

Do I Look Like My Dad?

Deanna Hurley | The Resting Place Apostolic Family | Matthew 5:9, 43-48

Hi. I'm excited to be here with you guys. I'm always excited to be at the Resting Place. I fixed my hair really pretty and I fixed my makeup really good, and then the Lord said, "We're not a church of perfect people. We're a church of devoted worshippers." So I lost the jacket and I lost the hair, and I thought, I'm going to devotedly worship the Lord with my brothers and sisters, because that's what we are.

We Are a Church of Devoted Worshippers

This weekend we were at the Worthy Conference, a regional conference for women to come together, and there were so many beautiful moments there. But one of the things that really hit me in that room is how grateful I am that the Resting Place is a place that empowers women. We believe that women are half of the image of God, that God is represented by both male and female. So when we have a core value that says empower everyone, it doesn't mean empower the men to do these things and empower the women to only do these things. It means empower everyone into what God has called them into. I was so grateful for the Resting Place, for allowing me as a woman to walk into the identity and the giftings that the Lord has placed on me, and never once saying, "You can do all those things, but that because you're a female."

I want to credit Caleb. He served his sisters of the region this whole weekend at the Worthy Conference. He was there running tech and AV. He taught a little bit. So thank you, Caleb, and thank you, the Resting Place.

This is an interesting fact for me, because I pulled the numbers. Of the 54 people at the Resting Place who are called leader, whether it be a small group shepherd or a serve team leader or staff all the way through, of the 54 people, 32 are women. That's 59 percent. 59 percent of our women are walking in the leadership that God put in them. I think that is exhibit A that we are empowering everyone.

I want to start with prayer. We are a people of persistent prayer. You're going to hear the TRP way all the way through here. Would you join me?

Lord, thank you that we get to come together and encounter you together. Thank you that we get the opportunity to worship you in spirit and in truth. Lord, right now I say, use me. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing and acceptable to you. Lord, I pray that you would soften hearts and open ears, so that each person in this room would hear the part of this message that you have ordained and designed exactly for them, that each person would hear the truth of heaven straight to the core of their being. I silence the enemy right now. Any lie, any shame, anything that is from the devil, I silence right now, so that only the truth of heaven can be spoken. We thank you, Lord, for this encounter with you. In Jesus' powerful name, I pray. Amen.

Do I Look Like My Dad?

We're in the Sermon on the Mount. We have today and one more Sunday left, and then we'll never talk about the Sermon on the Mount ever again. I'm just kidding. There's still so much in the Sermon on the Mount. We could spend a whole other year there.

I want to bring two passages from Matthew 5, and we're going to go down this trail of what these words mean. As Caleb says, what meaneth this? Matthew 5:9: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. And a few verses later, in verses 43 through 48:

You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Here's where we're going today: God adopts us into his family, transforms us by his Spirit, and grows us into sons and daughters who reflect the Father's nature. So the title is, "Do I look like my dad?" My dad is right there.

I'm going to start with some pictures of my mom and my daughter. That's me and my mom. She's back there, too. That's me, a cute little cowgirl. And that's my daughter Caroline a few years ago. My goodness.

My whole life I was called Little Debbie Cakes. I was told, "Debbie must be your mom. You look just like your mom." That was the first thing out of people's mouths. I dyed my hair red. I dyed it black. I tried to deny it, but they still found me. Now I'm proud of it. I say, yes, I am. And now Caroline gets the same thing. Caroline gets that she looks just like her mom.

So what is it? There's a likeness. There's a lineage. Jesus is saying in these verses that there are certain characteristics that someone can look at you and say, "That's a child of God." Not because you wear a Christian shirt. Not because you have a fish sticker on your car. Not because you have a Bible verse in your Instagram profile. But because you carry the nature of Jesus, the nature of God.

The Jewish world would have understood this far more deeply than Americans do. We celebrate uniqueness. We have the American dream. We have "be whatever you want to be." Fleetwood Mac saying you can go your own way. That's how we get: Pam Hyers, a nurse, and Tim Hyers, a military man, produce Caleb, a hippie musician who sang at us today. That's American individuality, and we love it.

But in Jewish culture, family was everything. You were Isaiah Ben Israel. You were Isaiah, son of Israel. You were known by whose father you had, because the identity of your family was everything. So imagine Jesus saying these words to a first century Jew. They wouldn't have heard, "Here's a list of rules you have to follow." They would have heard, "This is how this family is. This is what it means to be in this family."

