



SESSION FIVE Knowing the Child – Part 1

Thus far in our parenting seminar, I have attempted to set before you what another Author has called a cohesive, basic framework into which you may place *every* facet of living with your children. Now *that* is a big order. I have attempted to do that. And I believe, from the Scriptures, we have that. That is God's blueprint for parenting—a basic framework of principles which *should* include every issue, every theory, every *aspect*. I *believe* this will do it, with the goal in mind that we want to bring our children to the place where they're living under God—*normal* people—then this is the only one that is adequate. It meets *every* question. *It's God!*

But God works in *two* ways. He works first *in* the parents to make *them* personally what they ought to be as parents—as husbands, wives and parents. That has a natural effect on the child in his early growing and developing. *Then*, later *God* comes *supernaturally* and works in that child! For me, I'm satisfied. I can bring every question, every theory—all the issues of living with children and put it in that framework.

Now, as we move on in these sessions, what I'd like to do for some time—*several* sessions—is to deal with the details of *what God wants to work in parents*. What should a parent be like, as far as this specification? What does God want to work in *you* who are young fathers or young mothers? What does God want to work *in you*? Now keep it where it belongs; it's what *God* wants! And when God asks me to be something, then He has assumed the responsibility of working it in me *by* His grace. So don't put it on yourself. You cannot evade it, but you come to God and say, "Lord, that's what I want and now do it in me." What does He want?

Turn with me to John chapter 14 and I will set before you the basic blueprint of what God wants in parents. I can give it to you in one sentence. I will draw you a picture because of my love for good art. John 14, verse 2, the Lord Jesus is speaking on this occasion just before He left His disciples in this *familiar* passage. This is what He says: "*In My Father's house. . .*" Stop there just a moment. "*In My Father's. . .*" Now, this is Jesus Christ speaking, "*In My Father's house. . .*" Have all of you understood that Jesus Christ had *two* fathers? Are you aware of that? Has that ever hit you? Has the thesis there ever gripped you? This is the first thing, when I began to deal with children—that is, academically and in teaching child psychology—this is the first thing I began to see, *then* it opened up into broader vistas of everything. But when I began to see this, it revolutionized my thinking. I don't know that a greater idea has ever come to my feeble mind. It's not original with me; it's here.

Now here's what He says: "*In My Father's house. . .*" Do you realize—? I don't think that's what He's *talking* about, but He *could* have said it about this house in *Nazareth*. Who was His father? Joseph. He said, "*In My Father's house.*" *That's* not what He's talking about; He's talking about this: "*In My Father's house.*" Do you see it? Have you *ever* seen it? Have you been gripped as a parent with this? Even if you're not a parent and you're not even planning to be a parent, have you ever seen it in *Scripture*? It's broader than the implications *we* will touch. This is what He says. He says, "I have a Father *there*. He's My father! I have a Father *here*." Do you know what that means? It's not just *accidental!*

I personally believe God has made this to be a *great* analogy! Now do you get the point? Do you know what God wants to work in us as *fathers*? I said I would read it to you in one sentence. I will! And then we will be dismissed and we will go home. All you need to understand that God wants to work in you is to make *me* as a father—say it—like *Him* as a Father—that's all. Oh, you say, "It can't be!" Oh, yes! *It's all He wants*. Do you know what your Father does? As far as Scripture [explains it], do you know how He has dealt with *you*? If I were to ask you, "How many of you were children of God?" *He* is your *Father*. And we learn in the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father." That's the way we *talk*. Is He your Father? How has He dealt with *you* as a Father? Well then He says, "That's the way I want *you* to deal with *your* children, as I have dealt with *you*." I've said it. I did say it in one sentence. That's all.

Well, you say, "That's too high!" No it's not. You can't *do* it! And as far as I understand it, God is working. He will *increasingly* make me like that, but I'll *never* arrive. Well, you say, "What's the point in [even trying]?" Well, that's

what you do in your *personal* life, as a Christian you want to be like—. Finish it. You want to be, as you grow in your Christian experience and your behavior, you want to be like—say it—*like Christ*. Are you there yet? You never *will* be—as I understand it—this side of *heaven*. But I say, “That’s what I want.” And every day I move—! Alright, this is no more *higher* than *that*—for your *personal* life is to take as parents, that I want to be, as a parent—like my heavenly Father has been to *me*!

Now, I am convinced because of the constant reference—and I’ll pick out some of these as we go along—in the *details* of this, I’m convinced this is not an accidental thing that Hatch happened to discover, or a good little illustration that he cooked *up*! I believe God made things to *function* this way so that when a child comes up here and he’s got a *father* that is somewhat like that, then when he moves to his *heavenly* Father, it won’t be a culture shock. I’m serious!

