

Galatians #7 - God as Father vs God as Master

- All right, we're in Galatians 4. If you've got a Bible, go to Galatians 4, New Testament book. If you're brand new to the Bible just keep going to the right eventually you're gonna find it. Galatians 4:1-7 and we're gonna talk about the topic today of God as Father versus God as Master. And I was thinking about it, recently up in the office, we had a Bible study, staff Bible study, we're hanging out, and there was one of the dads was there and he had his little boy maybe about a year old, little, cute, adorable little guy, and all the other kids went to play in the other room and this little boy, he just wanted to hang out with his dad. And eventually his sisters came and got him. Said, "No, no, no, come to the other room play with us." It isn't long, I see this little guy just sprint right into the Bible study yelling, "Dad, dad, dad," he only knows one word, but he says it a lot. And just jumps into his dad's arms, sits on his dad's lap. He just wants to hang out with his dad. After a little bit of time being a little boy, he gets curious so he wants to go explore stuff in the room, but everywhere he goes, he turns around to make sure his dad can see him. And he only knows one word, but anything he wants he points at, what do you think he says? "Dad, "dad, "dad," he wanted a lot of stuff. And so, and I remember thinking about it in the moment thinking that's a really great picture of a healthy relationship with God. That's a really healthy portrait of how we should have a relationship with God. I mean, when he's pointing, it's kinda his form of prayer, "Hey, dad," and dad knows what his son wants, understands the need of the moment. Dad is present, dad is safe, dad is loving, dad is kind. And wherever dad is, that's where the kid wants to be 'cause he loves hanging out with his dad. And that's really kinda the heart of what we're gonna talk about today. But as we open the Bible, there are two things in the Bible that I would argue are maybe the two most important things in the whole Bible. Number one is who God is. Number two is who you are. If you get those two right, the rest of life tends to work itself out. If you get those two wrong, the rest of life has a lot of pains and problems. And so, I'm gonna start in Galatians 3:29 briefly. I was gonna start in four, but I think this is important to set up context. Paul, he's the man writing the book here, he says, "And if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, "heirs according to the promise." So we're gonna walk through a couple of questions this week. First is do you belong to Christ? And what Paul is dealing with, there were a bunch of religious people in the church that would have said, "I was born into a believing family. "My parents love the Lord, my grandparents love the Lord, "we've gone to church our whole life, we believe in God." But they had not personally come into a relationship with God. They had not personally crossed that line of faith, of trust, of belief, of wholeheartedness, of ultimately, I'm making this decision for myself. When you're a little kid, sorta attending church, praying, reading the Bible, sometimes those decisions are made by your parents. "Hey, we're gonna do family devotions. "Hey, we're gonna tuck you in bed and pray for ya. "Hey, we're going to church on Sunday." As you get older, your faith has to become your own. It's like when you're a kid, you can sort of for a little while borrow your parents' faith until you get your own. But at some point you have to get your own. And what these people had is they had some parents or relatives that had faith and did have a relationship with God. But many of these people did not. And if you ask them, are you worried about your eternal life, your relationship with God? They would say, "No, no, no, no, no, no, "we come from a good family, I

come from a believing family. "I'm sure that we're fine." And here, he is saying, "You only, "you only need to focus on if you are Christ." 'Cause what they were pointing to was their ancestors and their family history. How many of you grew up in a devoutly religious home where people had deep-seated beliefs and convictions? I did, I grew up in a home where when my grandfather died, my great grandmother joined a lay order of Catholic nuns and became a nun. So we were Irish Catholic, very devout Irish Catholic. My mom was a believer, my mom loved the Lord; I did not. When I first met my wife Grace, she asked, "Are you a Christian?" And I said, "Yeah," because I, my family goes to church and, I've gone a few times recently and like once every, if somebody died or had a wedding I would go, probably just for the cake. But I wasn't really, I wasn't really going to church, I was reading the Bible, I wasn't praying. I didn't have a relationship with God, but I wasn't worried about it 'cause I assumed that our whole family was okay. And then I realized in college, "No, no, no, the line into heaven is single file. "There's no group that makes it into heaven. "The line is single file." Now, my mom knew and loved Jesus. My grandma knew and loved Jesus. I did not know and love Jesus. So I had to understand what it meant to become a Christian. And that is, first of all that there's a problem with me. It's called sin, and that there's a solution for me and his name is Jesus. And that he came on the most amazing rescue mission in the history of the world that God came to the earth, Jesus Christ, and he lived an absolutely perfect, sinless life, the life that I was supposed to live but didn't because of all my failures and flaws and shortcomings and sins. And then he went to the cross, and he did something for me. He substituted himself, he paid a price for me, he did something on my behalf. It cost him everything, it costs me nothing. He takes care of my biggest problem and that is my sin problem which separates me from God, and then has me sentenced toward an eternal death. And then Jesus after he's in the grave, he conquers death. He's the only human being in the history of the world to conquer death. And so he gives me the assurance of what awaits me on the other side of this life if I belong to him. And so I cross that line of faith. I made my own commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. And in that I now have great assurance and confidence that if I die, I know where I'm going, if I sin I know I'm forgiven, that my relationship with God is absolutely secure. And now my hope and prayer and goal is to tell my kids about Jesus so that that line into heaven is single file, but all my kids are in that line, amen? That's the goal as a parent. And so the first question is, are you Christ? And if so, you inherit all of God's promises that are given to this man Abraham, he is sort of the father of faith, he's an Old Testament figure, he trusts in the Lord and God makes a bunch of promises to him, that he'll be blessed and be a blessing to the nations and that, ultimately, Jesus is coming through him. And what he's saying is this, you can be born physically through a father but to be born again spiritually, you need to come to know God as your father. And what qualifies you for heaven is not your birth, but what the Bible calls your new birth. A lot of people say, "Well, I was born and if I die, "I'm sure I'll go to a better place." No, no, no, you need to be not just born, you need to be born again. And this means that spiritually you're made alive as you were physically made alive. When a baby is born, and it cries out, so someone who is born again belongs to Jesus becomes a Christian, gets a brand new, fresh start spiritually, they cry out to God in prayer and worship. And if you have not done that, let me just be clear, I wanna invite you to do that, to acknowledge that there is a God and that He does have a problem, but He has provided a solution for your sin. So His problem is your sin, and His solution is His son and if you trust in

