

**Introduction:**

- Fathers play a huge part in our lives. They play an important part in who we become and the struggles we encounter while becoming. Psychologists have declared over and over the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. Yet we have sunk deeper and deeper into a fatherless society. Those same psychologists also speak of the ills caused by fatherlessness in our nation.
- I don't think I have ever met anyone that has not been wounded by a father. And I don't think I have ever met a father who denies not ever having wounded his child. And I am talking about relatively stable homes. This statement is obvious to those who have grown up in dysfunctional homes! So many issues that we deal with in life come as a result of Father issues we experience as children. These father issues show up as wounds in our hearts and they manifest in a number of ways that are contrary to scripture. Most of all, unless healed, they follow us all our lives muddying up relationships, sabotaging our successes, and alienating us from the people we love the most.
  - Some wounds come from fathers who are still learning to be fathers. Some wounds come from dysfunctional fathers. Some come from absent fathers. Some come from fathers who are there, 'but missing.'
  - How many of you can honestly say you have some sort of "father issue(s)" as a result of heart wounds and you are still overcoming in life?
  - These issues are often complicated because they come in layers. It is usually not one single event that caused it but multiple events that cover each other.
- In the film Shrek, we meet, Shrek, an ogre. Ogres are giants that eat people (issue!) Shrek has anger issues. Shrek has relationship issues. Shrek lives alienated from others. Shrek feels sorry for himself. Shrek by default lives alone.
  - Shrek, like onions has layers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMcXVe8zls>
  - These layers not only complicate our earthly relationships but they also complicate our relationship with our Heavenly Father. If you struggle with 'layers' in your earthly relationships you most likely struggle with your relationship with God. These layers of wounds produce in us an "orphan" heart in our own home. We become orphans because of the condition of our heart.
- Over the next few weeks, I want to talk about the Fatherhood of God. I want to help us have a better relationship with our heavenly Father. I want to heal the orphan spirit in all of us. I want us to see our Father as He really is. And I want that relationship with our heavenly Father to translate into our relationships within our families and with each other.
- *"So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father.""* (Romans 8:15, NLT)

- I. God As Father Is Revolutionary** - lets try to not be religious as we contemplate this. In familiarity we lose the profoundness of God as Father.
- A. In the Old Testament God is only known as the Father of a nation(s).
1. God as Father is rarely referred to in the OT.
  2. Never is father used in the OT in referring to God as "my Father."
- B. In the NT, Jesus introduces the radical concept of God as "my Father" when He calls God "Father" over 60 times. This makes our relationship to God incredibly unique!
1. The reason for the difference is this: the revelation of God as our personal Father is based on the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. His words: *"If you have seen me you have seen the Father. I and the Father are one. If you come to me you come to the Father."*
  2. Only in the NT do we discover that God is now the Father of those who come to the Lordship of Jesus by faith. The relationship is highly personal!
    - a) In the OT He was the Father/progenitor (founder, begetter, creator, starting place of) of a nation.
    - b) In the NT all who come to Christ are "Born Again!" of the Father. He is the begetter through Christ Jesus.
      - (1) He is our Father because He created us.
      - (2) But He is our Father because He has adopted, by way of the New Birth, into His family as sons of God!
- C. Three crucial understandings of Father that we find in the Bible are:
1. Father refers to the source or paternity or origin. IE Paternity test. IE. The Doxology: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" *"...for it is He Himself Who gives life and breath and all things to all [people]."* (Acts 17:25 AMP) When you call God Father, you are declaring that your ultimate origin rests with Him.
  2. Father speaks of parental authority. He is God we are not. He is running things and we are not. He is the Father we are the child. Because He is Father, and all wise, we may not always see/understand what He is doing. Therefore we affirm our confidence in His goodness towards us at all times.
  3. When you call God "Father" you confess that He is a tender loving God. Hebrew: 'hesed'-mostly translated 'loving kindness' with the understanding of "faithfulness in loving kindness." It is the love that keeps on loving no matter what we do or how badly we blow it or how many times we blow it.
  4. God is perfect in these three things. This is where we as earthly fathers have 'blown it.' And it is where we as sons and daughters have been wounded by fathers. The wounds are much more serious than what we think.

