

## What Kind of a Father Is God?

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. <sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

**For the past few months, we have been looking at how God meets our deepest needs and we have seen that God uses a descriptive name for Himself that matches every one of your deepest needs. Your understanding of God will affect every area of your life. If you have misconceptions about God, what He is really like – you are going to tend to worry about things you should not be worrying about. You are going to tend to feel guilty over things God has no intention of you feeling guilty about. You are going to carry unnecessary burdens and fears and doubts and depressions all through life that God never intended for you to have. Your understanding of God determines your happiness in life. When you get a false conception about God from the movies, from religion, from your parents, from the schoolyard or anybody, if you get a misconception of what God is really like, you will have unnecessary problems and misery in your life that you were not intended to have.**

**One of the things Jesus Christ came to earth to do is show us what God is really like. Jesus exploded all the stereotypes about God. He showed us that God is not some impersonal force, not just an energy field in the universe. God is not some angry tyrant who sets up in heaven waiting to make things miserable for people. God is not some apathetic creator who winds up the world and sets it down**

and then sits back and benignly watches it happen with no involvement.

**In fact, Jesus described God in two words.** In Matthew 6:9 He said, “This is how you should pray (in other words, this is how you should talk to God, this is how you should address the creator of the universe) **Our Father in heaven.**” God wants you to think of Him as a **Father.**

**This is no big deal to us today because we talk a lot about the Fatherhood of God, that God is our Father.** When Jesus said those words over 2000 years ago, it was radical stuff. The hearers must have been absolutely shocked when He said, “When you pray, God wants you to call Him Father.” **In the entire Old Testament over thousands of years, God is only referred to as Father seven times.** Jesus refers to **God as Father seven times in this chapter alone.** In His life and in the gospels, He talks about God being our Father over 150 times. He said this is how God wants to relate to you.

**The good news is that since God is a Father, we know that He is a person, not a power.** It is very difficult to relate to a *power*, a *force*, and energy. But when you say God is a Father, I can relate to a father. **I can be intimate with a father.** I can talk to a father. I can have a relationship with a father. That’s the good news.

**The bad news is, when I use the word “father,” for some people that conjures up all kinds of painful memories.** Rather than it being a happy term, it is a sad term for some and even an angry term for others. When I say the word “father,” for some of you, it stirs up deep resentment. **You had a father who was neglectful.** You had a father who was abusive, either physically or verbally. You had a father who just was not there, a nonentity in your life. **Some of you when you think of the word “father,” it brings up fear.** You remember phrases growing up like, “Just wait until your father gets home!” and you think, “If God is like my father... no thanks, God! I do not need a God like my father was.” Human fathers can make **homes a hell on earth.** Human

fathers can be *selfish*. **Human fathers can be demanding.** Human fathers can be **inconsistent**. They can be *self-centered, abusive*. They can be all kinds of things that we would say, "I do not want that in my life."

**So Jesus qualified the term.** He said, "This is how you should pray: **Our Father in heaven.**" He said you pray to your Heavenly Father. He is not just talking about where God is. **God is everywhere.** He is talking about the quality of God. He is a heavenly Father as opposed to an earthly father. **God is very, very different than human fathers.** In the first place, **God is perfect.** And none of us who are human fathers are. **We are imperfect, we make mistakes, and we blow it.** God has never blown it. He is unlike us. **He is at a higher plain.** We are to say "Our Father in heaven" or "Our Heavenly Father."

**I have noticed that there are four common misconceptions about God.** I have talked to thousands of people about God personally over the years. The misconceptions that people have tend to fall in one of four categories. I have no doubt that some of you here tonight have been misled because of one of these myths about God.