Jesus, you are forgiven completely, totally, fully and eternally. And not only that, your nature changes, your identity changes, your status changes, your life changes, your eternity changes. So that's where he's gonna go from here. So do you belong to Christ? Question number two, are you a spiritual child or a maturing adult? And he says it this way, "I mean that the heir," and so this would be a father has a child and that child is a legal heir to the inheritance and to the estate and to all the property of the family. "As long as he is a child is no different from a slave, "though he is the owner of everything, "but he is under guardians and managers "until the date set by his father." Now, this is written in the Roman Empire about 2,000 years ago. So let me unpack a little bit of the culture 'cause some of the words may, may be a little confusing. In that day, children were not generally highly regarded. Many children were beaten, were neglected, were abandoned. Children that had any sort of disabilities or lack of health oftentimes were literally left out with the trash. Poor families would tend to practice infanticide especially with the girls, 'cause all they wanted was male sons to go work to provide income. And so children were not highly regarded. And if a child was left out with the garbage, others could come along and literally take the baby, turn 'em into a slave, a gladiator, a prostitute. There wasn't such a thing as a social safety net, there weren't the kind of legal protections that we have for children today, that ultimately the father owned the child like a piece of property. And so you could do to the child whatever you wanted and there was no legal recourse. And the infant mortality rate was incredibly high. Half of the kids died by age five. And they would not oftentimes name the child until they had lived for at least a week because so many kids died so early and young. And so ultimately, in that world, the quality of your life was utterly dependent on the character of your father. So the quality of your life was ultimately dependent on the character of your father. If you had a dad who hated you, you could get put out with the trash. If you had a dad who got angry with you, he had the legal right to kill you, or beat you or abuse you or harm you. If you had a dad got sick of you, he could literally sell you as property to someone else. And so in that world, being a child really, really, really was either horrific or wonderful depending upon who your dad was. And what I wanna tell you is nothing's changed, insofar as the quality of a child's life is largely contingent upon the character of the father. That the father decides who the mother will be, that the father decides where the child will live, the father decides what the child will eat, the father decides whether or not the father will be involved in the life of the child. And so what he's talking about here is he's using this analogy of how God adopts us and becomes our father. But you need to know that a lot of the people that he's writing to in this church, they were abandoned. They were literally cast aside. Many of them were slaves. Early Christianity was very popular among the poor and the marginalized and the women and the outcast because in the church, they were given a lot more dignity than they did in this society. And in a culture where a lot of the people were rejected, they were cast aside, they were tossed out, their dads disowned them, they were even sold as property, to hear that there was a father who loved them, a father who was safe, a father who was kind, a father who was generous, a father who would only do good to them eternally, and that this father had a house called heaven and this father has an inheritance that he's gonna share with all of his kids. Well, these people who were dejected and rejected they were outcast and ostracized, they were, "Tell me about this God," right? "We didn't know there was a God like that. "And if there was a God like that, "we didn't think he'd picked people like us." How many of you kinda feel that way? You're like, "I can't

