

Small Group Guide THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

June 19, 2011

Matthew 6:9

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Sermon Outline

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD Matthew 6:9

God is our **Father** .

- The contrast with earthly fathers...
 - We are evil; He is **good** .
 - We have limited wisdom; He has **infinite** wisdom.
 - We have imperfect love; He has **perfect** love.
- The care of our heavenly Father...
 - He **loves** us.
 - He **understands** us.
 - He **forgives** us.
 - He **provides for** us.
 - He **disciplines** us.
 - He **leads** us.

We are His **children** .

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- What we have...
 - A new _____ name _____.
 - A new _____ spirit _____.
 - New _____ brothers _____ and _____ sisters _____.
 - Access to the Father's _____ presence _____.
 - We are not _____ afraid _____ of God.
 - We are now _____ friends _____ of God.
 - An inheritance in the Father's _____ kingdom _____.
- What we do...
 - We _____ worship _____ Him.
 - We _____ glorify _____ Him.
 - We _____ imitate _____ Him.
 - We _____ obey _____ Him.
 - We _____ reflect _____ Him.
 - We care for orphans not because we are _____ rescuers _____.
 - We care for orphans because we are the _____ rescued _____.
 - We pass the gospel on to the next generation because we want them to be counted among the _____ sons and daughters _____ of God.
- What we anticipate...
 - A day when there will be no more _____ pain _____.
 - An eternity where we will enjoy His _____ presence _____.

Message Summary

Dr. Platt taught two main points: God is our Father; we are His children. God is completely good, infinitely wise, and perfectly loving—far exceeding even the best of human fathers. He takes good care of us in every way: He loves us, understands us, forgives us, provides for us, disciplines us, and leads us.

Those who have been born again by His Spirit are God's children. We have been given a new name, new spirit, and new family (brothers and sisters). We have been given access to our Father's presence and an eternal inheritance in His Kingdom. In loving response, we worship, glorify, imitate, obey, and reflect our Father's character. We care for orphans because we have been rescued, and we pass the gospel on to the next generation because we want them to be counted as sons and daughters of God. One day, we will enjoy our Father's presence forever, free of every type of pain.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review the Head (What does God want me to know?), Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and Hands (What does God want me to do?) aspects of the message.

- **Read Matthew 7:9–11.** If the true mark of a Christian is to know God as your Father, what kind of Father do we know Him to be?
- **What do you think is the difference between knowing God as Master and knowing Him as Father?**
- **How should knowing God as our Father affect our desire to spend time with Him?**
- **Read 1 John 3:1.** What kind of love has God given us? How should this affect how we see life?
- **Read Matthew 6:7–8; Psalm 103:13–14; and Psalm 139:1–6.** How does knowing God understands us provide comfort to us?
- **How should this truth affect your view of sin (especially hidden or secret sin) and shame? Read Matthew 6:11–15.** How does God's forgiveness free us from fear and shame?

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- Read **Matthew 6:25–33**. What tends to make you anxious or worried? Why is worry a sure sign that you've forgotten you're a child of God? What's wrong with worry? What sin is at the heart of worry? How can we overcome worry and anxiety?
- Read **Hebrews 12:5–11**. Why does God discipline us as his sons? Why must He discipline us if we are His children? How does God discipline us? How is discipline a loving act? What is the end result of discipline?
- Read **Romans 8:14**; **Matthew 6:33**; and **Luke 11:13**. How does our Father lead us? What (Hint: Who) is His ultimate gift to us? How can we walk in the Spirit, following God's leading?
- In Christ, we are given a new identity, a new life, and a new family. Read **John 1:12–13**. How does a person become part of God's family? Does God want His family to grow? How will He grow His family? (Read **Mark 10:29–30**.)
- As His followers, what does **John 15:14–15** say about our access to God's will and presence? How is our relationship to God radically different from those who lived under the Old Covenant?
- Read **Romans 8:15–17**. What is our inheritance as God's children? How should this truth affect our view of earthly things, including our jobs, possessions, and relationships? Where should our mind and heart rest?
- Read **Matthew 5:16**; **Ephesians 5:1**; and **1 John 3:10**. How do these verses suggest we should respond to God's Fatherhood? How does this affect our view of our careers, our daily life at home, our marriages, our family, our relationships in the church and with the lost?
- How does care for orphans reflect God's Fatherhood in our lives?
- Read **Revelation 21:1–8**. How can knowing our eternal destiny give us peace now? What is the most wonderful part of eternity? How can we develop satisfaction in God alone now, here on earth?
- Men, how can you demonstrate the qualities of our heavenly Father in your marriage, in your families, and/or in the church?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from the worship guide)

- **Lives and Church:** *Pray that fathers all across our church family would wholeheartedly strive to be for their children an image of the Father in heaven.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for the children in the Birmingham area who are in need of a permanent home and/or who are in the foster care system. We are also praying for Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Q. E. Hammonds, pastor.*

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- **Global:** *The week we are praying for our long-term missionaries, the Hansens, serving in Kenya. We are also praying for Brook Hills team in New York City, Peru, and East Asia.*