What Kind of Love Actually Represents Our Father?

My first question for you today is, what kind of love actually represents our Father? There are three kinds.

There's selective love: I like who I like. It's easy. I love you because I like you. That's easy.

Then there's reciprocal love. This is what Jesus references: if you love those who love you, if you only greet your brothers, I treat you the way you treat me. And if you treat me mean, I'm not going to love you, because you get what you get. There's a meme online that says, "Don't cross an ocean for people who wouldn't jump a puddle for you." That sounds like really good boundaries, but it's actually not kingdom love.

Kingdom love says, "I love you because my Father loves you. I love you not because you've earned it or because you deserve it. I love you because God loves you, and I love the Jesus in you." The first two reflect humanity. The third reflects heaven. The first two also reflect religion.

So when Jesus says in verse 43, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. You have heard it said," that's not from Scripture. There was a sect called the Essenes. They retreated out of the city. They performed purification rituals. That was how they made themselves holy. The Essenes had a pledge: love the sons of light and hate the sons of darkness. That is how God is, and that is how we will be. That's what everyone knew the Essenes would say.

Jesus completely dismantles that. He says, love your neighbor. Love your enemy. Bless those who persecute you. Pray for those people, because that's what your Father does. He makes the sun rise on the good and the evil. He doesn't say, you're good Jordan, so you get rain on your crops, a little cloud that just follows you like Olaf, but Brody, no rain for you. God doesn't do that. He sends the rain on the just and the unjust. Jesus is perfectly revealing the Father to us. John 10:30 says, "I and the Father are one." So if you want to know what the Father looks like, look at what Jesus looks like.

Jesus Loved While Knowing Human Nature

My first point here is that Jesus loved while knowing human nature. Sometimes we say, if you knew how mean they were to me, if you knew the full details of how awful that person was, you would understand why I can't forgive them, you would understand why Jesus is fine that I'm not forgiving them. Has anybody ever said or heard that? Nobody in this room has ever said that, but I'm sure you've heard it.

John 2:24 is talking about people believing in his signs and wonders. It says:

But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

He wasn't naive when he said, "Bless those, pray for those." He knew what was in man, and yet he still said it. As Alan said a few weeks ago, if I can love no matter how you treat me, that's the love of God. That's Jesus.

I'm going to say a statement, and if you agree with me, raise your hand. Jesus did not come to change the Father's heart toward us. He came to reveal the Father's heart to us. We're doing pretty good today.

If that's true, let's listen to how the Father describes himself. In Exodus 34:6 to 7, the Lord is talking to Moses, and he says:

The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

The gods of that time would not have introduced themselves that way. They would have been like the Wizard of Oz: "I am Oz, the great and powerful." But he doesn't do that. He doesn't introduce himself with his power and his might, though he has it. He introduces himself with, "I am merciful." Jesus says it again in Luke 6:36, "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful."

Our standard is not earthly culture. Our standard is not healthy boundaries the way the world would define them. Don't hear what I'm not saying. Boundaries are healthy, and we need them. But we need heavenly boundaries, not earthly boundaries. God is merciful.

The next word is chesed. I have to say it real Jewish. The word chesed is hard to translate into English. It's loving kindness, steadfast love. It's love in action. It's moving toward someone with a response of love.

Jesus remained faithful. He responded with love and action. He showed up. I can tell you, for me, he has shown up time and time and time again when I didn't deserve it. I wasn't trying to be the good daughter. Well, I was trying, a lot of times. But he responded to me out of his love, not as a

quid pro quo situation. He responded with his love and action. Has he ever had love and action for you when you didn't deserve it? All the rest of you, I guess you deserved the love he gave you. You were the perfect ones.

Psalm 86:5: "For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love." There it is again, chesed. Lamentations 3:22: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." So he doesn't introduce himself with power or might. He introduces himself with mercy and steadfast love.

God Is a Peacemaker

God is a peacemaker. This is another characteristic of the Lord that we are called into. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God, because peacemaking is what God does.

Romans 5 tells us that Jesus is God's peacemaking strategy. Romans 5:6 to 8:

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Paul is saying, while we were sinners, ungodly enemies, God moved toward us to establish peace. Not when we're lovable, not when we deserve it. We were still sinners. We didn't start cleaning ourselves up. And Jesus came to establish peace.