believe Jesus picked me," right? "Nobody's ever picked me. "I spent recess my whole life, not getting picked "and Jesus picked me, God picked me. "God picked me to be his kid." So there's this sense of awe and wonder and amazement among these people. And what he's saying is when a child has a father and a good father who loves them, they're an heir, meaning one day they're gonna get the whole estate, right? They're gonna get the business, the land, whatever wealth may have occurred in the portfolio. But as long as they're different, as long as they're little, they have the same level of freedom as a slave. Meaning what? They don't. Kids can't do what they want, they have to do what they're told. That's like a slave. Though a kid owns everything, they're not allowed to sell it, amen, 'cause they're not of age yet. So it is with a slave, they don't own anything. And what he says is a child is being raised, he's under guardians, managers, and we have that today we call them coaches, teachers, we call them mentors, we call them youth pastors, right? What he's saying is there are people that help raise the child. And ultimately, the goal is to get the child to be mature enough to make their own decision. So how many of you've got kids that are in launch phase, you know what I'm talking about? What's launch phase with the kids? Raise a kid to launch, what's that mean? Yeah, get them off the payroll. That's the objective, right? That's the objective, right? You've been on the payroll, we're gonna launch you off the payroll, which means now you need to find your own place to live, right? You need to generate your own income, you need to figure out some health insurance, you need to, you need to decide how you're gonna take care of yourself. Because when you're little, you're fully dependent. And then the goal is, as you grow older to work toward becoming independent, no longer a dependent, but literally independent. And the hope and prayer and goal is that your kids do that. Now, how many of you are struggling with that? Let's just be honest. Sometimes kids don't watch well. And sometimes what kids will do, they'll want to revert back. Okay, this is gonna be a painful point for you guys with 20-something sons, but they wanna revert back. How many of you have seen that? You launch your kid and they realize, "Stuff's expensive. "I'm gonna go to your house and eat your stuff," right? "Man, I had an apartment, and I didn't pay the rent "they kicked me out, that's amazing. "My mom never kicked me out, I'll go back to her house." And what happens is, they can revert back and try and go back a life stage or two. Why do we do this? Because it's easier to have somebody else take care of us than it is to take care of ourselves. And ultimately, what's happening here in Galatia, they had become Christians, they were maturing and growing, and then some people showed up, we'll call them legalist, that means they're law-based, lots of do's and don'ts, they're always bossing everybody around and telling everybody what to do. The legalist started bossing them around. And what he's telling them is that legalism is immaturity, and it's going backward. Who thinks that they're the most mature, the legalist. That's why they tell everybody what to do. And if you've been in church for more than 15 minutes and met these people, they tell every, "You're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong. "I'll tell you how to do it, this is how you do it. "You do it like..." They're telling everybody what to do, and they're not necessarily teaching God's word, they're just making lots of rules, and commands and demands. And it looks like those are the mature people because they're, they're bossy. They're really bossy. That's what's happening here. What Paul is saying is, if you still need somebody to tell you what to do every day, you're reverting back to childhood, 'cause grown adults make their own decisions and little kids do what they're told. So the analogy makes sense? So some of you say, "Well, how do I make

decisions?" Well, as you mature, you read and learn the Word of God, you're filled with the Spirit of God, you're surrounded by the people of God, you can start to make your own decisions. You don't need everybody to tell you what to do all the time because you've got the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the people of God, and you'll be able to be a person who makes their own decisions. So some of you are newer Christians, some of you maybe are coming back to Christ after season a rebellion and your thought is "Oh, I need to be serious about my faith, "so I'm gonna find the people who are the most intense, rule bearing, "and just law-keeping "and just gonna tell me exactly what to do, "and then that'll mature me." Does it? No. So at some point when you're raising kids you go from, "Okay, here's what you're gonna do," to some day it's like, "Okay, let me now ask you the question, what are you, "what are you gonna do?" 'Cause at some point, if you're raising kids, you can't always be telling them what to do, they need to figure out what they're gonna do. And what he's saying is, is that this kind of legalism, it looks like it's maturity 'cause they have all the answers, but it's actually immaturity because those are not God's answers and it's trying to control people, rather than allowing people to mature to have self-control. And so the question for you would be are you a spiritual child or maturing adult? Are you still waiting for everybody to tell you what to do or are you maturing to the place that you can make your own life and faith decisions? Next question: do you see yourself as a slave or a son? For you, this is a significant, important, vital question. I told you two of the most important things you can learn in the Bible, who's God, who am I? Here's what he says, "In the same way," Galatians 4:3-5, "We also, when we were children, "were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world." Right, when we were kids we did what we were told, and all the forces around us they controlled us and we were at their mercy. "But when the fullness of time had come," that Jesus is coming at just the right time. And we don't know exactly why God picked the time that he did, but it was interesting 'cause that's when you had the first road system that connected nations so the message of Jesus could spread. "The fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son," notice the language here Father-Son language, born of a woman, that shows us that Jesus was fully man, he's fully God, fully man. "Born of a woman, born under the law." So he's under the Old Testament, the Old Testament was God's law book for his people. "And he was born under the law "to redeem those who are under the law "so that we might receive," what? "Adoption as sons." And what he's saying is this, you're either a slave or a son. That's your identity. And your identity is one of two things. It's either something you live for or it's something you live from, okay? If you're a slave, you're always working so that you'll have approval. If you're a son, you don't work for approval, you work from approval. It's a completely different sense of identity. A slave is measured by how much they produce and perform, and a son is secure because of the love and devotion to the father. It's a very, very different kind of relationship. Let me just hit briefly on slavery. Slavery in the ancient world was quite different than today. It's a big broad category, made some notes. It was almost entirely... American slavery rather, is almost entirely racial. It was a lifetime status as a masters property. If you had children, they were also made slaves in the property of the master. People were passed down as property along with livestock to future generations. This is the kind of thing that was done to Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. And in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 we hear this, "We know that the law is made not for the righteous "but for law breakers and rebels, the ungodly, sinful, "the unholy note, irreligious, for slave traders." So Paul lists slave trading, taking a free