**For instance, some of you, when you think about God, you might think that God is unreasonable.** And the reason that you do not want to get to know God is because He puts all these unreasonable demands on your life that you could never possibly live up to. All he wants to do is make my life tough, give me rules and regulations and restrictions. **He wants to remove all my fun, all my enjoyment, and all my happiness.** God is some kind of cosmic killjoy and He is very unreasonable. So obviously, if you feel that way, it is no wonder that you do not get to know God. Who wants to get to know somebody who they feel in their heart of hearts is unreasonable and too demanding and some of you feel that way.

**Others of you, you do not feel God is unreasonable, but you might feel like He is unreliable.** The reason for that is because you

have been hurt. It is an interesting characteristic of human behavior when somebody hurts us we not only blame that person, we blame God. If you have been attacked or you have been put down or you have been abused you not only get mad at your attacker you get mad at God. You say, “God, why did You allow that to happen?” And it is possible that some of you here tonight have never gotten close to God because you have never dealt with resentment in your heart toward God, blaming God for bad things that have happened to you. “Why did You allow that to happen, God? If that is the kind of God You are, no thanks, God!” So you resist it because you think, He may not be unreasonable, but He is unreliable. Therefore, we conclude, “I cannot trust Him.” When you have been hurt a lot you say, “I am not going to trust anybody and I am certainly not going to trust God!” You have gone through blaming God for some hurt that you suffered through.

God has given each of us the freedom to choose. That is one of God’s greatest gifts to us. He could have made you a puppet where you did not have a choice between good and evil. You could only do good. God could have kept people from hurting you by taking away their freedom to choose. But He didn’t. And because He has given us the freedom to choose, people make the wrong decisions and they hurt other people. You have been hurt by people who make bad decisions. God could have taken away their freedom to do that, but He also would have, to be fair, taken away your freedom and you would not have liked that. We always focus on how people have hurt us. Have you ever focused on the fact that you have just might have hurt a lot of people? And God never stopped you. Maybe you have hurt people through your own selfishness and self-centeredness. Maybe you have hurt people because of your rotten attitude, or because of gossip. We blame God for our hurts, as if He caused it all. He did not cause those hurts – people did. He allowed it because He has allowed freedom of choice in the world. He wants you to choose what is good.

**Others of you, you may not think God is unreasonable or unreliable, but maybe you think God is unconcerned.** You might be thinking, “Yes, I believe there is a God. He is just too busy to bother with me. How could God be possibly interested in me? God has got big things to worry about, like universes to create. How could He be concerned about my job, my kids, my family, my career, my schooling, my education, my boyfriend?” **Those things seem petty so you think God is unconcerned.** If you think He is unconcerned, you are not going to try to get to know Him. **Because you think,** “With all of the disease, sickness, violence, suffering, death, war, etc., how could God possibly be concerned about some problem that I might have?” **And we actually develop the Bett Midler mentality that is expressed in her song,** “God is watching us from a distance.” **Not up-close but backed off... from a distance.**

**Then a fourth misconception about God (and some of you have this one) is that God is unpleasable.** You think that no matter how hard you try it is never good enough in His eyes. **If you get C’s on your report card, God wants B’s. If you get B’s, God wants A’s. If you get A’s, God wants straight A’s and A+’s. Where in the world did you get an idea like that?** I wonder! **What most of us tend to do is take the weaknesses of our parents and enforce them onto God.** So if you grew up with ***unpleasable parents***, you tend to think God is ***unpleasable***. **If you grew up with a distant and unconcerned father, you tend to think God is a distant and unconcerned Father.** And so forth. **Whatever your parent was like, you tend to push onto God.**

**Tonight, what I want you to do is to open up your mind and I want to take all of the concepts you have had about God to this date, and set them on the shelf for a minute.** Instead, we are going to look at what God says about Himself in the word, in the truth, in the Bible. **The Bible says it is the truth that sets you free.** **And the Bible says that He is very, very different than the way He is portrayed in most movies, in most religions and even by most families.**

