



Father Knows Best...

Devotional Thoughts for the Week of November 15, 2020
by Ed Green

This is week 11 of our series on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. We are focusing on

Matthew 7:7-12, but also other passages in the sermon about our heavenly Father. Our devotional author this week is Ed Green. Ed serves as Pastor of Equipping & Care here at BCC.

Week 11 Day 1: Knock. Knock. Knock.



Sheldon, from *The Big Bang Theory*, has a peculiar way to knock on his neighbor Penny's door. Knock-Knock-Knock, "Penny." Knock-Knock-Knock, "Penny." Knock-Knock-Knock, "Penny." It's both annoying and

cute and serves as a running gag throughout the show.

Read Matthew 7:7-8. Jesus tells us that if we want something from God, to be persistent in asking for it. Make it a habit. Ask. Seek. Knock. This week I saw a graphic for a sermon series on this passage with the subtitle: "Getting God's Attention." Nothing could be farther from the truth! Our asking, seeking, knocking is not for the purpose of getting our Father's attention, but rather to demonstrate our heart and desire for God to do something. Jesus specifically says earlier (Matthew 6:8) that God already knows what we need *before* we ask.

Jesus tells a story in Luke 18:1-8 about persisting in prayer. What is something that you have prayed about, but have been tempted to quit (or maybe you already have), because God doesn't seem to be responding? Like Jesus, I want to encourage you to pray and not give up.

Week 11 Day 2: Good Dads and Bad Dads



This is one of the most shocking and iconic lines in science fiction entertainment: "I am your Father!"

Almost seventy years ago J.B. Phillips wrote a little book entitled *Your God is Too Small*.

The author discusses what he calls "unreal gods," false ideas about God we tend to hold that shape the way we view and interact with him. Here is an uncomfortable truth: my view of God the Father is often shaped by my experience of my own earthly father. Phillips called this "parental hangover."

Phil Davis talks about this in his book *The Father I Never Knew*. In my sermon on Sunday, I mentioned some of these kinds of dads:

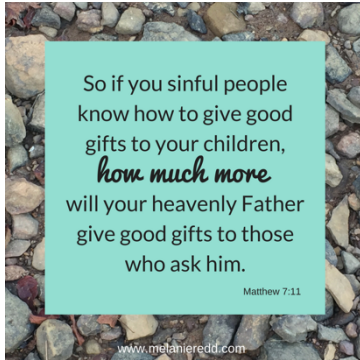
- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Forever-Practical Dad | Coach |
| Nit-Picking Dad | Angry Dad |
| Silent Dad | Dependent Dad |
| Absentee Dad | Martyr Dad |
| History-Teacher Dad | Seductive Dad |
| Drill Sergeant Dad | Passive Dad |

Take some time today and reflect on how your experience with your parents affect your view of God as your Father. This isn't about "bashing" your parents, but simply prayerfully asking, "because of my own experience, am I believing some kind of lie about God?"

Week 11 Day 3: How Much More

It's called *a fortiori*. That's a Latin term for a logical argument that, if A is true, then how much more will B be true. Jesus uses this kind of comparison when talking about God. He uses analogy to compare us and God. We are alike, because we are created in his image and likeness. We are unlike, in that he is so much greater than we are.

Read Matthew 7:9-11. To Jesus, it's obvious: if we, who are flawed, selfish, and sinful, know how to give gifts that are good to our



children, then HOW MUCH MORE will God, our heavenly Father, give to his own children who ask of him! James says that “every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (1:17). God is good, and his gifts are good.

In Luke’s version of this saying (11:13), Jesus says, “how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” It comes down to trusting God and his love for us. He has the kind of relationship with us that we can ask whatever we need, and we trust that he will answer, and that he has our best interests in mind. Do you remember the old hymn, Count Your Blessings? Spend some time today thanking God for the gifts that your heavenly Father has given to you.

Week 11 Day 4: Adopted

My father passed away when I was three years old. I can’t say I remember anything about him. When I was in second grade, my mom married my stepdad. He knew what he was getting into. He wasn’t just marrying my mom, but he was taking on a kid as well. My stepdad didn’t make the decision for me, but he chose to formally adopt me whenever I was ready to take that step. A couple years later I was ready. So, we went to court and I officially became his son, and he became my Dad.



Read Romans 8:14-17. In this passage the apostle Paul takes about how we have been adopted into God’s family. That adoption took place because God gave us his Holy Spirit. Before we were on the

outside looking in. Now we have a new father, we are a part of a new family, we have a new name, and a new inheritance. Paul says that now, we cry “Abba,” Father, Dad, Daddy, Papa. *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!* (1 John 3:1).



Week 11 Day 5: I Want to Be Like You, Dad

You remember the song, “Cat’s in the Cradle” by Harry Chapin? It’s a sad song about a dad not having time for his son, and in the end, his son becoming like his dad. The song reveals that almost inevitable reality (apart from the grace of God, that is).

There is something that underlies everything that Jesus says about the kingdom of God/heaven in his sermon on the mount. That something is our relationship with our heavenly Father, the Father of Jesus, our king.

We are participants in God’s family, his people. He is our Father, and we are his children. When the relationship between parents and children is healthy, the children *want* to become like their parents. They understand their folks aren’t perfect, but they are safe in their parents’ love, they are free to be themselves, to fail, to grow, and to become. And they do become like their parents. Maybe not in everything, but perhaps in the ways that matter most.

Jesus makes the statement in Matthew 5:45 that we should love our enemies that “you may be children of your Father in heaven.” In 5:48 Jesus tells us to “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” “Perfect” here describes God, who loves even those who don’t love him back: the ungrateful and the wicked (Luke 6:35).

Today, ask the Lord to help you see some ways in your own life that you want to become more like your heavenly Father. And this is a true statement: as you follow Jesus, and intentionally participate in his kingdom, you will become more and more like our heavenly Father.