person, making them property for the rest of their life with all of their progeny, and he says that is evil. Right, so slavery as was practiced in America is antibiblical, it's evil. Slavery in the Roman Empire was not exactly the same, and it was complicated. Ancient slavery was not mainly racial. All races had slaves, and all races were slaves. Oftentimes, it was not a lifetime sentence, it was something that was lifted off in around age 30 with an emancipation. Furthermore, sometimes slaves were people who had a debt to pay. And what we do today is we file bankruptcy, but they didn't have bankruptcy. So let's say you're buying a home or starting a business or you're taking a withdraw, part of the contract would be if I can't pay you back, I'm gonna go work for you for X number of years to pay back the debt that I owe. So many of the people who were slaves they were actually working off their debt. Other people volunteered because they liked the job or the master and it came with housing and food and maybe they had a kind master and it was a better lifestyle. So there's lots of different dynamics that are at play. Some of them were sinful, some of them were not sinful, there was also slave trading that was included in it. But when it comes to speaking here about slaves what's really awkward for us to consider lots of people in the church who heard this were still slaves. In fact, early church leaders, oftentimes were slaves. And so this led to all kinds of dynamics. Because let's say you're a slave and you go to work, who's the boss? The master. Now you and the master gets saved, you meet Jesus, you become Christians, you both go to church. If the slave has better character, they become the pastor of the master. I just did hip hop. They became the pastor of the master. Which all of a sudden is like, well, who's in charge? Because the kingdom of God values people very differently than the culture. And so there's a line in the New Testament, Philemon is a book 1:16, he says that there's this man Onesimus who was a slave and has become a Christian and perhaps now a leader in the church, and he wants Onesimus to be welcomed as a full status brother. Here's what's awesome, in the family of God, there's no second class. It's all first class. And it doesn't matter how the world identifies you, all of your identity changes when God adopts you. It changes. And so, I don't know what your family history was or what your work performance has been, or your IQ or your appearance or your income all of that is literally sort of set aside by God when he adopts you into his family and you become a Christian. You get a new father, you get a new family, you get a new identity. And that's what Paul is talking about that Jesus Christ has accomplished for us. Jesus is the Son of God and he comes to make all of us sons of God, sons of God. And when you hear this, because in our day when we hear Sons of God, immediately some people think "See, that's where the Bible is bigoted, "it's discriminatory, it's anti-woman," actually, it's totally the opposite. In that culture, men could vote, not women, men generally owned property, not women. Men could testify in court, not women, men would receive the family inheritance, not women. So if you were a son, as opposed to a daughter, you were in a privileged position. And so when God says, "You're all my sons," what he's saying is the males and the females, the sons and the daughters, they all occupy that same privileged legal status. So this was actually bringing to women a much higher category of honor than the culture in which they lived. But that being said, I wanted to juxtapose these two: slave versus son, think about that. Do you primarily see yourself in relation to God as a slave? He's the master, I'm the slave. He's not very relational. He could be cruel, domineering and overbearing. Sometimes He beats me. And my goal is just to not make the master angry, right? How many people have this view of God? How many

people have this view of themselves? If you have a relationship with God to where you see yourself as a slave, slave to your sin, slave to your past. Slave is someone that's chained. If you're chained to your past, if you're chained to someone else's opinion of you, if you're chained to your family, if you're chained to your failure, you're a slave, and it leads to a very controlling relationship with God. Do you feel like God's entire mission is to control you like a like a marionette? A slave is in a relationship with a master where they are completely and totally powerless. If the master hits you, you can't hit the master, right? If the master harms you, there is no recourse. You just have to endure whatever they give. You're powerless. A slave has a works-based lifestyle. In a negative pejorative understanding a slave is like a tool. So they would have livestock and slaves just like today we'd have trucks and backhoes. They would use people and beasts to accomplish labor and task. And so what you are at that point, you're just valued for your work, for your productivity, for your performance, that's it. And then, no matter what you do, if you're a slave in that culture, you're forever out of the family. You're out. They go into their house, you don't live there. They have their holidays, you don't join them. They have their dining room table, you never sit at it. You're out, you're not in. Some of you still think like a slave, even if you're a Christian. And what Paul is saying is here is know if you belong to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Jesus Christ makes us Sons of God. And what we have is not a controlling relationship with God, but a loving relationship with God, okay? If I could just say this to the men, this is where you can learn so much about God once you become a dad. Amen? How many of you, you held your kid and you're like, "Okay, something in my soul is changing"? And I hear it's like a double portion with grandkids, I'll tell you when I get there, right? Right, is that true? You hold your grandkids, you're like, "Oh, now I know what love is." Right, it's love. And a son is empowered. A good father's job is not to take power from their son or child, but to help them to grow in power in the right exercise of power so that they have a life of fruitfulness and productivity. A slave has a works-based lifestyle, a son has a grace-based lifestyle. If you're my slave and you don't produce, I can kill you or I can sell you. If you're my son, you're always my son. That'll never change, that's irreversible. That's grace-based. And if you're a son, here's the good news, you're forever in the family. See, some of you came from families where you were the, you were the, you were the rejected one, somebody else was the favorite. Maybe the family is sort of got you on the outs or ostracized or maybe you've got strained or distant relationships with relatives. Let me just say, the heavenly Father, he doesn't operate like that, it never works like that. You're always loved by your father. You're always, always, always part of the family. That the Father is always willing to hear from you. We call that prayer. The Father is always willing to speak to you. The Father is always willing to lead and guide you. The Father ultimately never punishes you, because Jesus already took your punishment. And so, if you have a slave mentality, every time something happens in your life that is painful or difficult, you think, "God, why are you beating me?" He's like, "That's not what I do with my sons. "The Son of God took the beating and I don't beat my sons." There may be consequences for our decisions and behavior but just because something is painful doesn't mean that the Father is punishing. Almost every, well I would say this, I would go this far. Every religion outside of Christianity people see themselves as slaves. You gotta work hard, you gotta reincarnate, you gotta do a good job, you gotta pay God back. It's all slave-based. It's all slave-based. Christianity is completely son-based, and that all starts with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And let me say