I want to talk about making peace versus keeping the peace. Those are not the same thing. Making peace does not mean ignoring the conflict. It does not mean everything's calm and cool on the surface while underneath it's a swirl. That's keeping the peace, ignoring everything for the sake of avoiding confrontation. Being a peacemaker means walking headfirst into chaos, speaking the truth in love, and establishing the shalom peace of heaven everywhere you go.

Being a peacemaker means taking what we call conflict protocol with our leadership, from Matthew 18, where you go one to one, then you bring someone to help you, and there are steps for how you deal with it. It means implementing Matthew 18 at all times and handling conflict so the enemy does not have a foothold to create offense, separation, and chaos. Making peace is an active process that requires you to walk in your identity as a child of God, to effectively bring chaos to order.

So the Father's nature is mercy, steadfast love and action, and peacemaking. Let's talk about forgiveness.

When We Forgive, We Look the Most Like Our Father

When we forgive, we look the most like our Father. When Jesus was on the cross, he was modeling this for us. Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What is Jesus doing? He's establishing peace for mankind, and he's blessing those who persecute him right there in the moment. He's looking in their eyes and saying, "Father, forgive them." He's being a peacemaker and acting out forgiveness at the same time.

Yesterday at the women's conference, there was a panel, and a woman talked about how she was sexually abused by her father for years, and how she forgave him. I sat there thinking, how is that possible? I couldn't understand how she could do that. She said the Lord showed her her father through the eyes of heaven. He showed her how lost and broken and bound her father was, and how that is what caused him to do what he did. God gave her supernatural grace to forgive this man. They didn't build a close relationship. He actually died shortly after. But her husband led her father to Jesus before he died, and that started with her emailing her father and saying, "I forgive you by the grace of God."

How Do We Become the Sons and Daughters of God?

Jesus isn't just showing us what the Father is like. He's making a way for us to become part of the Father's family. It's one thing to admire his character. It's another thing to actually share his name, to be called Ben God, son of God, to have that name attached to you. The cross didn't simply reveal his love. He invited us to be adopted into the family. And once we're brought in, his nature becomes our inheritance, which raises another question.

How do we become the sons and daughters of God? I'm so glad you asked that. Thank you, Brody. You guys like the Bible around here, because I have a lot of it. It's your favorite book. It's mine, too.

John 1:12: "To all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God."

Romans 8:14 to 17:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

Galatians 4:4: "God sent his Son so that we might receive adoption as sons."

Ephesians 1:4: "In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will."

But wait, there's more. 1 John 3:1: "See what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are. Beloved, we are God's children now." 2 Corinthians 6:17: "I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

Galatians 3:26: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith."

That's a lot of Scripture, and here's why. When I'm asking the question, who am I, what is my identity, I do not want to look to the world. I do not want to look to social media. I do not want to look to my emotions. These things do not define me. My past does not define me. I am defined by

the Lord Jesus, and the word of God will tell me who I am. All of those Scriptures tell me that I am a daughter of God. You are not simply forgiven. You are not a slave. You have been adopted. You are in the family. You have a new lineage, a new inheritance, a new identity. God doesn't ask us to imitate a family we don't belong to. He adopts us into the family, and then he teaches us how to live like his children.

Notice he does not say, love your enemies so God will accept you. Love your enemies so God will answer your wish list. Love your enemies because that's how you earn God's love, because that's how you become a son of God. Those are all lies straight from the pit of hell. He says, you are a son of God, and that is what's going to pour out of you. Love your enemies because that's what sons of God do.

Here's my favorite sentence: this is obedience that comes from identity, not acceptance that comes from your behavior. We don't love to become his children. We love because we are his children. It's the blood of Jesus that turns an orphan into the son of the Most High God. It's not what you do. It's not how you perform. It's the blood of Jesus that turns you into a son of the Most High God.

So the question isn't whether the Father loves you. My next question is whether you'll receive the love of the Father. Joel said a few weeks ago, the level you can receive the love of the Father is the level you are qualified to give love to others. So if you find yourself unable to love those around you with heavenly love, I would ask you, can you receive the Father's love into every part of your heart? When you receive and understand your identity, you allow yourself to be loved by the Father in heaven. He adopts you into his lineage, and that means you are made holy and pure by his blood and worthy of his love. He wants to pour it lavishly on you.

In the last year, in the Sabbath year, I've had inner healing session after private inner healing session. I sat in the bathtub for three hours, refilling the water, and the Lord was pulling stuff up. One of the things we got to in the last couple of weeks, and I'm going to be really vulnerable with you, is that I was still operating in a slave mentality. The devil had taken truth and twisted it to create a belief in me that God just made me to do things for the kingdom.

