

WE NOW COME TO A VERY INTIMATE, TENDER CHAPTER IN SOLOMON'S PROVERBS. HERE SOLOMON BARES HIS HEART. THE TIMES HIS FATHER URGED HIS SONS TO LISTEN TO HIS WORDS. THE URGING TAKES ON A URGENT TONE - TO THE POINT THAT THE "SONS" IN THIS PASSAGE ARE TO CONSIDER THEIR FATHER'S WORDS AS THOUGH THEIR LIVES DEPENDED ON LISTENING TO AND HEEDING THEM.

**THIS IS A MOST IMPORTANT POINT:** OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR EARTHLY FATHER (AND MOTHER) IS SO VITAL THAT GOD PLACES A SPECIAL BLESSING BY OUR HONORING THEM.

Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

**A FATHER LOVING - Proverbs Chapter 4.**

THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE URGING OF A LOVING FATHER FOR HIS SONS TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO HIS WORDS AND THE URGING TO LAY HOLD OF WISDOM IS STRIKING. HERE IS A COMPARISON BETWEEN FATHER'S WORDS AND WISDOM;

**Father speaking**

Prov 4:10 Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

Prov 4:4 he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.

Prov 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

**Wisdom speaking**

Prov 9:11 For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.

Prov 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.

Prov 1:33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."

I AM CONVINCED OF TWO FACTS; IT IS IMPORTANT IN AN ABSOLUTE SENSE FOR THE FATHERS OF OUR GENERATION TO ASSUME THE PROPER ROLE OF PRIESTHOOD OF THE HOUSEHOLD. FOR A MAN TO ABDICATE HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD HIS FAMILY IN A PROPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS A TRAGIC SIN ON HIS PART. FIRST, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR A MAN TO BE SURE OF HIS SALVATION. THEN THAT HE HAVE A TOTAL COMMITMENT TO HIS LORD AND FOR HIM TO LEAD HIS FAMILY SPIRITUALLY.

Eph 6:4 **Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

I WOULD LIKE TO PUT THE EMPHASIS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN NORMAL. FATHERS, WE *WILL* EXASPERATE OUR CHILDREN *IF* WE DO NOT BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD! WE OWE OUR CHILDREN THAT MUCH! LET ME PUT IT ANOTHER WAY. IF A FATHER NEGLECTS THE INSTRUCTIONS OF GOD'S WORD IN BRINGING UP HIS CHILDREN (IN PARTICULAR SOLOMON'S PROVERBS) HE WILL EXASPERATE HIS CHILDREN.

THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRED DAVID TO USE THE FATHER AS A WORD PICTURE TO DESCRIBE GOD'S INTENDED RELATIONSHIP TO HIS OWN.

**DAVID'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AS HIS FATHER**

**PSA 27:10.** DAVID IN WRITING OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD SPEAKS OF HIM AS THE FATHER WHO, HE APPARENTLY DID NOT ENJOY.

**PSA 89:24, 26, 28, 33, 35.** THE LORD, IN AFFIRMATION, SPEAKS TENDERLY OF DAVID AS HIS SON -

**GOD, FATHER OF THE FATHERLESS**

**PSA 68:5.** OUR HEAVENLY FATHER BECOMES OUR SURROGATE FATHER IN CASES OF THE FATHERLESS. FOR A CHILD TO BE FATHERLESS HE EITHER HAS LOST HIS FATHER THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS DEATH OR THE FATHER IS COMPLETELY DYSFUNCTIONAL.

(See also Psalm 10:11-18). THE PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT GOD IS

PERCEIVED AS UNAPPROACHABLE. IN REALITY IT IS GOD'S DESIRE THAT MAN ENTER INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THAT RELATIONSHIP TO THE FIRST PERSON OF THE TRINITY IS BEST PICTURED AS THAT OF OUR FATHERS - THUS JESUS USES THE TERM "HEAVENLY FATHER."

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

IT IS GOD'S PLAN THAT WE INITIALLY LEARN ABOUT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER FROM OUR EARTHLY FATHER. JESUS, EXPANDED THE CONCEPT OF THE FIRST PERSON OF THE TRINITY AS FATHER IN MANY WAYS.

**LIKE FATHER LIKE SON - MAT 5:44-48.** IN THIS PASSAGE JESUS IS SHOWING THAT JUST AS OUR EARTHLY FATHERS HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON OUR LIVES - SO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER SHOULD AFFECT US.

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER CARES AND PROVIDES FOR US - MATT 6:24-34.** THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PLAIN. AS CHILDREN WE LEARN EARLY ON TO TRUST OUR FATHER TO PROVIDE FOR US. THE LESSON OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S CARE AND PROVISION IS CLEAR.

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DISCIPLINES US IN LOVE - DEUT 8:5; PROV 3:11, 12; HEB 12:7-11.**

Deut 8:5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

THE COMPARISON IS BETWEEN OUR EARTHLY FATHER AND OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS CLEAR - IF WE REBEL AGAINST OUR EARTHLY FATHER'S DISCIPLINE (MAKE THAT "TOUGH LOVE"), HOW CAN WE LEARN FROM GOD'S ALLOWING DIFFICULTY IN OUR LIVES? LOOK AT THE CONTEXT (VS' 2-4). THE PROBLEM WITH ANY GIVEN GENERATION OF BELIEVERS MAY WELL BE THE LACK OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY OF ITS REJECTION BY THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS GENEROUS - LUKE 11:1-13.** JESUS WAS SPEAKING TO THE FATHERS IN THE CROWD OF WOULD-BE DISCIPLES. THE IMPLICATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLEAR IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN SO DENSE. AS CHILDREN, MANY COULD REMEMBER THE TIMES WHEN THEIR FATHERS WOULD GRANT THEIR REQUEST - THE LESSON, IN THIS CASE, WAS THAT THEY SHOULD ASK FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT AS PER THE OLD TESTAMENT DISPENSATION SO THAT THEY COULD ADVANCE SPIRITUALLY. THE ORIGINAL REQUEST WAS THAT JESUS WOULD TEACH THEM HOW TO PRAY - HE GAVE THEM THE "MODEL" LORD'S PRAYER THEN HE SHOWED THEM THE REAL KEY - THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER HAS PROVIDED EVERYTHING WE NEED TO ADVANCE SPIRITUALLY. JUST AS OUR EARTHLY FATHER WANTS US TO GROW AND SUCCEED, SO IT IS WITH OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

WE CANNOT UNDERESTIMATE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR EARTHLY FATHER. WITH IT IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER PLAYS IN OUR LIVES.