something kind of odd as well. In our world when we think of adoption, and adoption's a good thing. Jesus was adopted by Joseph, God adopted us into His family. So Christians have always been big on adoption. In our culture, you can't adopt a grown man, right? In the ancient world, you could. In our world, you adopt a minor child. In that world, you could adopt an adult. And this was often done, let's say, for politicians. So their government wasn't, many of the nations were not elected officials, it was family monarchy. So think about family. So when dad dies, who becomes the next king? The son. But what if you don't have a son or what if you, your son's a dud, right? Or he's gonna harm the people, he's a bad son. You could adopt a grown adult male as a son, and then he would have the full legal standing and the complete inheritance. So here's what I want you to realize, God the Father will adopt you when you're little or he'll adopt you when you're big. And just because you're older, doesn't mean you can't get adopted, God can still adopt you. And so what would happen is even if a father adopted an adult child, what they would do is they would wait to give them a day that they were declared legally an adult. One of the greatest problems we have in our country, number one, nobody knows when you're an adult. So, right? So what do we do? We just create ages. Is it 16 when you get a driver's license is it 18 when you graduate, vote, can join the military? Is it 21 when you can buy alcohol? Nobody knows, because we're not basing maturity, we're counting years. Hear me in this, if you're a parent, you're raising kids don't just think because they're of a certain age that they're at a certain maturity. Maturity and age are not synonymous. How many of you know old people that are really immature and young people who are more mature, okay? And so the father had the legal right to decide when you were an adult. So the father would be relationally connected to you, know you and would say, "You're now responsible, "you now are trustworthy, "you're now ready for adult responsibilities," and then legally, what they would do, they would declare you an adult, and what that meant now, you can now transact business on behalf of the family name, that your name is now included on the deed of the property, the family business, the portfolio, all the investments, the full inheritance. And he's using this analogy and he's saying, if you become a Christian you're adopted into the family of God. And at some point as you mature, you don't need a bunch of people telling you what to do because the Father has declared you to be mature enough to start to make your own decisions. And let me, let me say this as well. You probably don't believe this. Why? Why is it so hard to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and he made me a son of God? Why is it so hard to believe that? Permission to speak freely. Don't deserve it. You know what, because slaves earn, right? And sons earn what Jesus earned. So you're right, we don't deserve it, the Son of God took care of all of the sons of God. It's grace, we struggle with that. Or we know that we're saved by grace, and then we sin and we feel like, "Gosh, you know, "I'm acting like I used to act, "that might mean that I'm not who God says I am." This is where I think that most Christians truly don't 100% from the soul, bottom line, believe this. And as a result, bossy, older, legalistic people who wanna turn the relationship with God into a slave relationship come along, and they start telling you what to do and you start doing that, because you're more familiar with being a slave than a son. And the later you get saved in life you've got a lot of slave years, right? Just getting beat down told what to do at work by the boss having performance-based relationships, people leaving you, even marriage covenants being abandoned and betrayed, and you're just like, "Look, every relationship I've had, "feels like a real slave beat down." This is a unique relationship. This is a God-given

relationship. And let me just tell you this, this is who you are whether or not you feel like it because it's who God the Father says you are. So you receive that. I want this to be an encouragement to your soul. I'm a son, not only a son, he's gonna tell us in a moment, an heir. That means that I am now part of the family, right? I'm in, I'm not out. I'm accepted, not rejected. I'm blessed, not cursed, like I'm in. And some of you have this slave mentality and it comes to something called an orphan mentality where Jesus says, "I do not leave you as orphans," and you just, you never feel like you're in. You always feel like you're out. Let me tell you this, if you belong to Jesus, you're in, you're in, you can get over your insecurity, get over your past, get over your failure, and just move forward toward maturity. And that's ultimately God's intention for each of you. So then the next thing is, do you see God as Father or Master? This is where he's gonna go. Do you relate to God as master or father? Galatians 4:6-7, "And because you," what? "Are sons." What he's not saying is if you will do this then you can be a son. And he doesn't say you used to be a son. And he doesn't ask do you feel like a son? First thing he tells you is, you are a son. "God has sent the Spirit of His Son," that's the Holy Spirit working through Jesus Christ into our hearts, the center of our being. This is passionate, this is emotional, this is relational. Have you ever seen a little kid with a dad who adores them? They're pretty vocal with their dad. They're pretty, they wrestle with their dad, they snuggle with their dad, they hold hands with their dad, they talk to their dad. God's a father, and even though we might be older, he still sees us as his kids crying, "Abba! Father!" I'm gonna pack all that, "So you are," what? "No longer a slave, but a son, "and if a son, than an heir through God." So let me talk a little bit about God the Father, and I told you the two the most important things are who are you? You're a son, not a slave. Who is God? He's a father, not a master. See how these go together? If you think God is a father, that then you're a son. If you think God is a master, then you're a slave. Most Christians don't know a lot about God the Father. If you grew up in something called a Pentecostal or charismatic tradition, they're gonna talk a lot about the Holy Spirit. And if it was an old one, they're gonna talk about the Holy Ghost, okay? So if you grew up in sort of a regular Christian church, you heard a lot about Jesus, which is absolutely right and good. Very few churches, denominations, Christian groups focus on God as Father. It's almost like He's forgotten. You can find tons of books on the Holy Spirit, tons of books on Jesus, very few books on God the Father. The two religions, well, the cult and the religion that talk about the fatherhood of God. The most the Mormons talk about God as Father, but it's not the biblical view of God. And Muslims see God as father but not a loving, gracious, kind father, and they don't see Jesus as the Son of God. So there's not a lot of teaching that's done on fathers. And I think that your view of your father can negatively impact your understanding of God as Father, okay? I'll never forget this when my daughter was little. She's 21 now getting ready to graduate from graduate school. I would tuck her in bed at night, and she would say, "Wrap me up like a burrito." So we put the blankets over her and I tuck her in tight. We'd sing and pray. And she used to smile and just melt my heart. She'd say, "I'm really blessed, I have two daddies. "I have a daddy in heaven and I have a daddy on earth." And as a dad, it just dawned on me like, "Yeah, Father, you let me borrow your title. "Right, that's, thank you for that, "but what a massive weight of responsibility," amen. Because the kid grows up saying "Father, father, father," or "Dad, dad, dad, dad, dad," then you're like, "Who's God? "He's Father, He's the dad." Well, if you had a dad that was a real bad dad, that's gonna be a real bad word. And so I think most of

