**1. Motivate**

What are some characteristics and behaviors of a “good father?”

* patient, kind, loving

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://tinyurl.com/4sh5f5d9> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/584w82fj>

* good provider
* faithful spouse
* encouraging, affirming to family
* teaches good habits to children
* does not spoil children, neither is he miserly

**2. Transition**

People’s praise for and worship of God is often affected by their view of their own fathers.

* But God is unlike any earthly father, even the best fathers are imperfect.
* Psalm 103 exhorts us to praise the Name of our *perfect* Heavenly Father.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 God Provides

Listen for benefits the psalmist received.

Psalm 103:1-5 (NIV) Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

When Moses asked God for His name, God told Moses, “I am The I Am” – He is “The God Who IS”. What then does it mean to bless or “praise His holy Name”?

* we declare our adoration for the One True God
* We worship Him for Who He Is
* we praise Him for what He has done

What fatherly qualities appear in these verses? What benefits does He provide?

* forgives all sins
* heals all diseases
* redeems your life from the pit
* crowns you with love and compassion
* satisfies your desires with good things
* your youth is renewed like the eagle’s
* works righteousness and justice

Which of these qualities are actions only God can do?

* forgive sins
* heal diseases
* redeem

We don’t deserve these things … so why does God do them?

* He loves us – even though we are not always loveable
* It is His nature to do these loving things
* He created us to have fellowship with Him
* He works in our lives to make this happen

How does noticing these regular actions of God help you relate to Him as your Father?

* gives you a point of reference
* someone who is in charge and brings blessings …
* which is what a father is supposed to do
* all the good things you might wish for in a parent
* God is this and *more*

How do these realities about God help you feel renewed?

* when you are down, God gives encouragement
* when you are worn out, God gives strength
* when you feel guilty, God provides forgiveness
* when you are confused, God gives direction
* when you feel oppressed by situations or by people, God gives justice

God’s benefits are unforgettable.

* They are so undeserved
* They are such potent demonstrations of God’s power, love, and authority

So why do we sometimes forget them anyway?

* we take them for granted
* we are too busy to think about God’s role in the blessings we have

How can we keep these benefits at the forefront of our memory?

* make it a habit to praise the Lord
* practice thanking the Lord daily
* actively look for ways in which God has accomplished good things all around you

3.2 God Gives Compassion, Grace, and Forgiveness

Listen for the nature and character of God.

Psalm 103:8-13 (NIV) The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

According to these verses, how does the Lord respond to the sinfulness of people?

* compassion
* grace
* love
* slow to anger
* mercy
* does not harbor his anger forever

How is God’s love and forgiveness depicted?

* love as high as the heavens – infinite
* forgiveness, removal of sins from us as far as east is from west – again infinitely far
* compassion like a loving father

Verse 12 speaks of how far God removes our transgressions. Why is this important?

* gives us a sense of how God wants to change our lives
* it’s like a “sin-ectomy” … our sinful condition is totally removed

Then what is our role in this process?

* repentance, confession
* faith in God’s promised forgiveness
* trusting Him to continue in a life free from the slavery to sin
* live in awe, reverence, submission and obedience

Note some synonyms for the word “compassion”

* Sympathy
* Empathy – He knows how we feel
* Concern
* Kindness
* Consideration
* Care
* Kindheartedness
* Benevolence

What are some ways that God has demonstrated His compassion in your life?

* met needs emotionally
* provided for us financially
* physical healing
* protection in times of danger – sometimes we don’t even realize it
* worked in the lives of our loved ones
* given peace in midst of stress and despair
* send someone along with an encouraging thought or a word of guidance

3.3 God Never Abandons His People

Listen for comments on eternity.

Psalm 103:17-19 (NIV) But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children-- 18 with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. 19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

According to these verses, to whom does the Lord give His blessings?

* those who fear him
* those who keep His covenant
* who remember to obey His precepts

What does it mean to “fear God”? What does it *not* mean?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What does it mean? | What does it *not* mean? |
| * awe
* reverence
* totally impressed
* you have a hard time understanding His love, His power, His authority
 | * scared
* you obey else you get clobbered
* you see God as an angry deity,
* He is ready to smack down any demonstration of disobedience
 |

Note what this passage says about our vital role in our grandchildren’s lives.

* God’s love is extended to the children’s children of those who fear Him

How do you think this happens, even though each person in each generation decides for him/herself?

* children and grandchildren see the way we live our lives
* they emulate what they see modeled
* they see the benefits of fearing, trusting, obeying God
* they learn to trust and obey by observing our daily walking with God

How does God’s throne being established in heaven give us strength and encouragement today?

* God rules, He is in charge,
* He has the power and the authority to rule all things
* He somehow allows our free will and His sovereign will to work together to accomplish His purposes
* we can trust Him to accomplish His will and His purposes for both all of history and our individual lives
* as we bring to Him our problems He will accomplish good things for us as individuals, for our families, for our church, for our society

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Recall.

* Remember some of the benefits you’ve received from the Lord.
* Jot them down. Read them several times this week.

Recite.

* Tell someone how you’ve experienced God’s compassion.
* This testimony could be about your salvation or about some aspect of God’s forgiveness or provision.

Relate.

* Identify a friend or coworker who may be struggling with understanding God’s love.
* Help this person relate God’s love to ways He has walked with you through difficult times.



Clues and Words taken from
 Ps 103:1 – 5; 8 – 13; 17 – 19 (NIV)
help at <https://tinyurl.com/584w82fj>

Crossword Puzzle