**What does the Bible say God is really like?** What kind of Father is God?

1. **The Bible says that God is a caring Father.** He is **compassionate, loving, gracious and He cares about you.** In fact He loves you more than you will ever know. **He loves you more than you will be able to experience.** You cannot even understand how much God loves you because your brain is not big enough to handle it. But compassion is God's number one characteristic and attribute. The Bible tells us in Psalms 104:13, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who honor Him." **God is caring.** God is **compassionate.**

**There is a story in the Bible where the disciples – the original twelve guys who followed Jesus – were out in a fishing boat one day on the lake and Jesus was in the boat asleep.** They are fishing and all of a sudden a sudden storm comes up, the waves start rising and the rain is pouring down. **It is thundering and lighting.** **The boat begins to be rocked in the rocky sea.** The water is coming in over the sides of the boat and it is sinking. **It is starting to capsize.** **Jesus is asleep over at one end of the boat, obviously not concerned about this.** The disciples, the story tell us, go over and wake Him up, shake Him, and say, "Lord! Don't You care that we are dying? Don't You care that we are perishing?"

**That is one of the most profound questions in human existence.** Does God care about my problems? Does God care about my hurts? **The things I am going through?** The stresses I am feeling? **The worries I am experiencing?** Does God really care about what happens to me?

**And until you settle that issue, you are not going to get to know God.** If you think He does not care, why get to know Him? Does God care about the details in your life?

**The answer is yes.** He says it many, many times in the Bible. One place is in 1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your cares upon him, for he cares for you.” Does the Bible say, “Cast some of your anxiety on Him...”? “Cast all the spiritual sounding problems on Him.” **No, it does not say that at all.** It says, “Cast all (notice that) your care (anxiety) on Him, (that means every kind of care you have – financial, physical, social, spiritual, mental, relational) because He cares for you.” Does God care about your house payments? Yes. Does God care about the fact that your kids need braces on their teeth? Yes. Does God care about the grades you get at school? Yes. Does God care about whether you have a boyfriend or not? Yes. Does God care about your moods? Yes. Does God care about your financial investments? Yes. Does God care about your dreams and hopes and ambitions? Yes. Does He care about whether or not you are a success or failure in life? Absolutely. **He is a caring Father.** You have a heavenly Father that cares about all the details of your life. In fact, He knows every detail of your life. **The Bible says He knows every hair on your head.** He knows how many you have. They are numbered. **For most of you that isn’t too hard.** But I guarantee you; there is not a person in here today that knows how many hairs you have. God knows every hair on your head and He knows their original color! **You may have all of us fooled but your hairdresser and God know for sure.** God knows the moles on your body that nobody else has ever seen. He knows every intimate detail of your life.

Because of that, the Bible says this in Matthew 6:31-32, “So don’t worry saying, ‘What shall we eat? Or what will we wear. Your heavenly Father knows you need these things.’ He says, “What are you worrying about? God knows the details of your life.” **He is going to take care of your needs.** Fathers, do you want your kids to worry about where their next meal is going to be? No. Do you want your kids worrying about whether they will have clothes to wear to school? No. If my kids came to me and said, “Dad, I am worried. I am worried that we are not going to have enough to eat.” **I would consider that a personal failure, an affront to me.** Why? Because it is my job

as a dad to take care of my kids' needs. I love them, I care about them, and I am committed to meeting their needs. If their needs were not being met, I would blame myself.

God does not want you worrying about your needs either, because He is your heavenly Father. He says, "I do not want you worrying about if you are going to have food to eat or clothes to wear. I am going to take care of your needs. Because I am a caring Father. Do not worry." Whenever you start to worry about anything in life it is a warning sign that you have started to doubt the love of God. That is what worry is. Doubting that God is in control and that God cares. Therefore, you conclude, "I had better worry about this because God can't handle this one or God is not caring enough about this one. He does not care about this, I am going to have to work this out because God does not care." But you are wrong. Every time you are worrying, you are doubting that God really cares about the details of your life.