the philosophical, ideological, spiritual views of God are based upon someone having a negative experience with a earthly father and projecting that onto a heavenly Father. I'll give you some examples. Atheism is I have no father, I'm fatherless. Agnosticism is I have a father, but he left a long time ago, he lives far away, I've never met him, I don't care to, I'm not looking for him. That's agnosticism. I don't know who he is and I'm not looking for him. Deism is I do have a dad, but he's non-relational, he's not involved in my life. I'm kind of on my own. He doesn't really show up. There is a theology called Arminianism. And that is basically God's a permissive parent, lets me make my own decisions, doesn't tell me what to do. Liberal or progressive Christianity tends to say that God is a Father who really has no rules, He's more like a permissive big brother, big sister, He lets you do whatever you want. He actually participates in, and He has no judgment on your behavior. There's something called reformed theology that I would more ascribe to, but their view of God is that He's far away, He's not very relational, He can get angry. You don't wanna make Him mad. Sometimes He can get pretty harsh, okay? And so each of you comes into and then I would add one more sort of feminist theology says, "You know what, "let's just be raised by a single mother. "Let's call God, mom." Okay? And I think the key to your identity is knowing who your father is. And isn't it true that this is true physically, as well as spiritually? How many people they don't know their dad, and they grow up, and they do all their genealogical work to figure out who their dad is and who their family is. There's something in us that wants to know who's my dad, who's my father, who's my family, where do I come from, who am I? That is ultimately a longing that can only be met by a relationship with God as Father. And as you come into that relationship with God as Father, it gives you the correct perspective of what a father is and does. And so my thought is always don't start with dads and then look up and say, "God, you must be like that." Start with God, look down and say, "Men, we need to become like him, by the grace of God, "by the grace of God." And so let me tell you a little bit about the Fatherhood of God. If you read the Old Testament, it very, very, very, very, very rarely talks about God as father, doesn't say hardly anything. On a handful of occasions, I'll double check my notes about 15 times the entire 39 books of the Old Testament mentioned God as Father, and it's almost every single time talking about a whole nation like Israel that God was the father over the nation, nothing personal, nothing more. Nothing like that's my dad. "That's my dad," you ever met that kid? They're like, "That's my dad." Well, God's your dad. And in the Old Testament, when God is referred to as Father just 19 times in 39 books, it's never that's my dad, it's, he's our dad over the whole nation. And then something happens that's very significant in the history of the world: Jesus shows up. Do you remember what was spoken over Jesus at his baptism? He went into the water, he came up, God the Father spoke from heaven and said what? "This is my Son, in whom I'm well pleased." Let me ask you this, had Jesus done anything yet? Did he cast out a demon, performed a miracle, walked on water, answer? Hadn't done anything. Your identity is not based on your performance. God loves you before you do anything good, and God loves you in spite of doing anything bad. That's amazing, right? How many of you don't have any other relationship like that? How many of you are like, "I could get my boss to listen to this, "this would be amazing," right? "My performance review would be so much better "if they were grace-based." Jesus is called by the Father, the Son of God. Here's what you need to know, if you are in Christ, that's your position, if the Son of God is your Savior, and you've adopted, God has adopted you into

