

A FATHER'S LOVE Luke 15:11-24

"Mother's Day Dilemma"

Same for Father's Day—except for one biblical example

One father is presented who is totally worthy of emulation.

The ideal father—God Himself

Contemporary problem

Many people's image of a father

Shaped by their own homes.

School teachers are told that probably as many as 5 students in their classroom have been physically or sexually abused—frequently by a father

Average father spends less than 10 minutes a week in meaningful dialogue with his children.

Majority of the time spent talking to kids is spent in anger.

No wonder we have a problem communicating the concept of God as our Father.

It's *supposed* to reflect: –love, warmth, concern and affection
–Unconditional acceptance

That's what God's love for us is like!

[Let's take a look at God's kind of love—**the LOVE OF A FATHER**—

LESSONS FROM A FATHER'S LOVE

1. THE FATHER SHOWED NO PREFERENCE 15:12

How often is preferential treatment—the good child/bad child syndrome—a basis for division and quarreling among siblings.

One child seeks attention by being good, the other by being bad. But they both get their attention.

Notice that the father doesn't show preference for the "good" son. He loves them both—seeks the good of each—and deals with them according to their need at the moment.

When one son turns rebellious and wants his share, the Father divides the estate between them.

The "good" child—the one who stays home as expected—seethes on the inside.

But the Father's love is constant toward them both.

2. **When the younger son packs to leave, the Father loves him enough that HE LETS HIM GO 15:13**

He doesn't cling to him.
He doesn't bawl him out
He doesn't try to hang on

Notice—

**The son went a long way off
He squandered everything
He dedicated himself to loose living**

The father seems to know his son well enough to believe he will work through it—and come back in time.

He can trust God with his son

It took a moment of need to bring the son to his senses! 15:14-17

The son squandered it.

He lost everything
He took his father's hard-earned fortune—and lost it all!

3. **THE FATHER DEMONSTRATED NO ANGER**

Did he hurt for his son? Sure he hurt!

Did he bawl him out? NO!

HIS SON WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN HIS THINGS!

He was concerned about the person
–Not his reputation
–not his things

4. **THE FATHER HAD CONSISTENTLY MODELED HIS LOVE FOR HIS SON 15:17-19**

The son had no fear to go home.

He knew his father would treat him fairly. At least he could join the workers and trust his dad's just treatment.

When "the chips were down"-it was his assurance of his father's fairness that brought him back home.

5. **THE FATHER ANXIOUSLY WAITS FOR HIS SON'S RETURN-- HE SEES HIM COMING *a long way off!* 15:20**

He's always hoping for his return--never gives up hoping.

6. **THE FATHER RECEIVED HIS WAYWARD SON JOYFULLY 15:20-24**

He was so glad to have his son back, there was no anger
 -no vengeance
 -no punishment

His son was home--and that was all that mattered.

7. **THE FATHER REACHES OUT TO THE ANGRY BROTHER**

He is concerned about the response of "the good child" who resents his brother's return.

- The brother expected to profit from his brother's fall.
- He didn't want him to come back.

The father loves the older brother too much to let him go on in his anger.

He reaches out to him.
 -not in anger
 -not in bawling out

He tries to show him what His love is all about--**a FATHER'S LOVE isn't earned--it's given!**

IMITATING A FATHER'S LOVE--Application

1. GOD LOVES US LIKE THAT

Remember what this story is about--it's one of three tales about a person who has suffered loss, and isn't willing to rest until they find it again.

They leave the secure ones at home and seek the lost because they are valuable to them.

That's what God's love is like. Though we have gone astray, His desire is to find us and bring us home again.

Then the celebration begins--because the lost has been found.

God loves us that much.

He lets us go

His love draws us back

He never stops waiting for us to turn back to Him.

2. WE NEED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER LIKE THAT

Both as parents--with our own children--

And as brothers and sisters in Christ

-with one another

-knowing how much "Dad" cares--we then love one another also.