

Article 24

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

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“I have had prayers answered - most strangely so sometimes - but I think our heavenly Father's loving-kindness has been even more evident in what He has refused me.”

Lewis Carroll

Fathers come in all shapes and sizes, ages and occupations. My dad is of average height and weight but has an above average ability to make friends and to put a smile on people's faces. One of my favorite childhood memories of him is when he would bring me to school on his motorcycle with the wind blowing on my face and my body nestled securely in front of him. I remember too that when I was starting to get bullied by my next door neighbors, he took me and my older brother aside and taught us how to defend ourselves. As an adult, I look back on all those years and am grateful for the gift of my father. He wasn't perfect, as evidenced partly by the fact that he and my mom separated when I was barely seven years old. But, there are enough good things about him to make me miss him and wish him and his new family well.

But not all people feel as I do about their dads. Many more people tell me now about how their dad was a complete stranger to them either because he was working overseas for most of their growing up years or because even when he was physically present, he was emotionally absent from them. I'm not sure which is worse, having a dad who's living miles away from you, or a dad who lives right with you but may as well be on another planet.

I want the words Heavenly Father to mean something to me, to the people I love, to the strangers I meet; to be more than just some religious term that we say at prayer.

So I ask myself, who can parent those who haven't been parented? Who can Father the fatherless? Then I remember the words of Psalm 139:16 "You have knit me together in my mother's womb and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe." And I hear the lyrics of a song some friends wrote, "*You made the heavens and the Earth, You're Ruler of the Universe. Yet You call me Your child. I will always be Your child. Though my way has been a way of tears, though Your ways have broken me, You have come to be the One who loves me.*"

You will always be the one who loves me. In complete abandon now, I lay my life before You because You've given me a reason to believe I'm the Fathered one."

The wounds of an actual or virtual abandoned child may not heal very quickly, but I hold on to hope that the one who created us and the one who chose our earthly fathers didn't make a mistake. I hold on to the hope that with His fathering, you and I can say the words Heavenly Father and have it put a smile on our faces rather than bring pained tears to our eyes. I hold on to hope that in God's family, there are no orphans.

Hey

"A father is a fellow who has replaced the currency in his wallet with the snapshots of his kids."