I heard my pastor say years ago; he said a young fellow came to him and he was in trouble and he wanted some counseling. He was *trying* to lead him and he asked him—. I don’t know what the situation was, but he said, “Well, let’s pray,” and this young man said, “I can’t pray.” “Why?” “Well, the only prayer I know is the Lord’s Prayer and every time I think of saying, ‘Our Father’ all I can think of is that drunken bum that was my father.” The positive side—the *wonder* of having a father and then saying, “My father *there* is like my Father *here*.” That’s what it is to me.

Now let me give you one more verse to show you that God intended this, not just a happy little illustration to use in a parenting seminar. I believe God *made* it this way! Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 3. Let me just read it and I’ll give you my interpretation again. I charge you; you must search the Scriptures and see if these things be *so*. Make your *own* interpretation and see if I’m right. And all of you are aware, you know who’s right! That was supposed to have been [funny], but you were busy turning. Chapter 3, verse 14. Now watch Paul as he begins to pray: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father.” Now, he’s talking about God as *Father*. Now watch what he says: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the *Father* from whom *every*. . .” What’s the next word in your translation? “From whom every. . .” Now, some [versions] say, “every family,” every, but what the word *really* means is “*every fatherhood is named*.” Now, it doesn’t mean that you call *your* earthly father “Father.” I’m not talking about *name* in that sense, “Daddy.” But it’s a pattern! That I bow my knees unto the Father from whom every fatherhood is patterned! I’m convinced from that, He’s speaking to this issue which is clear in all Scripture—that constantly it refers to. That God has ordered *this* to be a little model of *this*. Fathers *here* are to increasingly parent their children—and so with *mothers*—as our heavenly Father has done with us. Now that’s what God expects and that’s what God will work. And in His mercy I have seen Him *begin* to do it.

I referred to what one of my sons said the other day. And I just never have had anything that just *pushed* me to praise my God like that. When I began to be a father, [I had] so many hang-ups. I didn’t know any of this. All I could do was cry, “God, have mercy on me.” You know what He did? He began to make me like Himself, as a father. I wish I could do it over again. We never have that opportunity. But he *began* it. *That’s* the blueprint. What God wants to work in *you*? All He wants is to make you, as parents, increasingly like Him.

Now we’ll have to go in closer and see what’s involved in that. How does your Father deal with *His* children? All right, that’s the way I will deal with this. Now we’re going to go through this, if I seem to be a little dogmatic and sometimes even get excited, that’s contrary to my personality. Dr. McQuilkin used to tell me when I first began teaching about a hundred years ago, he said, “Buck, you don’t get excited about *anything*!” Well, in my old age I had *begun* to get excited about a *few* things, and when I *see* this I *really* get excited. And I hear all of the child psychologists; they talk about what I ought to do and I say, “Well, my Father’s never done that. He doesn’t do that and He doesn’t expect me to do that.” I’ve never heard any scream from any child psychiatrist, child psychologist, or even from a child or a adolescent, and I say, “Well that’s not what God wanted.” So I get excited and I get rather dogmatic and I’m just going to push it down your throat if I can. This is what *God* wants.

Now wait a minute, let’s get close to it now. How does God deal with *His*? Turn with me to Matthew chapter 6. Now I’m going to show you some things that I have sensed in Scripture *and* from the sciences that deal with parenting and children. Putting them together, these are some things I have seen my heavenly Father do.

Matthew chapter 6, a very familiar verse, Jesus is talking about my Father—His Father and mine. Verse 32. We’ll come back to what He had in mind in the context, but right now I just want to pick up a phrase and use it. “For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, but your heavenly Father. . .” Now do you see where you are? Look at your thesis. Your heavenly Father. Now read the verb and then stop. “Your heavenly Father. . .” what? “. . . knows. . .” and then stop. This is where God—my *heavenly* Father—begins. He knows that child. I mean, *He* knows; do *you*? My heavenly Father, He *knows* you. Do you know him—your *child*?

Now don't let me scare you. You see, my heavenly Father *made* him. He *created* him. He *knows* him *altogether*. And in that Psalm—and I'll refer to it in our next session in detail—in that Psalm the Psalmist cries out, "Such knowledge—my Father God knows my very thoughts, words before they come, He knows it *all*—such knowledge is high; I cannot attain unto it." Right! You'll never know what your heavenly Father knows. But listen, your heavenly Father has *revealed* some things He wants you to *know* about your child. And I think He has made available to these who have studied the sciences through observation some things He wants you to know. My heavenly Father *knows* that child.

