

GAME ON

WK. 3 - GROUP DISCUSSION

“God’s Great Pastime” - Chad Bruegman

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Think back to when you were growing up. What were your favorite pastimes that you remember as a kid and why were they so memorable?

SHARE

Welcome to our series, “Game On.” Originating in sports, the phrase “game on” really just means, “I’m ready.” Ready for the challenge, ready for the unknown, ready to put fear aside and take on whatever is to come. As you know, we have talked a lot about facing those things that challenge us and leaning into God and trusting his power and faithfulness.

This week, we are going to look at God’s favorite pastime. Just like America has its favorite pastime sport of baseball, God’s favorite pastime is reminding his children that he is their true loving Father. This can be problematic, because many of us have so much baggage from our earthly fathers that imagining God as father is a difficult hurdle. This week we are going to see why it is so important to look beyond the shortcomings of our own earthly fathers and look to our heavenly one.

In this week’s message, we will take a look at a lesser-known story from scripture:

Let’s Read Matthew 6:26, Luke 12:32, Romans 8:15-16, Matthew 7:9-11

1 John 3:1

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

Which verse speaks to you most and why?

Which verse about our heavenly Father is most difficult for you to believe and trust? Why?

GROW

In this week's message, Chad talked about how we need to extend grace to our fathers, whether present or not, because many times we don't understand the things they faced, the battles they waged and the painful shortcomings that they might have dealt with. We are still to honor them, for without them we would never be here today. For others of us, we can speak passionately and lovingly of what an amazing example our fathers have been to us, but even the best of the best fathers pales in comparison to God's perfect sacrificial love for us.

When you think of your father, what three words would best describe him?

If you grew up without a father figure, how has that affected you?

Read Malachi 4:5-6

Of all the things God could have promised about the new covenant to come, why do you think he emphasized the changing hearts of fathers and children?

Psalms 146:9

The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Throughout scripture, we see God continually promise to sustain those who are fatherless or those who feel they are drifting without guidance. This is good news for all of us who wish we had that perfect father.

Matthew Henry's Commentary sheds light on this idea of God watching over us:

He has a tender concern for those that stand in special need of his care: The Lord preserves the strangers. It ought not to pass without remark that the name of Jehovah is repeated here five times in five lines, to intimate that it is an almighty power (that of Jehovah) that is engaged and exerted for the relief of the oppressed, and that it is as much the glory of God to succour those that are in misery as it is to ride on the heavens by his name Jah, Ps. 68:4. (1.) Strangers are exposed, and are commonly destitute of friends, but the Lord preserves them, that they be not run down and ruined. Many a poor stranger has found the benefit of the divine protection and been kept alive by it. (2.) Widows and fatherless children, that have lost the head of the family, who took care of the affairs of it, often fall into the hands of those that make a prey of them, that will not do them justice, nay, that will do them injustice; but the Lord relieveth them, and raiseth up friends for them. See Ex. 22:22, 23. Our Lord Jesus came into the world to help the helpless, to receive Gentiles, strangers, into his kingdom, and that with him poor sinners, that are as fatherless, may find mercy, Hos. 14:3.

Why do you think the name “Jehovah” is repeated so many times? What do you think God wants us to remember?

MOVE

Chad challenged fathers and those who will someday become fathers to “relentlessly teach your kids the Gospel, and then undergird it with ethics.” This frees fathers up to be honest about their shortcomings with their children, to show that daddy needs Jesus too and to ultimately handle our children’s mistakes with mercy and grace in their time of need. Secondly, Chad emphasized that fathers need to be there both PHYSICALLY and EMOTIONALLY. Both are necessary to be good fathers.

Titus 2:11-13a

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, up-right and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope...

Why do you think it says “the grace of God” teaches us to say “no” to worldly passions? Why wouldn’t it say “stricter rules” will teach us to say “no?”

Why is grace so crucial in the hearts of good fathers?

Whether you are a mother, father or will someday become one, how do you need God’s help to become a better mother, father or future mother or father?

Lastly, as a challenge, regardless of the state of your relationship with your father, how could you extend grace to your father this day?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women’s groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Romans 8:15-16

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.