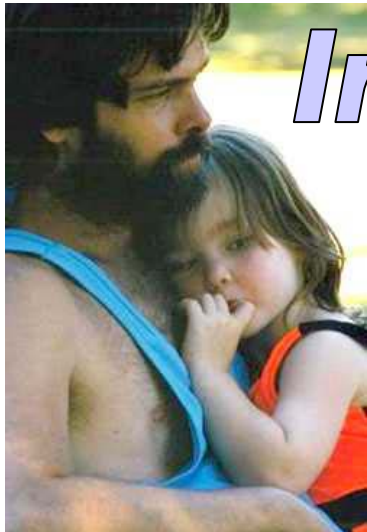




E-Worship 4:23

An online resource for officers and worship leaders in the 21st century

"A time is coming...when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." - John 4:23



In Praise of Fathers

The photo at left may not be what is expected in light of the title of the article. But this picture has special meaning for me. The father in the picture is my cousin, and his daughter Julia is on his lap. Julia had been playing with her siblings and cousins, and as is typical of youngsters, had taken a tumble and burst into tears. She had a 'boo boo', but she knew instantly where to go to make it all better. So she ran straight into her father's arms, and immediately he took her up, kissed away the hurt and wiped the tears from her eyes. The camera caught the moment right after she had stopped crying. She was safe in her father's arms, protected, and things were all right again.

The Bible makes use of two types of intimate relationships in order to describe our relationship with God: That of a father, and that of a husband. What is interesting in that there are similarities in both roles, in that the character of a godly husband and the character of a godly father are one and the same.

In scripture there are two Hebrew words that can translate into our one English word of 'husband'. Yet they both have a different back definition and subcontext.

The first word used is first found in Genesis 2:23 where Adam says of Eve "*She shall be called 'woman' (iyshah) because she was taken out of the 'man' (iysh).*" The Hebrew word 'iysh' not only means 'husband' but literally means 'champion; a great good mighty man, a man of high degree', and it depicts well the sinless Adam, the man God created and called 'good': Literally, the perfect man and the perfect husband.

But then comes Genesis 3, and we find the sad verse in Gen. 3:16 where God says to Eve, "Your desire will be for your husband ('iysh') and he will rule over you." The Hebrew word for 'desire' here literally means to 'reach for', or 'stretch out

after' and depicts a longing for the perfect husband she knew, the 'iysh' that God originally created. But sin in Adam had already begun to do its work, and a new word is introduced for 'husband' in scripture: 'Baal'.

Does it surprise you that the word we normally associate with an old testament idol is also the common Hebrew word for husband? 'Baal' literally means 'master, owner, lord' and in its verb form means 'to have dominion over'.

'Iysh' and 'Baal' represent two different character qualities that can be applied to anyone in a position of power and strength. 'Iysh', the champion, uses his strength and position to protect his loved ones and charges, but 'Baal' turns on them in abuse. The former uplifts and nurtures, the latter usurps and desecrates. 'Baal', if you will, represents a love of power, 'Iysh', the power of love.

Continued on next page...

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In Praise of Fathers *Continued...*

In scripture God is called by both names in different places, but enlightenment comes especially when we look at Hosea 2:13-23, where God is speaking to his unfaithful bride Israel who has broken his heart with adultery. "Therefore I will allure her", God says, "I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the valley of Trouble a door of Hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. In that day... you will call me 'Iysh'; you will no longer call me 'Baal'...I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion."

We see now that before we receive Christ into our lives, we are under God's wrath and judgement, and He is 'Baal' to us, a master to be feared, one who punishes and destroys. But in Christ we discover the 'Iysh' God really is, and we find we have access to all His strength and protection. He is a covering for us, the one who is 'the lifter of our heads' (Psalm 3:3). Deuteronomy 33 sums it up perfectly in verses 12 and 26-27, when it says "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields Him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders... There is no one like God, who rides on the heavens to help you, and on the clouds in His majesty. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." In 'Iysh' we discover the meaning of the verse that says 'Perfect love casts out fear' (1 John 4:18). The Lion who was dangerous, is no longer dangerous to us, but rather to our enemies. He is our 'refuge and strength, an ever present help in times of trouble' (Psalm 46:1). We call Him 'Abba', 'daddy', for we 'have not received a spirit that makes us a slave again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of sonship' (Romans 8:15). Under 'Baal' we are slaves, under 'Iysh' we are sons.