I want to share some of the things that He has revealed and expects you to *know* about your child, because there's where the parenting begins. Do you know what he is? If you don't know what he is, you're not going to handle him right. Your Father, your heavenly Father, I just can't get over the wonder of the way my heavenly Father has dealt with me. He knows me; He knows all of my hang-ups. I wish I had time to share with you how my heavenly Father came and spoke to me about coming up here. I hope I won't shock you, but because of my hang-ups, I don't want to do any of this. I didn't want to come here. It's not because of you. My heavenly Father, He knew me. He knows me. He doesn't beat me all to pieces. He just says, "I know, *now* let's go." He knows me. He doesn't deal with me like He does with Robertson McQuilkin. He knows me. Do you know him or her?

Now I want to share with you what He has revealed in Scripture about this child. Here's the first thing, now watch it. Do you know what your heavenly Father thinks of you? Do you know how important He thinks you are? Some of you *desperately* need that. It's not the point of our discussion now, but some here are floundering because you don't know how important you are to God! I'm not talking about your service; I'm talking about *you*.

Now let's bring it down here. How important do you think that child is? What value would you place on him? God's revealed that. Do you know the 127th Psalm that talks about "Children are, children are. . ." You know it, some of you. I'll read it to you, a new version. "Lo, children are a burden from the Lord and the fruit of the womb are His way of testing us. As the source of endless work and continual aggravation, so are children's of one's youth. Unhappy is the man who hears his neighbor ask, 'Do all these kids belong to you?'" We laugh, but that's the way so many think of these children. Our society is reeking with it. "Children are limitations." "They keep me from my own fulfillment." "They keep me from a new car, or a new TV." "They keep me from going where I want to go. They're drags, they're burdens!"

Do you know what my Father thinks of me? Turn with me to Mark chapter 10 and I'll show you this is revealed. You don't need to study child psychology to know this. You don't have to be omniscient; you just read the *Bible*. This is what God, my *Father*, thinks of children. Mark chapter 10, verse 13, "And they were bringing unto Him (unto Jesus) little children. . ." How would *you* like to be taking care of the 70 children over there this hour? "Man, what a!" Oh, except *yours*! "And they were bringing unto Him little children that He should *touch* them." And the disciples, acting like typical Americans, rebuked them saying, "Don't bring any kids around Jesus. He's too busy. Wait until they grow up." See, I was raised in the day when the motto was, "Children were to be seen and not heard." The disciples rebuked them, "Don't bring any of those screaming kids around."

Listen to Jesus. "But when Jesus saw it, He was moved with indignation and said unto them, 'Let the little children come to Me; forbid them not.'" Do you know what value He puts on them? And I tell you, God has revealed this, and He expects us to start our parenting process at this *point*—the value you put on these little children. Well you say, "You don't know mine." I don't care who he is or how he acts—the *value* of that child. If you don't have this back in your mind, you're not going to operate right.

Let me turn you to the greatest passage on this: Matthew 18. Do you know what my Father thinks about children? And He has revealed this to us. I cannot be as omniscient as He, but I can understand what He says. Matthew 18, I'll just pick out two verses. I won't have time to read the context and all that's involved; you do that later. Pick it up in verse 5. He brings the children in His midst, a little child. And verse five, "And whosoever shall *receive* one such little child. . ." *Receive* him, give him value! "Oh, but you don't—!" "Everyone who shall receive a little child in My name receiveth Me. But whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck [and that] he should be cast into the depths of the sea." That's pretty heavy.

Drop down to verse 10. "See that ye despise. . ." There's that word we ran into before. "See that you don't put as *low priority*, ignore. See that you don't *ignore* one of these little ones, for I say unto you in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven." Now I don't know whether the Bible teaches that every one

of your children has a guardian angel; it could be. But this I know! You'd better be *careful* with them; they're *very* important! So important that Jesus describes that they have a *hotline* to the Father in heaven and you'd better be careful. *He* thinks they're important. And American society doesn't think they are of that value.

What can I use as a symbol of value? My Father *knows* that. It's not *all* He knows, turns back to Matthew 6 and I'll show you something *else* He knows. I'm *amazed* at the Scriptures. I told you I've dabbled a little in psychology and some of these other behavioral sciences. But then I come back to the Bible and it's got it all there before! You see, because God *knows* all of this. But look at Matthew chapter 6, verse 32, that verse we started with. "For your heavenly Father knoweth. . ." Now, in that context here's what He's talking about. He's not talking about the value—what symbol can I use for value? I hate to use that symbol for money. That's *so* rotten! But now here's what my *Father* knows. He says, "My Father knows that you have *need* of these things." Modern psychology, after fumbling around for generations, finally came to what the Bible taught all along—that your children have *needs* that are indispensable to their lives.