One time one of our members came to me all stressed out, going through panic attacks. That individual felt *nervous* and *pressured* and *fatigued*. I listened as that individual told me about all the things he/she was worrying about. Finally that individual said, "I am afraid that my problem is that I just don't love God enough, but I really want to." I said, "You miss the point entirely. Your problem is not that you do not love God enough. Your problem is that you do not realize how much He loves you. That is why you are filled with worry. That is why you are all stressed out. That is why you are all tense and nervous. You do not realize how much He loves you and how much He cares for you and how much He is committed to taking care of your needs if you will just trust Him to do so. And because you do not realize how much He loves you that is why you are all stressed out. You need to understand that God is a caring Father and He is not mad at you or trying to get even with you."

2. The second thing the Bible tells us about God is that He is a consistent Father. You can count on Him, every time. He never lets



you down. He is always dependable, entirely consistent in who He is. God is worthy of our trust. James 1:17 says, “Every good and perfect gift is from the Father who does not change like shifting shadows.” The truth is, earthy fathers are unpredictable. Some of them are incredibly unpredictable and fickle. I know some teenagers who feel like, “I never know what to expect from my dad. It changes so much from one day to the other depending entirely on the mood he is in. One day he is silent and the next day he is violent. One day he is a good guy and the next day he is a tough guy. I never know what to expect.” **Inconsistent fathers produce insecure kids.**

Where do you find security in an inconsistent world?

God is a consistent Father. God is not moody. God never has a bad day. That is good news for us. What if God woke up and said, “I feel a little grouchy today. Who can I zap today?” What kind of world would that be? The good news is God is always consistent. And the great news is His consistency and dependability does not depend on my consistency and dependability. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, “Even if we are faithless, He remains faithful for He cannot disown Himself.” I am so glad that even on the days that I might be down, God is still up. Even on the days when I might be struggling, God is still victorious. He is always consistent.

The fact is, the world around us is changing at an incredible rate and we all have to deal with that in a daily way. Because of that, we all need what Alvin Toffler calls “islands of stability” in this world of change. While everything around us might be changing, there is one thing that you can absolutely count on. God always acts the same way towards you. He always acts in love. He always acts with forgiveness. He always acts with grace. He always offers you His power. He does not change. He is always caring and He is always consistent. That is what God is like. That is what the real God is like. In all the man-made religions of the world, when we try to make up our idea of God, it is different. In man-made religions God is always temperamental.

Whether it is Greek gods or whatever. They are always fickle. **You always have to appease the gods.** The true God is different. In Malachi 3:6 in the Bible God is speaking and says, “I the Lord do not change.” We can count on that.

**One of the greatest causes of resentment and rebellion in kids is broken promises.** Some of you still have thoughts of times when your parents broke a promise and you still have thoughts of times when you broke a promise to your kids because we are all imperfect. That feeling of “...But you promised!” **The good news is God always keeps His promises.** That is the kind of Father that He is. Romans 11:29 says, “God will never go back on His promises.” And from Psalms 49:10, in the Old Testament, says, “My God is changeless in His love for me.”

**Who needs the thrill of a roller coaster when you have relationships, right?** There always seem to be the ups and downs of relationships! How do you handle the ups and downs of relationships with an inconsistent father? Or mother or children or anyone else?

**You handle the ups and downs of a relationship with an inconsistent father by knowing that you have a heavenly father who is entirely consistent.** You can count on Him every single time. You need a perfect father to give you strength.

**Some of you had a father that loved you the best that he could.** He was not perfect but you know that he loved you the best that he could. Because of his love for you he built into your life a foundation that has grown into a wonderful relationship with God. **Ever so often you need to take just a minute to thank God for the gift that your dad gave you.** It is an incredible gift.

**But others of you did not have a good relationship with your dad and you have struggled over the years.** It was not only imperfect, it was hurtful and painful. That is not fair. **Every child deserves great**

relationships with their mom and dad. But we live in an imperfect world that is not fair sometimes. So how do you live with that? How do you deal with that? I have some good news and bad news for those of you who face that.