There's a song we sing, "I lay my life down for Christ alone." In the old, perverted mindset the devil had twisted up in me, I would have thought, "Yep, here I am, I'm a slave." When I hear the Bible verse where Jesus asks the disciples, "Are you leaving too?" and Peter says, "Where would we go? You have the words of eternal life," I responded to that like, "You're stuck with me, God. I'm a slave to you."

There's a concept in the Bible called *doulos*, a bondservant, someone who voluntarily gives up their freedom to stay with the master. We would talk about being permanently a *doulos* to Jesus. But the trauma, the hurt, the pain inside of me made me go, "Yeah, I'm a *doulos*. I'm a slave. I'm a slave to Jesus." That sounds noble. It sounds great. But actually, I'm a daughter of God. I'm not a slave of God's. He didn't buy my freedom to put me back in shackles. He bought my freedom so he could lavishly pour his love on me, and I could not receive it, because slaves don't get love. They get presents on Christmas, but they don't get love.

So how dare I look at the Lord Jesus, holy, holy, holy, and say, "Love me"? But when God's love and the Spirit get in there, and you root out those lies and agreements inside, then you can allow the love of Jesus to invade every part of you. Then you can receive his love. Then you can look in his eyes and say, "I am made clean by you. I am worthy to look in your face, because you have made me worthy."

If you can't pour out love on others, you can't receive love yourself. I would submit that maybe you can't receive the Father's love yet. We have a prayer team ready for you in a few minutes.

You Are a Technon, But You Are Called to Grow Into a Huios

Let's get back to my title: Do I look like my dad? You don't grow into your family of God. You grow up in your family of God, because becoming God's child happens the moment you surrender to Jesus. You are his child. But then you spend a lifetime maturing. You look at a new baby and say, "Oh, he looks just like his dad." But chubby cheeks does not look just like his full-grown dad. There's a growth process that turns that baby into its dad. It's a lifelong journey of maturing.

I'm going to get a little Bible geeky. We like the root words here. John 1:12: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." The word there is technon. A technon is a child, a family member. When you accept Christ, you immediately become a technon, a child of God. You immediately belong. You are loved and you are accepted.

But in Matthew 5, Jesus uses a different word: huios. Let's compare these two words. Technon emphasizes relationship and belonging. Huios emphasizes representation and maturity. A huios wasn't simply a child living in the household. This was a son growing into the responsibilities, mature enough to go represent the family at the market or wherever they were going. This was a mature son who carried the family name, the family values, and the family characteristics.

You are a technon because of unearned grace and salvation. But you are called to grow into a huios, displaying the character, wisdom, and responsibility of the Father. Say that again with me: you are a technon because of unearned grace and salvation, but you are called to grow into a huios displaying the character, wisdom, and responsibility of the Father.

If you're constantly battling rage, or constantly battling being easily offended, or constantly battling bitterness, it's possible you are stunted at a kindergarten level, even though you've been a Christian for 20 or 30 years. There's a maturity that has to consistently happen so we continue to grow. We talk to our kids a lot about how a lesson is entirely appropriate to be learning in sixth grade. It doesn't mean you're struggling. It doesn't mean you have a problem. But if you're in ninth grade and still struggling with the sixth grade issue, now it's an issue. When you're in sixth grade, it's normal to be learning these lessons. We continue to grow and learn new things as we mature.

Romans 8:14 says, "For all who are led by the Spirit are the sons," huios, mature sons of God. Paul could have used technon. He was being led by the Spirit as he wrote, but he used huios, because he's describing children who are walking in the character and leadership of their family as they are being led by the Holy Spirit. When you're being led by the Spirit, what's the Spirit doing? He's leading you. He's teaching you. He's convicting you with holy conviction, saying, "No, no, no, your Father doesn't do it that way," because you're being led by the Holy Spirit.

Then a few verses later, in verse 16, the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children, technon, of God. So the Spirit bears witness that you are adopted into the holy lineage. Both truths are present. You are God's child, and you belong and you are accepted and you are loved. And you are growing into maturity, learning to be led by the Spirit. You're learning to represent your Father. That's huio.

God never asks us to manufacture this ourselves. He doesn't say, "Hey, kindergartner, learn how to read, you'll figure it out." He doesn't say, "Try harder to act like God. Make those fruits of the Spirit grow." No. He says those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. It's Spirit-led transformation.