## II. What is An Orphan Spirit?

- A. The orphan spirit refers to a spiritual condition in which some Christians profess outwardly to know God as Father, but experience an internal contradiction to that belief. Deep down they struggle to comprehend that God really loves them. The Bible indicates that when father's and children's hearts are turned from each other, a curse can result. An orphan has no name, no family, no rights, no inheritance. An orphan has to succeed on his own, make his own way and make a name for himself. An orphan strives to gain approval and acceptance.
1. By "orphan," I am referring to a sense of abandonment, loneliness, alienation and isolation. Some have felt these for so long they think it is normal.
  2. It began immediately in the Garden of Eden at the fall of Adam and Eve. It carried over to Cain and resulted in the murder of Able. Thus creating more abandonment, loneliness, alienation and isolation.
  3. IE. The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) is the story of two sons with a orphan spirit. The younger son spends his inheritance in pursuit of pleasure. The older son works to earn his father's love not realizing he already has his father's favor. The younger son represents people who run from God and the older son represents many people in the church who believe they are close to God but in reality do not know God. Both sons live as orphans with a poverty spirit. The younger son does realize the error of his ways, but the older son continues to try to earn his father's favor through works.
  4. I believe the emotional, physical and spiritual ills of society can be traced to people feeling alienated from God and their biological fathers. Orphaned men have a hard time connecting to their spouses, their children, those in spiritual authority and their supervisors, and they have a hard time accepting and loving themselves. Orphaned women struggle with the same issues.
- B. How do I know if I have this? Here are some symptoms:
1. Fear - always expecting the worse. This comes from getting very few, "Good job!" Therefore you know you will never be good enough. You will always be expecting the worse. Also closely connected is fear of failure-results in 'don't try' or 'try to hard'
  2. Shame - you feel bad about yourself. Always putting yourself down. To skinny, to fat, to dumb, to short, etc.
  3. Poverty - fear of lack. Fear of not having enough. (millionaires struggle with this). IE. Heidi Baker described the difference between the orphans who are new to her ministry and those who have been there for a while. The newbies are always stealing, hoarding, gathering while those who have 'become sons' know there will be enough. Their security causes them to act differently.
  4. Abandonment - fear of being left alone. Comes by death of parent, divorce. "Nobody loves me. I don't really matter."

5. Unworthiness - results in trying to earn love. Perform to get love.
6. Rejection - fear of not being accepted. Again trying to earn love/relationship.
7. Rebellion -
8. IE. Many parents make the mistake of shaming your kids into a certain behavior. We make them feel bad about not trying, not doing, in order to get them "to do." When they don't...they feel like failures, they feel they have let us down because they are not good enough. So you have fear, shame, unworthiness, and rebellion (I'll show you!) How many adults do you know like that? How many of you still struggle with these things?

C. An orphan spirit is person who lacks emotional identity and seeks to earn his identity through his/her efforts. Their symptoms include a critical spirit, being defensive, unable to take correction, feeling abandoned and blames others. Those are all self-protect modes of operation.

1. Are you seeing how complicated this is getting?
2. Are you seeing the layers?
3. All stemming from an orphan spirit.

### III. What Must I Do Now?

A. Acknowledge the uniqueness of the relationship you have with the Father.

1. *"So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father.""* (Romans 8:15, NLT)
  - a) You received. Gr. "To take to ones self." What was it that you received?
  - b) You received God's Spirit - the breath of God. *"who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."* (2 Corinthians 1:22, NKJV) *"In Him you also trusted, ..., having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,"* (Ephesians 1:13, NKJV)
  - c) You received the Spirit of adoption/sonship! Now you can say, "My Father!"
2. He became Abba Father
  - a) Abba - Aramaic for Daddy. Come from Aleph and Bet- Aleph - strength, progenitor, symbol of an ox in a yoke. Bet, symbol of a house. Strength in the house. "Daddy's home!"

B. What does it mean to be adopted by God?

1. Gk. huiothesia - a legal act that is done in public where a child is brought into ones home and made son of that house. huios - Gk for son.
  - a) It was determined by the Father accepting a child into his home as a son of the house.
  - b) Adoption is the legal action by which a person takes into his family a child not his own with the purpose of treating him as and giving him all the privileges of his

own natural child. An adopted child is legally entitled to all rights and privileges of a natural-born child.

- c) *Spiritually speaking our adoption began in the heart of God. It is the result of Grace! We do not deserve a thing and it's not a bad thing to be reminded of that fact! Adopted by the Grace of God!*
2. It means God wants us! The whole process rests in the hands of God who has set out to adopt us. His mercy and compassion, His loving kindness moves Him to take us as His children. I belong! I have a place!
    - a) And I am under the loving care of a very loving Father. I have the right to enter into this loving relationship. This relationship with Father is diametrically opposed to the spirit of bondage. Ro 8:15
    - b) Adoption emphasizes more exactly the Father - son relationship against the judge-prisoner relationship. It is not so much the judge setting the prisoner free as it is the Father restoring the (wayward son Lk 15:22ff).
  3. It means we have a new family. The family of God. God is now our Father!
    - a) We are brought into a new family and relationship where we now have privileges and responsibilities as a member of that family.
    - b) We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We all share in God's Kingdom.
  4. It means we now have a new name.
    - C. Receive the Father's love. The only way to break this orphan spirit is for people to be filled with a sense of the Father's love for them in Christ, which then enables them to become mature sons who serve God out of knowledge of His undeserved grace instead of trying to earn the Father's love through performance.
    - D. *"This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."* (Matthew 3:17)
    - E. Heal the heart. You cant cast this out. It must be love penetrating the heart through relationship!

### Conclusion:

- The Father never intended us to live as orphans without a Father and without a home.
- Are you ready to embrace the full inheritance that the Father in heaven has for you now on earth? Adopted children know their emotional identity, walk in their God given destiny and embrace the eternal resources that God has for them.
- Lets start taking off some layers this morning. You are not an ogre.
- Invitation