the family and you are a son of God, here's what I want you to know. You are in the position as the son of God, as the son of God. What that means is that if you are a son of God, God speaks over your life and your destiny and says, "This is my, "this is my son. "This is my son." See, some of you have been rejected by your fathers, and this is how you get healed from that. You say, "Well, I have a father who didn't reject me, "he adopted me. "And he chose me and he loved me. "And he actually speaks over me and says, ""That's my kid, I love them."" And so from that point where Jesus is revealed as the Son of God at his baptism, what do you think of all the titles for God in the Bible, and there's a lot of them, what do you think Jesus' favorite title was for God? Father. Just in Matthew, Mark, Luke, the first three Gospels of the four, I looked it up, he refers to God as Father about 165 times. Let me ask you this, how many of you've got a little kid and how often do they say dad or mom? A lot, right? A lot. They need something, they call out, right? They want something, they call out. They get hurt, they call out. And just to make sure you're there, they call out just to make sure you yell back and you're nearby. Jesus is always talking to and talking about God as Father. You know what that is? Warm, intimate, personal relationship. You know what that is? Constant union and community. You know what that is? That's life together. That's what it is. And what happens then, Jesus is headed to the cross to die in our place for our sins. The Son of God is taking our place so that we can be adopted into the family as the sons of God. And what happens is Jesus is in a garden, he's praying all night, and he's talking to God as Father. He's talking to dad about the most painful moment of his life. Right, and Jesus taught us to pray, when we pray, whatever our prayers are to pray our Father, our Father, that's personal. And then Jesus is hanging on the cross, and he is dying for our sins. And he ends by saying, "Father, into your hands I come in my spirit. "Dad I trust you. "Dad I trust you on the worst day of my whole life. "Dad I trust you with the greatest pain "that's ever been endured. "Dad, I trust you with the most public shame "that anyone has ever faced. "Father, I trust you." That's faith. And Jesus pays the price for all of our sins. And if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to know that his resurrection from death is the promise of your future. And when he was forsaken by the Father as the Son of God, it was so that you and I will never be forsaken by the Father as the sons of God. Let me say, if you believe that God is your Father, it'll change your whole life. And what he says here is, "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, "crying, 'Abba! Father!'" That word, it was a word that was used of little kids and grown adults. How many of you are older but you've still got a dad? Okay. I talked to my dad this week, he turned 70 here recently. And he's got 18 grandkids, he's gonna live to see his great grandkids, which is awesome, and he's met the Lord Jesus and reads his Bible every day and I'm super proud of my pops. But when I talk to him, that's what I call him, I say, "Hey pops, happy birthday," I call him pops. Right, it's not disrespectful, but it's affectionate. I wouldn't refer to, let's say my IRS auditor with the same kind of terminology, we'd have a more professional relationship. But this is my dad, he's my pops. That's what I call him. My kids for fun, they call me Pastor Mark. They think that's hilarious 'cause that's what everybody calls me. "Pastor Mark, could you pass the ketchup?" Hey, man, it's literally. "Pastor Mark thank you for the coke." So that's their, but it's, maybe it's not respectful now that I think about it. I was gonna say it's not irrelevant, I was like, "That is kind of..." All right, we're gonna talk about this in my house. Okay, so this is a conversation we're gonna have. But the point is, if you know that your dad is not a master, but he's a father. You tend to have a special name for him that shows your affection and

warmth, okay? We only, sociologists will tell you we only nickname the people we love the most and the people we hate the most, true? Just don't say 'em 'cause they're naughty words. But how many of you have a few nicknames for a few people? Right? And some of them are like, "That's amazing," others are like, "That's horrifying." See, this is like Jesus' favorite title, name for God is it's originally Abba and it's translated Father. Father. Father. Now why do I tell you this? Number one, people build their relationship with God based upon who they think God is and who they think they are. How many of you honestly, maybe in your past, maybe in your present or to some degree, if you are honest, you saw God, or see God as master and yourself as slave, employee? How many of you, let's just be honest, okay? And how many of you, you're willing to really say, "Okay, I need to get to know God as Father "and myself His son. "If I know him his father and me as son, "that's very different than master and slave." Masters don't have warm nicknames that are given them by their slaves. Fathers have warm nicknames that are given them by their sons. This is Jesus' fond word for the Father and Jesus lived his life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Once he returns to heaven after his resurrection, he sends the Holy Spirit where? Our hearts. You get a new heart. You get a new nature. You become a new person. You get a new Father. You have a new power. You have a new identity. You have a new destiny. And how do you know that God is your Father? You cry out to Him. I love kids with all my heart. We didn't accidentally have five. But it's really interesting when there's a crowd of people and the kids and their parents get separated what do kids do to find their parent. They cry out, "Dad," right? "Mom." When the Holy Spirit comes in your heart, you're like, "Dad, dad." You're like a kid. There's so much power in this relationship. There's so much healing in that relationship. So I just, I want you to see God as Father, not Master. I want you to see yourself as son, not slave, and I want you to yield to the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in you. Which means we sing, it's one way we cry out. We pray. And sometimes this means just in the course of life, we're just, "Father, help, Father, thanks, Father, what?" Whatever. Just like a kid pursues the dad who loves them so the sons of God are welcomed by the Spirit of God to cry out and to pursue God as Father. Once, my heart is especially for the men on this, once the men particularly get unstuck in this they become healthy, they become relational, because not only does your view of God in yourself define your view of how you have a relationship with God, your relationship with God also then becomes a template for all your other relationships. If you think God is master and you are slave, how are you gonna treat your spouse? Master, slave. How are you gonna treat your kids? Master, slave. How are you gonna treat your extended family? Master, slave. Right, how are you gonna treat your grandkids? Master, slave. Okay, how many of you that was the relationship that you had with someone and it was death-inducing, it was not life giving? You say, "Why do people do that?" Well, they think that that's how God is. And if you wanna be godly, you need to be like God. The problem is, that's not what God's likes so that's not godly, that's a counterfeit. And I've told you in the series, God creates, Satan counterfeits. God, God creates a relationship where He's your Father and your He's son. Satan counterfeits where he tries you to believe this demonic myth that God is a master and you're a slave. That's demonic, it's a counterfeit. So I'll close with this, God as Master versus God as Father. If God is Master, a master uses you. A father blesses you. A master you serve them. You know what a father does, they serve you. How many of you men did things for your kids that you would not do for anyone else? Amen. How many of you, if I came to you right now and I

said, I gotta, I've messed my pants. I need help with that. You would say,

- Take care, good luck.