This matters because Matthew 5 can feel impossible. Love my enemy. Pray for people who hurt me. Bless people who curse me. I'm going to step on some toes: pray for a leader of a different political party than mine. Give, as Alan said, the Hawaiian good luck symbol instead of the middle finger, to the person who cuts you off in traffic. Keep scrolling past a social media post you don't agree with. Those are very hard to do in the natural. It's why Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit.

Oswald Chambers said God's love is revealed in that he laid down his life for his enemies, and Jesus tells us to love our fellow humans as God has loved us. How do we do this? By the power of the Holy Spirit. The supernatural is made natural by the grace of God.

This changes the way we hear Matthew 5: love your enemies so that you may be mature sons, huio, of your Father. He's not giving us a religious performance checklist. He's describing what you look like as the Holy Spirit is forming you into the likeness of your Father. The Spirit leads you. It reminds you who you are. It reveals the Father, and gradually you look less like the world and more like your dad.

Let me show you what this looks like in the natural realm. You know Paige and John Brown, our Brown family. They adopted Jaden a couple of years ago. Jaden is John Brown's son. There is no difference between Jaden and their biological children, Ally and Anna. Jaden is in their family, and because of that, he is learning the family values. The family motto is, "Don't be dumb." Every day on their way out the door, they say it. That's their family motto.

Performing to that motto does not make Jaden their son. There's nothing he can do to earn his position as John's son, and nothing he can do to lose it. John can't say, "You know what, I think we made a mistake, you're not really my son, I'm going to send you back." He doesn't do that. Jaden is

legally and forever their son. What they're doing is instilling in him what it means to be a Brown. It means you don't have to be hungry, scared, and fighting for food. There's more than enough. But it also means you contribute to the family and do chores, because that's what we do. We are part of the family together.

Sometimes old mindsets pop up, and John does not respond with shame. He responds with identity. He says, "Jaden, you are my son. This is not how Browns act. Jaden, you are my son, and that is in you. Don't be dumb." It's said with love. It's not said with shame. The behavior is never corrected by shame. It's always corrected by identity.

God does the same thing with us, when we're bitter, when we're offended, when we want revenge, when we're really mad that someone is not following the rules while we are, and we feel that injustice rising up. The Father reminds us, you are my child. You come from a holy lineage. We are a people of forgiveness. We are a people of mercy. We are a people of peace. And the Holy Spirit empowers you to walk in that maturity as a son of God.

Can People Say They've Seen the Father?

Matthew 5:48, the last part of this passage, says, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." If you want to dig deeper into that, there's a sermon from a couple of weeks ago from Caleb on it. But the word "perfect" there is not perfect, as in blameless and flawless. It's mature. The Lord is telling us to become huioi, sons of God, and mature into the likeness of our Father in heaven.

I'm going to tell a quick story. A couple of years ago, we had an all-leaders retreat, gathering all of our leaders for connection, bonding, and relationship. Our leaders were drinking the water and the soda, and we ran out of ice. So I ran to the dollar store to get ice. I'm at the register, there's a line building behind me, and there's no one anywhere to be found. I'm waiting and waiting. I said, "Excuse me, we're ready to check out." Kind of like, "Where are you?" She stomped up, and she was angry. I said, "Hey, how are you doing today?" She didn't even tell me my total, nothing. I got the card, got the bag, got in the car, and I was miffed. I thought, "What in the world did I do to deserve that from her?"

I got to the retreat, and while I was unloading the ice, I told Caleb, and his response was, "Oh, she must have really needed the Father's love today." I thought, "Dang it, I missed it." I forgot, in that moment, that the Lord was sending me as a huio, as a mature daughter, into his daughter who needed love.

Jesus says, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." That raises a question for us: can people say that about me? When someone sees how you treat difficult people, can they say they've seen the Father? When someone sees how you respond when you're offended, can they say they've seen the Father? When someone sees the speed at which you forgive, can they say they've seen the Father? When someone sees you pursue peace, creating active shalom everywhere you go, or not, can they say they've seen the Father? When they see how you respond to gossip and lies, can they say they've seen the Father? When you respond to people who are not like you, what does that look like? When they see the way you love yourself, can they say they've seen the Father?

The greatest evidence that we belong to him is not that we claim his name, or wear a shirt with his name on it. It's that they can say, "You look like your dad." I want the world to be able to say that about me.

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