The bad news is it will be a little bit more difficult for you to trust that there is a God that loves you, that can heal you from this. And it will always be that way. It is always going to take an extra measure of trust. But the good news is, because of the extra measure of trust, when you to build a relationship of faith with God, it is a relationship that is not built on feelings but that's based on genuine trust. Therefore, you have the potential to have an incredible relationship with God who is your Father.

I was reading the story of a young woman who told the story of growing up with a dad who suffered from mental illness. She told the story of a father who, in his confusion and anger one day, murdered her mother. How do you live with something like that? How do you make it after something like that happens? This is what she said, “My earthly father took from me something that no one deserves to have taken away when he murdered my mother. But one day I discovered that I have a heavenly Father who gave to me what no one deserves to have given when He gave His Son Jesus Christ on the cross for me. He gave me forgiveness and He gave me significance and He gave me peace and He gave me life.”

Tonight, I encourage you: Trust God. Trust God as the Father you never had. Trust God to be the Father that your father never was.

I know this might seem a little strange, but I really feel that we just need to stop right here for just a moment. I am going to ask you to pray this prayer in your mind: “Father, help me to see You as the Father I never had.” You might pray something like this depending on your situation. “I was disappointed by my father on earth. Help me to see You as a God who will never disappoint me...I never knew my

earthly father. Help me to see You as a God who wants to know me and whom I can know...I was hurt (maybe deeply hurt) by my father on earth. Help me to see that I can be protected by You...I was ignored by my earthly father. Help me to see that I can have Your full and constant attention...I was never able to meet the expectations of my father on earth. Help me to find in Your grace a freedom from expectations. In Jesus name. Amen”

**Please hear me tonight, God is a different kind of father. He is a Father who cares and He is a Father who is consistent.**

**3. Your heavenly Father is a God who is close. That means He is available all the time. He is there when you need Him. He is not distant. He is not far off. He is available. The Bible tells us in Acts 17:27, “God did this so that people would reach out for Him and find Him since He is not far from each of us.” God wants you to find him. God wants you to know Him. God wants you to have a relationship with Him, so He is not far off. He is a close Father.**

**Some of you grew up with absentee fathers. Your father was never around. He was never home. Maybe he was always off on some important trip. Maybe he was always off on a business deal. Maybe he was just hanging out with the guys. But he was never around when you were growing up and when he was at home he was distant and aloof, hiding behind a newspaper. For some of you your father was a non-entity. He just did not make that big of an impact.**

**I read a new study in Time magazine about the impact of absentee parents and the effect it is having on children today. The President’s Counsel of Economic Advisors recently did a study and they concluded what plenty of folks already knew. It is that the rise in two-earner income families as well as the rise of single parent families has resulted in the fact that parents now spend an average of 22 fewer hours with their children each week than they did in 1969. That is almost a full day per week in lost parental attention.**

**And we wonder why kids are shooting each other on the campuses of our nation.** We have decided that money is more important than our kids. We have decided that a certain standard of living is more important than time with our kids. You say, “We’ve got to make ends meet.” Lower the ends! **Do not make the kids pay for a lifestyle you cannot afford.** Kids growing up with absentee parents have a hard time getting to know God, for one thing. God, our heavenly Father, is a close Father. **He is not detached.** He is not distant. **And that is why you can get to know Him.**

Three good news truths about God:

1. **God is never too busy for me.** Your parents may be too busy for you. You may be too busy for your kids. **But God is never too busy for you.** When you pray, God does not say, “Not now. I will check you later.” **No, God is never too busy for you.** He never turns away. **He is with you every single day.**

**I read about an article in Newsweek about Nathan Myervolt, the chief technology officer for Microsoft.** He is worth well over 250 million dollars and, if he had stayed with the organization, he would be worth more than that. Myervolt shocked the entire industry when, at 39 years old, he announced he was taking a year long sabbatical to make time for his family. He said, “I have just been too busy for my family.” **So he has walked away as the chief technology officer of Microsoft to go spend time with his wife and twins boys.** That is unheard of in our society today. **Where are the people that have those kinds of values, who say, “I want to be close to my kids rather than make another dollar.”?** **You are only going to have your kids for a certain season of time, likely an 18-year window.** Then they are gone. **Then you have the rest of your life.** **So what are you going to do?** You need to make time for them. Why? **God is our model.** He is not too busy for you. **He is never too busy.** You can come to Him any time.

