

Whats your dad like?

INTRODUCTION

1) Think about your own dad pretend I've never met him or heard about him. Describe him to me.

Some sample questions to help the teen:

- a. What does your dad love to do? Hate to do?
- b. What are some of his best character traits?
- c. Worst? How do you know how he feels about you?
- d. When is he most proud of you? What makes him mad?

1. Luke 15:11-24

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons.

12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'

20 So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.

24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

What is the son like before he leaves?

- a) selfish-took his dad's money before he was even dead
- b) very sinful-reckless, wild sensual

Even though the son was really mean to his father when he left, how did the father respond when the son returned?

- a) excited
- b) gave him gifts
- c) called people together to celebrate

Bottom line : God is a compassionate and loving father who desperately wants to be with us. He is not a judgmental God, waiting to zap us for every mistake. He is not an uncaring God, laughing at our pain. He wants to welcome each one of us home in our relationship with him.

2. John 8:1-9

1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group

4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.

5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

What was Jesus reaction to this woman's embarrassing, humiliating sin/ (Keep in mind that Jesus character is the exact representation of God's character)?

- a) sensitive to her embarrassment
- b) Treated her sin like any other - not, "Oh, I can't believe you did that!"
- c) totally forgiving, even though that sin was punishable by death

Bottom line : Forgiveness is part of God's character. Understanding our need for forgiveness and God's willingness to totally forgive us helps to draw us closer to him, to love and appreciate him more.

3. Hebrews 12:5-11

5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are

illegitimate children and not true sons.

9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

How does this passage say it feels to be disciplined?

- a) like hardship
- b) painful
- c) unpleasant

Why does God discipline?

- a) for our good (to keep us from walking on evil paths)
- b) so we can learn lessons in order to make better decisions in the future
- c) so we can be secure that he loves and cares for us

What is our dad in heaven like?

- a) He unconditionally loves
- b) He forgives all of our sins.
- c) He disciplines us for our good.
- d) He believes in us and wants us to live happily ever after.

4. Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

This passage sums up how God takes care of us when we seek him.

PERSONAL HEART -CHECK QUESTIONS

- a. Do you want to be closer to go?
- b. Let's read your essay now. Is your view of God different now than when you wrote this?
- c. Do you see any relationship between how you personally view your earthly father and how you view your heavenly father?
- d. Are you willing to open wide your heart to God and let him be the Father to you that he wants and needs to be

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- a. Write out a one-page essay about what you've learned from this study and why you think this is an important study to do in order to become a disciple or grow as a disciple.
- b. Pray every day to see God as the Bible describes him, not as you feel or think

he is.

To the leaders of the study

A teenager's view of their dad will effect how they view God. In order to be in a healthy relationship with God, the teen must understand what God is like and begin to love him deeply.

Special notes : Even if the teen's dad is not with the family, he still has a presence and an impact on his child's life. Use the introduction time to draw how they feel about him, whether present or absent. Also be sure to encourage teens who don't have a great example in a dad that God is the perfect Dad for them. Open your time together by sharing about your own dad.

Important Note : Ask the teen to write out their view of God before you get together to study the Bible. When you sit down to study, ask them to give you their essay, and hold on to it until the end.