

FATHERED BY GOD Chapter 1

When I think of my own father, I have mixed feelings. He was hard-working and successful. He passed on to me some great work traits, and along with my mother, a sense of family connection. I assume he felt he was exceeding his own father's achievements, but we didn't talk much about deeper stuff. In fact, outside of often being antagonistic to the point of meanness, emotional conversations revolved around hunting, fishing, and whatever else we could make work.

In short - I have had to find my own way as a dad.

While I felt reasonably prepared for the work world and life as a male, I was ill-equipped for relationships. My values and choices were a mess and I drifted through my young manhood pretty unanchored. As I was somewhat likeable (and a pretty good liar) I did OK with relationships, but mostly I carry regret about my late teens and early twenties. When you are a hedonist, the ends most always justify the means. This results in a very tenuous peace of mind and plenty of relational baggage.

When Dad died a few years back, I took my own lyrical advice from a song I had written for my brother's funeral when he was killed in a car accident at 20.

*What do you do, when you lose someone close to you? Someone who's a part of your life
What do you do, when your love is gone from you? How do you fill in the void?
Well you cling to the good things and bury the bad - And hope in the life that's to come
'Cause if Jesus can't save him, your love never will - Put your trust in the Master's hand
Not a sparrow may fall - Off of life's wall - Without Him*

When I was 27 and we had three kids of our own, I reconnected with my father each year through fishing openers and deer seasons. During those years until his death there were some watershed interactions that allowed me to experience a satisfied mind regarding my own father and helped me with my own insecurities about being a dad.

During the course of this book I will return to some of my experiences to help illustrate how God helped me navigate my relationship with my earthly father. My purpose in doing this will be to open windows into what has allowed me to not only find peace with being a dad and a grandfather, but also to deeply experience the Fatherhood of God - and to find security in being His valued son.

I got really excited as I looked at the breadth of what the God Story (what I have chosen to call the Bible) had to say about God as my Father. Then I got really cranked when I realized how much Jesus revealed about His relationship with the very Father I wanted to get to know better.

I have also observed that human fatherhood and God's Fatherhood are a challenge to understand and connect for every generation. I think these pages will help you look at yourself as a current or future dad or mom with a recognition that *perfection is not the goal of family life. If anything, we need a direct, personal touch from God in order to see our home become everything it can be. We need His presence every bit as much as His principles.*

If I can be reconciled to God's Fatherhood over my life, then I can be reconciled to my own father's shortcomings - or my own as a dad. This is liberating because it gives me a foundation to move beyond imperfect human love into the love of my Dear Creator Father.

Exploring being mentored by God can be huge for your journey. If you are already comfortable with reading from the Bible, you will experience multiple passages about fathering.

If you are less familiar, this can be a great opportunity to learn tons about God, how He works, as well as *what He has communicated* about the true substance of our relatively brief stay upon the earth.

I recommend you find a pace that allows you to read a chapter (all God Story quotes are contained in the book) and integrate that particular portion into the ongoing theme of being mentored by God. *If you are an audio learner there is a listing of podcasts which mirror some of the content of the book on page 143.*

I have found in God my great mentor, and the truest Friend I will ever have. - Dave Nadler ENJOY!