God give us heroes!

A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts,
true faith and ready hands;
Those whom the lust of office does not kill;
Those whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Those who possess opinions and a will;
Those who have honor – those who will not lie;
Those who can stand before a demagogue
and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall folks, sun-crowned, who live above the fog in public duty
and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
their large professions and their little deeds,
mingle in selfish strife, lo!
Freedom weeps, wrong rules the land
and waiting Justice sleeps.

- Josiah Holland

Under a flag,
They sword a bond,
Caught under fire they ran;
Are you the one
Standing your ground?
Are you a principled man?

Followers fall,
Blinded by kings,
Lost in the lie of the land;
Are you the one
Sworn to be true?
Are you a principled man?

Now... Begin,
Come alongside it;
Seize the wind,
Come along, ride it;
One day it will be you believing
There is a principled man.

Who goes there?
Do you belong, lad?
You know there
Is a new dawn, and
One day you'll say
'Stick with me, baby,
I am a principled man.'

Many's the man
Grounded by greed,
Leaning on power and land;
Show me the one
Lost in the stars,
Show me a principled man.

Bleeding and hushed,
Hung between thieves,
There the foundation began;
Are you the one
Taking your cross?
Are you a principled man?

'A Principled Man', by Steve Taylor,
From the album 'I Predict 1990',
© 1987.

The Scary Consequences of Fatherless Families

For statistics on how the absence of
a father impacts the lives of our
children, go to

[www.fathersforlife.org/divorce/
chldrndiv.htm](http://www.fathersforlife.org/divorce/chldrndiv.htm)



Inspirational Videos for Father's Day

1. A Legacy (worshipfilms)
2. Four Characteristics of a Godly Dad (revmike2)
3. The Impact of a Father (TransformStudios)
4. I Want to Be Just Like You (Phillips, Craig & Dean)

All videos can be located via www.youtube.com



Songs for Father's Day

1. Rise Up O Men of God (Merrill, Williams)
2. Godly Men (Brown, Hampton)
3. Faithful Father (Doerksen)
4. Faithful Men (Paris)
5. Father (Daniels)
6. Father Me (Kendrick)

Father's Day Congregational Reading

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.

The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.

A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth.

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.

Don't fail to correct your children. You won't kill them by being firm, and it may even save their lives.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

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

For we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

"Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

For we are the temple of the living God.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Amen!



Isaiah

A soliloquy based on Isaiah 6: 1 – 8

(Isaiah enters dressed in biblical costume)

Good morning. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Isaiah.

It all started for me the year that old King Uzziah died – and I saw God! Yes, God Almighty. He was huge, towering high up and sitting on a throne. His cloak was so enormous that it filled the whole Temple.

And there were angels – amazing, dazzling creatures with six wings, singing a song so beautiful it seemed to grab my heart and squeeze it. The whole place was shaking and filling with smoke.

I felt indescribably small and dirty. I remembered all the wrong things I had done, and especially the bad things I had said. My lips felt filthy. And I knew the lips of all the other people in the nation were just as bad. I was so ashamed. How in the world did I dare to look at God?

But you know what? God didn't throw me out – or zap me with a big bolt of lightning. He sent one of the angels over with a coal from the altar. When the coal touched my lips they felt clean again. In fact, all of me felt clean inside and out.

Then I heard the voice of God, himself, asking who would go and represent him.

And I spoke up. I couldn't help myself:

"I'll go. Send me."

(Isaiah exits)

- written by Gwenyth J Redhead Jan. 2010
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