

know that we also have a Father in heaven who cares for us, loves us, and provides for us. Part of that love, care, and provision comes by way of the people our Lord puts into our lives. We've been thinking about and talking about our heavenly Father and we started the week, coming off of Father's Day last Sunday, also thinking about our earthly fathers. As we near the end of this week, I want to encourage you, if you haven't already, to take time today or this weekend, if it's possible, to express your thanks to your father or people who may have served as father-figures in your life. Jot them a note, call them, send them a text or email or snapchat, and just let them know how much you appreciate what they have done for you in your life. Take time also to give thanks in prayer to your heavenly Father for claiming you as His children – which is exactly what you are, through faith in Jesus and by the waters of baptism. What gifts we've been given. Express your gratitude and thanks for that. And as we've been doing through the week, close by speaking the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer.

Saturday – When I'm Bad...

We've been thinking about our heavenly Father throughout this week and some of the character traits that we can know from Him and about Him. But what about us? What happens when I'm not the daughter or son that my Father expects me to be? I don't know about you but when I mess something up, the last thing I want to do is to face up to the person I let down – to say nothing of facing up to my Father, who I also hurt and disappoint with my bad behavior. And yet... back to our Father is exactly the place we NEED to go. Might there be consequences for our actions? Yes. Might there be some discipline that comes our way? Yes. And yet, our Father invites us, desire us, wants for us to come to Him. Why? Because with Him there is forgiveness, compassion, and love. Take a look at these several verses from God's own mouth: Psalm 103:13; Psalm 130:1-4; Ephesians 4:31-32; 1 John 1:8-9. We have a Father who loves us, more than we can ever fully comprehend. He invites us daily into His arms and He is ready to reassure us of our place as His children. When you sin, mess up, make bad choices, don't run from your Father. Instead, run to Him. He will not turn you away or turn His back on you. That is the Father we have! One more time, conclude your devotion time by professing your faith with the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer, both slowly, thoughtfully, and prayerfully.

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What Now?

1. Take time today, if possible, to express your thanks to your father or people who may have served as father-figures in your life. Jot them a note, call them, send them a text or email or snapchat, and just let them know how much you appreciate what they have done for you in your life.
2. Consider memorizing (or re-memorizing) Luther's explanation to the Introduction to the Lord's Prayer, as we pray to God as our Father: "With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children as their dear father."
3. If you would like a *Luther's Small Catechism*, they are available on a table in the atrium. You do not need to but if you would like to contribute to the cost of the catechisms, you can leave a donation in the box on the table in the atrium or drop off your gift in the church office.

If you would like to receive daily Bring It Home devotions by email, please contact the church office: churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org

Monday — I Believe in God the Father

The teaching that the God in whom we believe is a God we can refer to as “Father,” shows up in two key places, both familiar to many Christians. The first is in the Apostles’ Creed when we say, “I believe in God the Father...,” and the other is in the Lord’s Prayer where we begin that prayer by praying, “Our Father...” Read 2 Corinthians 6:18, where St. Paul is quoting from 2 Samuel 7:14 where the Lord is speaking to the prophet Nathan a message for David, reminding David of his relationship to the Lord and God’s promise to David for the future. As you hear these words today, take them to heart as the Lord is speaking them directly to you. What does it mean for you that God promises to be a Father to you and that you get to be His sons and daughters? How can that assurance and promise make a difference in the way you approach the day ahead of you? To wrap up your devotion today (and I’ll be encouraging you to do this all week), speak the Apostles’ Creed and then close by praying the Lord’s Prayer. But don’t just rattle through these quickly. Say and pray them slowly, deliberately, thoughtfully, and prayerfully.

Tuesday — A Bad Dad

Read, or recite it if you can from memory, the 4th commandment as it’s recorded in Exodus 20:12. The Lord commands us to honor fathers and mothers but what do we do if we find ourselves in situations where our father (I’m going to focus on dads, but the same questions can apply to moms, too) may have been mean or abusive or hurtful? What do we do then? The reality of our lives as sinful human beings living in a sin-filled and broken world means that we are not going to find a perfect dad – not in human form on this side of heaven. There are plenty of bad dads, absent fathers, men who abandoned their families. No matter how great a dad we may have had, more than likely there were times when he let you down, disappointed you, or hurt you in some way. Honestly, it can be very, very hard to honor a man who has been a bad dad. But what is the purpose behind this command? Our Lord is asking of us something that He demonstrated Himself – that is, to love when love is not deserved. To serve and show honor to a father not deserving it can be done with the hope that by showing such love or respect or honor may open his heart to recognize, admit, even confess where he has missed the mark and especially, if he is not a believer, to hear of the perfect Father who has come to offer forgiveness, grace, and second chances. Regardless of the type of dad or father-figures that you’ve had in your life, lean heavily into your heavenly Father. You can be assured that He is here for you, that He loves you with an everlasting love, that He will not disappoint you or hurt you, and that He stands ready to wrap you in His loving arms. Wrap up your devotion time again today by speaking the Apostles’ Creed and then praying the Lord’s Prayer. Remember, don’t just rattle through these quickly. Say and pray them slowly, deliberately, thoughtfully, and prayerfully as you speak to your Father.

Wednesday — Good Good Father

Christian singer and songwriter Chris Tomlin wrote and performs the well-known song, *Good Good Father*. The words of this song provide a powerful reminder of all the promises our heavenly Father has given to us. I offer this song and the accompanying music video for your devotional thoughts for today. Here’s the link if you’re able to use it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJsQryckKsY> I’m also giving you the words here for your meditation: 1) I've heard a thousand stories of what they think you're like But I've heard the tender whispers of love in the dead of night And you tell me that you're pleased And that I'm never alone. (Refrain) You're a good good father; It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are, And I'm loved by you; It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am. 2) I've seen many searching for answers far and wide But I know we're all searching For answers only you provide 'Cause you know just what we need Before we say a word. (Refrain); Bridge) Because you are perfect in all of your ways to us. 3) Oh, it's love so undeniable I, I can hardly speak Peace so unexplainable I, I can hardly think As you call me deeper still Into love, love, love. (Refrain)

Thursday — An Approachable Father

When Jesus’ disciples asked for some direction on how to pray, read what Jesus gave them as we have it recorded in Luke 11:1-4 and also in Matthew 6:9-13. Why do you think Jesus started this model prayer in this way, speaking not simply to an almighty and all-powerful God but rather as “our Father”? The relationship that Jesus has with His Father is a relationship that He desires to share with us that we, too, can embrace. The desire that our Lord has for us to consider Him our Father connotes the fact that He both wants to be in relationship with us and He wants us to know we can place our trust and confidence completely in Him and that as our Father, He really is going to take care of us. As Peter urges us in 1 Peter 5:7, we can cast all our cares, anxieties, worries, and issues of life on Him – that’s what a loving Father does. He is here to take all that we have and love us. As Martin Luther wrote in his explanation to the Intro to the Lord’s Prayer, “With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children as their dear father.” Our heavenly Father doesn’t want us to be scared of Him or afraid to go to Him with any need, any request, any matter in our life – that is how deep His love for us goes. Take some time to do that now – those matters on your heart and mind, talk to your Father about them. And then close your time professing your faith with the Apostles’ Creed and praying the Lord’s Prayer.

Friday — Thank Your Father

Read 1 John 3:1 and Galatians 3:26-28. These verses are beautiful reminders of who we are because of Jesus – and because of Jesus, we