**2. Because He is a close Father, God loves to meet my needs.** Matthew 7:11 says this, “You know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him. God says, “If you being an imperfect parent love to give good gifts to your kids what do you think a perfect parent like your heavenly Father wants to do?” **I am selfish a lot of the times. I am probably self-centered some of the times.** I am sure that there are times when **I think only of my needs.** **But, as a parent, I love to give to my kids.** I love to meet their needs. I really do. **And if I with my own mixed motives love to do that, how much more does God want to meet your needs.** He is a perfect Father and He is waiting to meet your needs.

**For the past six months we have seen how every one of your deepest needs can be met in God.** And God has even given Himself a name that corresponds to those needs. We saw that verse in Philippians 4:19 that says, “My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory with Christ Jesus.”

**3. God is sympathetic to my hurts.** He is never too busy, He loves to meet my needs and He is sympathetic to my hurts. When I come to God with my pain, God does not say, “Oh, come on! Get over it! Put a smile on your face. That’s an easy little thing. Get a Band-Aid!” **If you have had a tough week, God understands.** Psalm 34:18 says, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” I have no doubt that in a crowd this size here tonight somebody might have a broken heart. Somebody had their heart broken this week. **Some of you feel crushed in spirit.** What do you do? Turn to God. **He is sympathetic to your hurt.** He loves to meet your needs. He is never too busy for you. **He wants to help you out!** He is your heavenly Father.

The word that Jesus used for “father” is Aramaic is the word “abba.” “Abba” is not a Swedish rock group. **Abba is the first word that**

every Middle Eastern child learns. It means “daddy” – “papa, mama, dada, abba.” It is the very first word a baby learns in the Middle East. If you have been to Israel or any Middle Eastern country, little Arab kids run around all the time – “Abba, Abba, Abba.” It means “daddy.” It is the ultimate term of endearment, of closeness, of family. There is no barrier between a little baby and a father. It is just “Abba.”

My guess is that some of you just might not have that kind of intimate relationship with God. You would be very uncomfortable calling God Papa or Daddy. But that is the kind of relationship Jesus said we were to have with Him. He wants you to have such an intimate close relationship that you just cuddle up in His arms and say, “Dad, here’s my problem...Dad, here’s my hurt ... Here’s my need...Here’s what happened this week...You know what I am thinking, Father.” You just share with Him on a heart to heart basis with no fluff, no ritual, no “thee’s” and “thou’s,” just daughter to daddy, and son to daddy. God is a close Father.

And not only that. He is caring, He is consistent, He is close and...

4. The Bible teaches us that God is a *competent* Father. He can handle any problem you give Him. Nothing is beyond His ability. Nothing is beyond His resources. Today this is in direct opposite to human fathers. We have an epidemic of incompetent fathers today who are good at a lot of other thing but pretty lousy as fathers. Especially on TV, all the fathers are duffuses. Al Bundy, the butt of a joke or Homer Simpson or two dozen other incompetent dads. I heard about two school kids bragging on the schoolyard. One said, “My daddy can beat your daddy.” And the other kid goes, “Big deal! So can my Mom.”

**But nobody can beat up your heavenly Father.** Nobody! The Bible says in Luke 1:37, “For nothing is impossible with God.” **Nothing is impossible.** He can handle it all because He is competent.

