

## **The Best Father: A Marriage Counselor's Perspective**

In every healthy family system, a father holds an important role—not only as provider, but as emotional anchor, spiritual teacher, and relational model. When we examine the attributes of God as our Heavenly Father, we find a blueprint for how earthly fathers can mirror these divine characteristics within the marriage and the family. Let's explore what makes a father “the best” through a therapeutic lens.

### **1. A Good Father *Prepares***

*Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)*

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

#### **Therapeutic Insight:**

Preparation is a form of emotional and relational investment. A good father and husband envisions stability and legacy. He communicates with his spouse/family to co-create a nurturing environment. Like a wise counselor, he anticipates needs, prevents trauma, and lays emotional groundwork for trust and resilience. Planning as a parent/leader is not just financial—it includes spiritual direction, conflict resolution skills, and emotional safety for the family.

### **2. A Good Father *Protects***

*Matthew 6:25-26*

“Do not be anxious... Look at the birds of the air... Are you not of more value than they?”

#### **Therapeutic Insight:**

Protection includes guarding the mental and emotional well-being of the home. Fathers are called to create a non-anxious presence in the family. A calm, emotionally regulated father helps foster secure attachment in both spouse and children. Emotional protection—listening without judgment, intervening in times of distress, and modeling peace—mirrors the way God shields us from fear.

### **3. A Good Father *Provides***

*Matthew 7:9-11*

“If you then... know how to give good gifts... how much more will your Father in heaven give good things...”

#### **Therapeutic Insight:**

Provision goes beyond material support. A healthy father provides *access*—access to his time, attention, affection, and wisdom. Many marital wounds stem from emotional neglect, not financial lack. A good father listens and responds to the emotional needs of both his children and his spouse. He cultivates an environment of love and joy through sacrificial presence, just as God provides for us through His grace.

#### 4. A Good Father *Corrects*

*Proverbs 3:12*

“The Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”

##### **Therapeutic Insight:**

Correction in a healthy marriage and family system must be redemptive, not punitive. A good father disciplines with clarity, consistency, and compassion. He works in tandem with his spouse to set boundaries that honor the child’s development and protect the marriage covenant. Correction is not about controlling behavior—it’s about forming character and fostering accountability in love.

#### 5. A Good Father *Teaches*

<sup>3</sup>John 1:4

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

##### **Therapeutic Insight:**

Fathers are primary educators in the emotional and spiritual formation of their families. Through shared stories, modeling integrity, and facilitating healthy communication, fathers teach more through example than instruction. Teaching also means being teachable—learning from one’s mistakes, from one’s spouse, and from the Word of God.

#### 6. A Good Father *Loves*

*John 3:16*

“For God so loved the world, that he gave...”

##### **Therapeutic Insight:**

Love in family life is demonstrated through sacrificial presence, not just affectionate words. Love gives, listens, forgives, and repairs. A father’s love sets the tone for how children view God, others, and themselves. In marriage, this love must remain covenantal—committed through hardship, forgiving through failure, and enduring through seasons of change.

##### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What can we learn from the way God displays His love for us?
2. In what ways have your personal relationships been shaped by your understanding of God’s love?
3. How has making mistakes—impacted your relationship with God, your spouse, or your children?
4. How can we show our love back to God and to others as believers?
5. What spiritual qualities would you like to see more in yourself?

Below is a detailed and reflective response to each question—answered from both a **biblical perspective** and through the voice of a **50-year-old African American father** who has been **married for 16 years** and is **raising a 15-year-old son**. This blended approach integrates Scripture, life experience, and spiritual maturity.

## 1. What can we learn from the way God displays His love for us?

### **Biblical Perspective:**

God's love is *sacrificial* (John 3:16), *unchanging* (Malachi 3:6), *patient* (2 Peter 3:9), and *covenantal* (Deuteronomy 7:9). He loves with grace and truth (John 1:14), disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:6), and remains faithful even when we fall short (2 Timothy 2:13).

### **Father's Perspective:**

What I've learned is this: God doesn't stop loving us when we disappoint Him. That truth has transformed how I approach my own family. As a father, I've had to remind myself that loving my son means not just showing up for the highlight reels—games, report cards, or birthdays—but also during his defiance, his doubts, or when he doesn't live up to what I expected. God's love is consistent. It shows up every day. That's the standard I try to live by.

## 2. In what ways have your personal relationships been shaped by your understanding of God's love?

### **Biblical Perspective:**

1 John 4:19 says, "*We love because He first loved us.*" Knowing God's love changes how we love others—with forgiveness (Colossians 3:13), humility (Philippians 2:3-4), and grace.

### **Father's Perspective:**

God's love helped me reframe how I engage my wife and son. Early in marriage, I thought leading my family meant controlling the direction. But the more I understood Christ's love—how He leads by serving—I began listening more, apologizing more, and learning to love with actions, not assumptions. With my son, I've learned to listen without always fixing, to correct without condemning, and to be emotionally available. God's love has made me softer in the right places and stronger in the right ways.

## 3. How has making mistakes impacted your relationship with God, your spouse, or your children?

### **Biblical Perspective:**

Proverbs 24:16 says, "*Though a righteous man falls seven times, he will rise again.*" God's grace is redemptive. David's failure in Psalm 51 led him to deeper repentance and transformation. Peter denied Jesus but was later restored and empowered.

### **Father's Perspective:**

Mistakes have humbled me. I've raised my voice when I should've asked a question. I've withdrawn when I should've pursued. In marriage, I've let pride speak louder than love at times. But those moments have also been invitations—for repentance, restoration, and renewal. My relationship with God deepened not because I got everything right but because He kept drawing me back. When I've confessed my wrongs to my wife or son, it didn't weaken my authority—it strengthened our connection. Grace works in the everyday.

## 4. How can we show our love back to God and to others as believers?

**Biblical Perspective:**

Jesus said, “*If you love me, keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). We love God through obedience, worship, stewardship, and how we love people (Matthew 22:37–39; 1 John 4:20). Love is seen in service, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice.

**Father’s Perspective:**

For me, showing love to God is about *faithful presence*. It’s in how I treat my wife—with honor and kindness—even when we disagree. It’s being patient with my son even when I’m tired. It’s setting time to pray, serve at church, or mentor a young man in the community. Loving God means my *life reflects His values*, not just my lips. It means giving what’s most costly—my time, my ego, and my willingness to change.

**5. What spiritual qualities would you like to see more in yourself?****Biblical Perspective:**

Galatians 5:22–23 describes the fruit of the Spirit—*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*. Philippians 1:6 reminds us that God is still completing the work He began in us.

**Father’s Perspective:**

If I’m honest, I want more *patience*—especially in the tension between guiding my son and giving him room to grow. I want *peace*—not the absence of noise but the calm confidence that comes from trusting God even when life is uncertain. I want more *gentleness*—not as weakness, but as controlled strength in moments of conflict.