Now when you say your child *needs* a bath, does he need a bath? I mean, he just came out of the mud hole. No child can resist a puddle, you see. To walk by a puddle and not get in it is contrary to *all* that's in a child. And so he comes in out of the mud puddle and you say he needs a bath. Does he need a bath, yes or no? Not in the sense of this word. Will he live without a bath? He will probably be happier without it, you see. He doesn't need a bath. But let me ask you: Does he need food? Yes or no? If he doesn't have food he what? Say it. He dies. That's a need. Modern psychology has finally come to that and saying the great driving force of all human behavior are these needs. They have cups, tanks inside of them that *must* be filled, and not only [with] food. But he has needs in his *soul* that must be there—indispensable—and if he doesn't get them he dies! If he gets just enough to limp along, he's crippled. *I know!* Not on the food, but he has some needs to be loved, to be thought important, to be secure, etc. My Father *knows* that he has need of all of these things.

I'm deeply concerned in our society. There's not one parent here that's not aware that your children need food and it is criminal the way we have glutted our children with food. I'm not jumping on *you*. I'm just saying we've poked it down; we've used food for all kinds of things. In the grocery store so often I see a harried young mother with two or three children trying to shop and you know, take care of these [children]. And the only way she can keep them quiet is to give them another cookie. So what she's doing is using food to satisfy other needs. And then you get a problem among children which the pediatricians are troubled by: childhood obesity. And children out there are *starving!* Thousands of them! *Never* have enough to eat. They have a *need*. But that's not my problem. My problem is that he has other needs. I'm not talking about his need for a Savior, I'll talk about that down the road. But there's a need, and he's born with needs to be *loved*, to be *accepted*, to be thought important, to be thought that he is the only kid in the *world!* You say, "You'll spoil him." You *won't* spoil him. He's *got* to have it or he won't live.

My Father knows that you have needs, and I'm *amazed* that my heavenly Father is dealing with the needs of an old granddaddy. He knows I have needs, and how *wonderful* He's met them! Now you be like *Him*. Your child is *very* important; your child has needs that *must* be met. Your Father *knows* that. *You* need to know that.

Turn to Matthew 21. I'll show you something else my Father knows. The Lord Jesus told a story about a father and two of his children. I'll use it, not to make the point that Jesus was making, but just to show you something about what He *knew* about these children. Matthew 21, verse 27, Jesus is telling a parable—a story. Now I'm not going through what He's using the story to teach. If we were studying this passage I'd go into that, but I just want to use this as an illustration. And he said, verse 27, "And they answered Jesus and said, "We know not." He asked a question and they said, "We don't know." "And He said unto them 'Neither [do] I tell you by what authority I do these things.'" And then He tells the story. "But what think you? Now listen carefully: "A man had two sons, two children; and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' And he answered and said, 'I will not.'" I don't care what you say; I'm not going to work." And he ran away. "I will not!" Then he got out in the yard and he repented. Do you know what that is? He repented. My Father knows that. He came back and said, "Okay Dad, I'll go."

Now watch the next one. "And he came to the second and said, "Son, go work today," and he said "Okay Dad. " He said, "Okay Pop, I'm going," and he went swimming. Which of them *did* the will of his father?

Now, what I want to pull out of that is something very, very central for you to understand about a child. How many of you realize that my Father *knows* that these children are not robots? Do you know what that means? God has made them in His image. And the moment God made a human being in His image He took a great risk. Because you are not in the image of God if you are a robot. God is not a robot. God is a what? A Person

who has what you know as the will of God. And God decides this and He chooses *this* and He chooses *this*, and He has purposed this, and He has made us in His image. *Now watch careful.* And your child has that God-given responsibility and *capability* of making choices. Call it what you will, but he's *got* to make his own choices! Now don't draw any implications yet, but he's *got* to make his own choices. Now what symbol will you make for *that*? All I can say is that one son said, "I will not!" and he chose to go away, and then he did what? He reversed his [decision]. That's what repentance is. He made *another* choice, he chose to come *back*. He has a choice! And God took a great risk when He gave that to us. And some can choose to go away. Your child is not a robot; he is in the image of God and he can make his own choices. My Father knows your child. He knows he is of a great value. He knows he has needs, and He knows He has committed to him the responsibility of making his own choice. Those are some of the things *God* has revealed. Now in our next session we will pick up some other things God knows.