

The Traits of a Great Father

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I. He gives the security of belonging.

Romans 8:15-16 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.

- a. A slave did not belong.
- b. A slave was evaluated on and approval was conditional on performance.
- c. A slave was subject to the capricious whim of the master – punishment could be overly harsh or patently unfair.
- d. A slave thus lived in fear.

- a. A child did belong.
- b. A child was loved just for being a child and was secure in that.
- c. A child was subject to a father who trained out of love.
- d. A child is respectful of the father's authority but does not live in fear.

II. He aspires for his children to excel.

John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 Just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children, ¹²so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

III. He practices tough love.

Hebrews 12:5-11 And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; ⁶FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." ⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Jonah 4:1-11 But, it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. ³"Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life." ⁴The LORD said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?" ⁵Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city. ⁶So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. ⁷But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered. ⁸When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with *all* his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life." ⁹Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death." ¹⁰Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and *which* you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. ¹¹"Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

IV. He gives good gifts.

Matthew 7:9-11 "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰"Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Conclusion:

1. If your father failed you or wasn't there—Look to God and others to see what a great father is.

Psalms 68:5 A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, is God in His holy habitation.

2. If you have failed or are failing as a father—Repent, seek forgiveness if necessary, and start doing right.

3. If your father did it right—then follow the pattern he set for you.

4. If you did it or are doing it right—then stay the course.