**I will never get over that my kids thought I could fix anything when they were growing up.** They thought I could fix broken toys and bicycles. They thought I could put heads of decapitated dolls back together. **They thought I was the best coach for their ball team.** As a father, my kids thought that I knew everything, could fix anything, could afford everything. But I couldn't.

**When you are growing up, you want to think your dad is Superman.** As a little kid you think, “My daddy can do anything!” But as you grow older, you realize that your father had limits to his resources when it came to allowance and there were limits to his wisdom when it came to advice. Sometimes he was just guessing, giving it the best guess.

**But your heavenly Father really can do anything.** He can do anything! Nothing is impossible with God. Ephesians 3:20 says, “God is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of – infinitely beyond our highest prayers or desires or thoughts or hopes.” God says, “Think of the biggest dream for your life. I can top that. Think of the biggest goal for your life. I can top that. Think of the biggest problem you think you can ever come up against. I can solve it. Think of the biggest hurt you will ever have. I can soothe it.” God says, “I can handle it all. I am your heavenly Father and I am close and caring and competent and I am consistent and if you will trust Me, things will go a whole lot better in your life.”

**Here is my question for you.** What have you been doubting that God can handle? That situation that you are in right now that you are all stressed out about because you think, “I don't think God can handle this. I need to do this one. I am going to have to manipulate behind the scenes. I am going to have to politic for that job at work. I am going to



have to pull ends and cut corners and streamline things and be a little deceptive here and there. I have got to work extra hours and make this happen because I don't think God can handle this problem.”

**What are you thinking? That you can handle something that God can't? God can handle anything. You need to drop it in His arms and let Him handle it. The bottom line is God can take care of His children. And He does when we trust Him. Because He is caring, He is consistent, He is close and He is competent. He takes care of His children.**

**The obvious logical question then is: Is everybody a child of God? Will God take care of everybody's needs? Is God the Father of everyone?**

**The answer is Yes and No. If you mean, Did God create everybody? Yes. If you mean, Does God love everybody? Absolutely. If you mean, Does God have a plan and purpose for every person on the face of this planet? Absolutely. God is the Father of everyone in that sense.**

**But it takes more than birth to be a father. It takes a relationship. Some of you were probably birthed by men you never met. They are your father by creation but they are not your father by relationship and you miss it. You long for it and you wish you had that relationship. God says, “I have created everyone but not everyone is My child unless they have a relationship with Me.” You are not in the family of God – you were created by God but you are not in the family of God until you choose to become a part of it. That is a choice you can make tonight.**

**How do I become a part of the family of God? How do I become a child of God? How do I get God to be my heavenly Father?**

**Look at what the Bible says.** John 14:6-7 says, “Jesus said, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you really knew Me, you would know my Father as well.’” Jesus said, “That is why I came to earth – to show you the Father so you could get to know God.”

Galatians 3:26 says, “We are the children of God through... being religious.” No, that is not what it says. “We are the children of God by ... going to church.” No. “We are the children of God by ... keeping the Ten Commandments.” No. Galatians 3:26 actually says, “We are the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” That is the only way you get into God’s family – children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

**In human terms there are only two ways you can get into a family.** You can be born into it or be adopted into it. There is no other way to get into a family. **You are either born into it or adopted into it.** In the Bible, both of those terms are used as explanations of what it means to be a Christian, to be saved, to experience salvation, to become a part of the family of God. By birth –that is called being born again. Or by adoption – by being adopted into God’s family.

1 Peter 1:3 says, “God has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God’s own family.” **When you were physically born you were born into the human family.** It is called the human race. The only way you get into God’s spiritual family is by being spiritually reborn – that is a change that takes place inside of you when Christ comes into your heart.

Then, Ephesians 1:5 says, “His (God’s) unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. He did this because He wanted to.”

**Either way you have got to come to God the same way.** It is through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. By birth, by

adoption – it is the same way. **By faith in Christ.** John 1:12 says, “To those who believed on Him and received Him, He gave them the right to become the children of God.”