- "One, two, three, not it. "No, that's all you." Now what if it was your, yeah, or go see your mom, there's the honest answer. But then if your kid comes up who's 11 months old your answer is, I'll take care of that. So you'll take care of that, why for them? 'Cause this is not a general assignment, amen. Why would you do that for your kid and nobody else? 'Cause you love them and you're the father and they're your son, and that's the way it's gonna be. See, if you're a slave you serve. If you're a son, you get served by your father. God as Master primarily motivated by fear. God as Father motivated, they motivate you by love. Love. Let me tell you this. People do more for love than they do for fear. Fear will get people a little ways down the road toward behavior, love will take them significantly further. How do I know that? Because God so loved the world that He sent His only Son. Jesus went to the cross for love. He didn't go there out of fear. He went there outta love. And then what God as Master does, He beats you down. God as Father builds you up. And here's what's crazy, if God is your master, you never have any portion in the family inheritance. If God is your Father, you have a full inheritance. That was his language here, an heir. Okay, this isn't in my notes, I'll close with this and pray. Let me tell you a little, I just finished a book on spiritual warfare and it'll be out this fall. Right now, just make it up as I go. Right now, the Bible says that as the children of God, we are seated a little lower than the angels, okay? What's gonna happen is, one day you're gonna get your full inheritance. Right now, if you're a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit, Paul tells us in Ephesians that is the deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. That's the earnest money. That's the down payment, okay? That's the percentage to secure the deal until it's closed. One day, you're gonna die. And then what's gonna happen is this. You're gonna stand before God and he is going to finish this transformation and change process that he began in you the moment that he put the Holy Spirit in you. You, one day like Jesus and with Jesus, you will see your body and soul rejoined, you're gonna get out of the grave. How long are you gonna live for?

- Forever.

- Forever. God's gonna make a new heaven, new Earth, new Jerusalem. God is going to create a perfect, pristine, environment for you. You will never be sick again. You'll never be sad again. You'll never be scared again. You will never sin, you will never rebel. You will never regret any of the decisions that you make for all of your eternity into the future. Furthermore, the Bible says that is the Son of God he is seated at the right hand of the Father on a throne. I can't get into all this, but trust me, it's in the scriptures. The Bible says to those who overcome they also will sit on thrones. Do you know what happened in that day. If your dad was a king, and he adopted you, guess what you got? A throne. So dad sat on his throne, you sat on your throne. Here's what I'm telling you. God is the Father, Jesus is the Son of God, the Father's got his throne, the Son's got his throne. But if you're the sons of God, what is waiting for you? Whole bunch of thrones. And what it says then is you're gonna judge the angels. You're gonna sit on thrones as the sons of God with the Son of God. And you're not going to be lower than the angels, you're

gonna judge the angels. Which means Satan and demons and rebellious spirits and the cause of all the counterfeits are gonna be brought to trial before the sons of God. And you're gonna say, "No, that's not my father's will. "No, that's not my father's word. "You rebelled against my father's commands." And you will rule and reign forever in the kingdom of God under the headship and leadership of its king, Jesus Christ, with everyone and everything subject to the Fatherhood of God, which means that all of God's people for all of history are going to be a healthy, loving, safe, provided for, relational, reconciled family.

- [Man] Yeah, yeah.

- That's the inheritance.

- True.

- That's the inheritance, okay? And so, I need you to not just look at your past, where you were a slave to some sort of sin, that robbed you of life as a master. I need you to look forward to Jesus and the Kingdom of God, and the full inheritance and just there's this line in Scripture that the Holy Spirit just brought to mind. "No eye has seen, "no ear has heard, no mind has conceived "of the things that God has planned "for the children who "love Him." Lord Jesus, thank you for this inexplicable gift. Lord Jesus, you are the Son of God that you would come down to take those of us who were slaves to sin and slaves to Satan and slaves to addiction and slaves to death, and that you would set us free. And not only that, that you would put us in a position to be adopted by the Father and to become the sons of God. With an inheritance that awaits us that never ends. And a family that is healed and perfect and forgiven. Lord Jesus, we will not know sickness we will not know poverty, we will not know war we will not know danger. Our cars won't have airbags, our homes won't have locks. Our soldiers won't have jobs. Our police officers will never again report for duty. Lord Jesus, we so look forward to the full unveiling of your kingdom. In the meantime, I pray and invite you Holy Spirit to give us the faith to believe this truth. God is our Father if we believe in His son. And furthermore, we are the sons of God, because of Jesus Christ, our Savior and your son. Help us Holy Spirit to just absolutely have this hardwire and re-hardwire our understanding of who God is. And who we are in Jesus good name, amen.