

The Desire for Spiritual Parents

1 John 2:12-14

Do you know who first suggested celebrating Father's Day? Not a man, but a woman. She just wanted to find a special day to express her admiration and gratitude to her father. Her father was not a great man with great achievements, nor was he a wealthy and powerful entrepreneur. He was just a veteran of the American Civil War, a very ordinary father. This woman's mother died when giving birth to her sixth child. From then on, the father became both a mother and a father, taking on the responsibility of raising a newborn baby and five children. He raised six children in a rural village in eastern Washington State, and all of them received good educations, which was no easy task. After getting married, one of the daughters deeply felt the bitterness and selflessness of a single father raising six children, so in 1909 she proposed to the Washington State government to establish a Father's Day. The first Father's Day began on June 19, 1910, and it has been more than a hundred years now.

Every father, no matter what achievements you have made or how ordinary you are, a responsible father is a great father.

Today, wherever you look in the world, the same discovery is made: the need for fathers – perhaps the greatest need in the world today.

God's most basic design for humanity is the family unit. There is no culture in the world that does not believe in the need for family. Unfortunately, this foundation has been broken.

God created man in His own image, and the image of God, at its core, is relationship. Man has a relationship with God. Among all creation, only humans can connect with God. Therefore, no matter where they are, people will worship. Humans have the nature to worship God. If they do not worship the true God, they will find something else to replace God as the object of worship.

In addition to having a relationship with God, man also needs to have a relationship with other people. This is the image in which man was created. If a person is isolated, he will become abnormal. People need relationships, and people are created for relationships.

When materialism becomes a person's value, relationships become a tool for obtaining material things, and human alienation brings human suffering. Psychological theory states that happiness does not come directly from acquiring material things. Whether our lives are meaningful or not does not directly or necessarily depend on material things. The most important condition for

happiness is relationships. There are many poor people living in the garbage hills of Cambodia, but there are no suicides or murders there; on the contrary, in Hong Kong, there are many rich people living there, but the suicide rate is the highest in the world!

We need to return to the biblical values of relationships: we learn through relationships, we grow through relationships, and we understand life through relationships.

People are motivated by relationships. The desire for relationships begins at home, so parenting education is so important! When we place material values above parenting and education, family relationships are broken down and the foundations of society collapse. What modern people generally lack is fatherly love.

1. The importance of father

We are a fatherless generation. Fathers play the role of affirmers in their children's character development, mental growth, and spiritual growth. Sociologists point out that many of the social problems facing society today, such as drug abuse, violence, rebellion, and low male self-image, are directly related to the problem of "absent fathers." Fatherlessness is the most destructive trend in our generation. The world needs fathers who can truly function.

But in the real world, it is not easy for men to become real fathers. What can we do then? First of all, parents in the Lord must realize that they must rise up to be true parents, spiritual parents, to their children. Next, mature believers must consciously step up and take on the role of spiritual parents to others. Everyone needs spiritual parents. Those who have not yet believed in the Lord need them, those who have just believed in the Lord need them, those who have believed in the Lord for a long time need them, and even pastors need them. The greatest calling in your life is to be a spiritual parent because it is a sharing in the love of the Lord Jesus.

The last words in the Old Testament say that in the last days God will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, or He will come and curse the earth. (Malachi 4:5-6) Today, the world is under the curse of fatherlessness. Let us rise up and become spiritual parents to others, opening our arms to help others grow.

2. Redefine success

This world says that success is getting what you want. The world values power, and we may even be willing to hurt others in order to get what we want.

But the Bible sees success as being able to commit to and bless others, and thereby bring glory to God. True success is helping others succeed. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5) The mind of Jesus was to lay down His own life so that others might be blessed. Jesus said, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45), and His washing of His disciples' feet is the best example.

People are interested in who will be the greatest man; Jesus is interested in being able to serve others. Developing a servant mentality in others is the key to helping them develop their potential. When the person you are helping is willing to be a servant rather than insisting on being served, you have helped him to have a truly successful life. This is what spiritual parenting is – extending your arms to serve others and helping them become servants.

3. Three Types of Christians

1 John 2:12-14 mentions three kinds of Christians. Brats are those who think too much about themselves. No matter how old they are, they only think about their own needs and join the church just to get benefits. Such people are spiritually infants. Young people are those who understand God's word and are able to apply God's word to resist Satan. Such people continue to grow spiritually. Fathers are those who understand and appreciate God's heart. They follow Christ's example and lay down their lives for others. Such people are spiritual parents.

When Christ returns and you stand before His throne, will you be alone or will you be with your spiritual children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren? This has nothing to do with whether you are a pastor or not. God calls all believers to be spiritual parents.

The parable of the prodigal son in the Gospel of Luke shows us the heart of our Heavenly Father toward his children. As spiritual parents, we should also emulate this fatherly heart of our Heavenly Father. When the father in the parable saw the prodigal son returning, he threw away his dignity and ran to greet his son. He did not make any comment on his son's actions, but instead affirmed him by giving him a noble status.

Today, God not only calls people to turn back to Him, but also calls people to become parents. In today's generation, spiritual parents are very important because only spiritual parents can raise up the next generation, only spiritual parents can respond to the needs of the times, and only spiritual parents can facilitate the Great Commission.