default has become a rather common thing in our day. Sadly, in some cases, fathers have done unspeakable harm to their children, even sexually abusing them.

Because of the poor example of their fathers, many Christians today have difficulty relating to the fatherhood of God. They have trust issues that they can't get beyond because they transpose the poor character of their earthly fathers onto their Heavenly Father. They seem destined to relate to God in the unwholesome way they related to their earthly fathers. Many find it difficult to trust in the provision of God because their earthly fathers often failed to provide some of their most basic needs. Jesus very likely faced the same issues when He taught the multitudes about the unfailing care and provision of their heavenly Father.

What stirring and tender terms the Son used to describe the faithfulness of our Father! His concern and provision extend to the lilies of the field, which He clothes in glory surpassing that of Solomon. Even the birds of the air are the constant recipients of His care. He is concerned when even one of them falls to the ground.

The Father, the Begetter

There is a seldom-pondered aspect of God's fatherhood I would now like to address. The term Father (Greek *pater* 3962) as applied to God, means the Begetter. He is the everlasting Father who continues to beget moment by moment. Relating to God as Father means that we yield to His ongoing fathering. Whatever does not issue from Him is a bastard.

Regardless of how good it looks, if it doesn't have its origin in Him, it is illegitimate. Jesus taught His disciples to begin praying with this very acknowledgement, "Our

Father who is in heaven . . ." Have you ever considered the full ramifications of these words? They are the key to prayer, in that God's fatherhood is inseparably attached to His provision. And Fatherhood is all about begetting. Jesus was teaching His disciples a manner and attitude of prayer that acknowledged God as the origin of everything. To truly honor Him, you must do just that. Prayer then is both asking God to issue forth, and allowing Him to do it by staying out of His way. Unless we understand this we will not wait the due time, but instead do as Abraham did, hastily taking matters into our own hands and becoming our own begetter. Abraham went into Hagar to create his own child of promise and then dared to offer the child to God for approval. No matter how earnestly Abraham pleaded, "O that Ishmael could live in your sight," God refused to accept what did not originate in Him. God is not really our Begetter, our Father, until our ambition to bring things to pass by our own energy is severely tested. Until we get the "our Father" part down, we will constantly be answering our own prayers and offering to God things that do not issue from Him.

Those things that do not emerge from the Father's heart are illegitimate, and will not be sustained by Him. God takes this very seriously. He has set in effect a causal law that governs both the natural and spiritual realms. Every living thing, without exception, will inevitably take on the nature, life and likeness of its source. Often the differences are not immediately noticeable (See Matthew 13:24). It may look good for awhile, but if it does not issue from the Father, it will eventually take on the likeness and character of its source, whether Satan or man. God is not mocked; we will reap what we sow. Whatever originates in the mind of man will take on the likeness of man. If it comes from the Father, He will sustain it and it will look like Him and return glory to Him. Paul explains it this way: "[For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.](#)" (Romans 11:36 NKJV)

A careful examination of the prepositions of, through, and to in Romans 11:36 will reveal much.

- **of** (Greek *ek* 1537) denotes origin--the point from which action or motion proceeds.
- **through** (Greek *dia* 1223) signifying the channel of an act; the ground or reason by which something is or is not done--the means.
- **to** (Greek *eis* 1519) into, unto, to, toward, for, denotes the destination.

Everything will be tested by these criteria. If it is not of Him it will not be sustained through Him and it will never return glory to Him. Whatever does not originate in God will not be supported by His Spirit and therefore will never lead into, unto, and on toward His eternal purpose and glory. God is glorified only when things are of, through and to Him. The of part is the hardest for most of us because it requires the death of our plans and programs and consigns us to the scary position of waiting upon God to act. This is a great test and humiliation for the flesh. If we do not stop acting of ourselves we will never realize the through of God, where all is nurtured and brought to fruition by Him. Until we know the Father as our Sustainer, we will never share in the to part, where all is unto Him and He receives all glory. If God's Children understood this, it would certainly put an end to many Church practices; prayer would replace brainstorming and waiting would replace reckless religious experimentation.

Jesus spoke of the Father's aggressive posture toward those things that are not of Him. "Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13 NLT). Jesus was referring to the religion of the Pharisees, which was for the most part the invention of the Pharisees. At best it was a mixture. God does not reward good ideas. He is not seeking innovative young talent. He never said to anyone, "You take it from here." No. He is looking for those who will reverently yield to His fatherhood.

Reformation history should be viewed as the ongoing plucking of the Father. He is still weeding His garden, uprooting everything that He has not planted. We may try to blame the devil or other people when our planting withers, but God is to blame. He is pulling up by the roots all that finds its origin in the traditions of men or has been sown by the enemy (Matthew 13:25).

While in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by Satan to turn stones into bread. But He answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds [is now flowing forth] out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

What was wrong with turning the stones to bread? What could it have possibly hurt? Answer: the idea did not proceed from the mouth of God. It might have seemed like a good idea, but its origin was wrong. In the economy of God, things are not tested and approved based upon necessity or logic but upon the grounds of origin. Did it proceed from Him?

Father give us discerning eyes and careful hand so we won't spend our days in vain--
planting what you are plucking!

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