

Introduction:

- We have had multiple messages on our identity in the past month. The strongest believers in Christ are going to be those whose identity is clearest to themselves.
- Our identity is who we understand ourselves to be at the very core of our being—the heart level.
- So the natural question to ask is: Where do we get our identity from?
 - I would say that the majority of people attempt to get their identity from the things and people rather than from God.
 - I would also with confidence say that fathers or lack of fathers also plays a major roll in how our identity is established.
- 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. Therefore if I can establish a solid faith in who my Heavenly Father is and my relationship to Him as a son, many of my identity issues will disappear.

I. Fathers And On The Job Training**A. Fathers can hurt you.**

1. 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!
2. 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.

B. Most fathers are doing their best.

1. When you become a dad you start practicing to be a father. If you are learning to be a father from someone who is practicing, you are probably going to get hurt. Babies don't come with instruction to their 'make and model'. Some wounds come from fathers who are still learning to be fathers. There is only one set of instruction that are given when a child is born and that is the Bible!
2. Some wounds come from dysfunctional fathers.
3. Some come from absent fathers.
4. Some come from fathers who are there 'but missing.'

C. 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.

- D. 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.
- E. 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)

II. God As Father Is Revolutionary - let's try to not be religious as we contemplate this. In familiarity we lose the profoundness of God as Father. I want to bring our Heavenly Father into close view where we are in awe of Him.

- 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, born from above!" 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. We can say, "God will come and save us!"
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.

Conclusion:

- The strongest believers in Christ are going to be those whose identity is clearest to themselves.
- Our identity is who we understand ourselves to be at the very core of our being—the heart level.
 - Fathers do this best in us. But they also have potential to wound us greatest.
 - Therefore, we must know our Heavenly Father most intimately.
 - Intimacy brings revelation of who He is and Revelation of who He is brings us into a place of obedience. Intimacy, Revelation, Obedience