

06.16.13 Small Group Questions, Ron Blalack teaching

“What I Learned from My Father”

2 Timothy 2:1-3

Getting Started:

Both Mother's day and Father's day are distinctly American holidays, but have spread throughout the world; Mother's Day began in 1908 and Father's Day began in 1910.

- *As you think about your earthly father, what comes to mind or to heart?*

Looking Back:

Because of Ron's father's involvement in the military, he did not see his dad very much. He said that many other men were fathers to him.

- *Who has played a fathering role in your life? What did their “fathering” look like?*

Paul was a father-figure to Timothy

- Timothy is mentioned in most of Paul's letters - Acts 16
- Timothy comes from a distinct and honored family - mother and grandmother were women of faith
- Father was Greek and mother and grandmother were Jews who put their faith in Jesus; Timothy's father was not present..many think he might have died
- Paul calls Timothy beloved son, evangelist, co-worker
- Paul begins, "You then, my son..." (endearing term)
- Paul takes him on his journeys
- Paul entrusts Timothy the church at Ephesus - Paul wrote 1&2 Timothy to encourage him as a spiritual father
- Paul left Timothy with a heritage of influence

Just as Paul was a "father figure" to Timothy, God has designed us with a need for love and community. Who are the spiritual "fathers" in your life?

Whether or not your memories of your father are positive, we must learn to accept the love of our Father.

- *Take time to reflect about how God has served as a father. Why comes to your mind?*

A father's purpose is to direct his children to his heavenly father

2 Timothy 2:1 - Paul directed Timothy's attention to what matters

2 Timothy 2:2 - A father sets an example

- “Witness” - a person who can give first hand testimony in a court of law

- Jesus said, "I only do what I see my Father doing."
- Role of father - transmitting the message to a future generation

Read Joel 1:1-3. What does this verse teach about fathering?

V. 3

Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus

- Come alongside someone in adversity
- There is an intimacy that comes from suffering for Christ
- *Why do you think some of Paul's fatherly advice and encouragement to Timothy was to "endure suffering?"*

We are called to father children who are not ours biologically. (Ex. Mike & Matt in youth dept)

Ron shared some things to "be the best parents we can be". (Commit your life to Christ, set an example for your children, show your kids the love of Christ, help your kids make godly decisions, pass on to your children what you've learned, challenge your kids to do what is right, enter into strong relationships with other believers, choose to be a friend to younger men and women)

- *Share some of your own reflections on what makes the best father...the best parent.*

Ron shared a quote of General Douglas MacArthur, who said, "I am prouder to be a father than a soldier."

- *What are you known for? What makes you proudest in life?*

Having a spiritual father requires you to be a spiritual daughter/son. How can you be more open to being "fathered" spiritually?

Moving Forward:

Not having an earthly father, having a father who was distant emotionally or spiritually, or having a father who deeply hurt you, can give us conflicted feelings about the word, "Father" and God being called, "Our Father." Before attempting to reconcile and address the issues we have concerning our biological father, we must learn to accept the love that our Heavenly Father has for us. Not until we can receive the love of our heavenly Father, can we truly love our earthly fathers.

- *Spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to reveal Himself to you as a Father. Ask Him to open your heart, in new and deeper ways, to His love.*

Ron shared a quote by Howard Hendricks from Dallas Theological Seminary - "Every disciple needs three types of relationships in his life: Paul (someone to mentor & challenge you), Barnabas (someone to encourage and come alongside you), and Timothy (someone you can pour life into)."

- *Who are the Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy in your life?*

- *If you are lacking one or more of these relationships, spend time in prayer, as a group, specifically asking that God would lead you into such relationships.*

What are other ways we can pray for you this week?