

*Perspective Ministries
P.O. Box 1473
Woodstock, GA 30188*

You may email responses to: perspectiveministries@gmail.com

Dear Friend,

I believe that God is directing me to write a book of encouragement to fatherless children and those who are raising them. Almost every day I hear of another family that is facing life without an earthly father for different reasons: death, divorce, or even a father who is living in the home, but is absent in the lives of the children. The enemy would love to convince these families that life is hopeless and that these children will be handicapped because they do not have a physical father with whom to interact. My desire is to help these people to “re-direct their focus” from an earthly father (with skin) to their Abba Father (God, who does not have skin, but wants to be involved in their lives in a powerful, supernatural way).

*I am interested in testimonies of **how** God has been a Father to you in your earthly father's absence.* While I appreciate the stories that describe the circumstances through which God became your Father, I ask you to really seek God to discover specifically *HOW* He has been a Father to you in practical ways. I want to encourage both children and moms who are walking through a very dark tunnel of grief to consider a new and exciting perspective relating to *God as Father*. The following examples from my own life may prompt your remembrance concerning God's personal faithfulness to you.

The other morning, I was with my daughter in our Christian doctor's office. My 5-year old was displaying her strong leadership qualities ☺ while I was challenged to remain steadfast and unmovable in my parenting skills. The battle of the wills continued for several minutes – I must admit I was beginning to grow weary in well doing. At that moment, the doctor went over to my daughter and wrapped his arms around her and assured her that she was a blessing. He told her that truth repeatedly, while reinforcing it with love. Then, he looked her in the eyes and said, “You ARE a blessing, but you must obey your mommy.” Wow, **a Father to the fatherless!** God's Spirit moved to speak to her through our doctor, just as her earthly father would have done!

One Sunday recently, I sat in church listening to the announcement for a special “Men's Night Out.” Oh, how it made my heart ache to know that my boys would have to sit this one out! I just didn't feel like rounding up a man to stand in the gap for the occasion. The next morning before breakfast, my phone rang. When I answered it, on the other end was a man from my church asking if it would be okay if he took my sons to the Men's Night Out. **God is a Father to the fatherless!**

One of my husband's traditions with our girls was to give them roses on their birthdays – one rose for each year they were celebrating. When he died, one of my daughters insisted that she did not want to give up that tradition. I knew in my heart that I could not carry on the custom and told her that I thought it would be best to release that memory and tradition with her dad. This was not easy for her because the roses really meant a lot to her. On her birthday after my husband's death, we were playing in the backyard. A car came to our driveway, and a woman jumped out, asking if this was the home where the dad had died almost one year ago. I told her, yes, she had the right place. With that, she reached into her car and pulled out a beautiful bouquet of flowers. I handed them to my daughter and said, “Happy Birthday – **God is a Father to the fatherless!**” At that moment, we looked up into the sunshiny sky and there, stretching across our home, was a giant, UPSIDE-DOWN rainbow – God was smiling down tangibly showing His great love for us.

On my daughter's most recent birthday, I had forgotten all about the flower tradition, but she hadn't. I took her to a restaurant for a birthday lunch, and when we arrived, there on her plate was a yellow rose! She was thrilled that God had remembered her birthday. On the way home, she remembered that she had left the rose at the table. She was very sad, and I was perplexed. The restaurant was a long way from our home, so I knew I couldn't go back. I thought about stopping to purchase another rose, but it wouldn't be the same. I tried to encourage her, but to no avail. When we stopped to take one of her friend's home, the mom came running out and threw her arms around her singing, “Happy Birthday.” She then handed her---you guessed it--- a single yellow rose! Our friend said that she had been in the grocery store earlier that day and felt impressed to buy her a rose. **God is a Father to the fatherless!**

It is becoming more and more exciting to sit back and watch God fulfill His promise to my “fatherless” children. When we first started out on this new journey, we encouraged each other by sharing what made us “happy and sad” each day. It was a non-threatening way to open our hearts to each other (and to ourselves) to see what emotions were rising to the surface. We were able to pray for each other and learned to become both vulnerable and transparent, as we trusted God to bring healing.

While sharing these feelings is still a part of our family time, we now find ourselves sharing how God was our Father that day. Instead of focusing on the areas where a dad was not available, we look for times when God used a friend to work in the lives of my children. At the same time, there have also been occasions when God just reached into our hearts to bring forgiveness toward our absent father. Not surprisingly, this has opened up ways in which God can work afresh in new areas of our lives.

Perhaps you don't have a testimony relating to this subject, but you have walked down a road of grief. *I would also like to include short sentences or paragraphs sharing how someone comforted you in your time of distress*, ways in which a simple idea or gesture really spoke to you and brought great comfort. Kindhearted people want to offer solace, but since they have not walked in your shoes, they really do not know the best way to bring comfort. Sharing your ideas would be a big help to those who want to be used by God to encourage a friend during a difficult time.

Thank you for seeking the Lord about being a part of this project. I am excited to see what He is going to do. Thank you for your prayers concerning this book. My prayer is that it will be used to bring a new focus to fatherless children and to remind them that He is working in their lives...*for their good and HIS glory!*

Grace and Peace be unto you, *Lori Apon*

Survey for the fatherless

"A Father of the fatherless . . . is God in his holy habitation." Psalm 68:5

1. **What is your age?** _____
2. **What is your occupation?** _____
3. **How old were you when your dad left / died / became absent in your life?** _____
4. **What were the circumstances for your dad's absence in your life?** Death Divorce
 Dad was in the home, but not active in my life
5. **I was a Christian (saved) / I was a non-Christian (unsaved) at the time of my dad's absence.**
6. **My mother was a Christian (saved) / unsaved at that time.**
7. **My dad was a Christian (saved) / unsaved at that time.**
8. **What phrase best describes your view of God in the years following your dad's absence:**
 distant friend and companion a father other _____
9. **Did you have a male figure in your life to encourage you and model manhood for you?** Yes No
If yes, who was that role model?
 grandfather older brother uncle coach teacher spiritual influence other male role model
10. **Did you ever consider God to be your Father in the absence of your dad?**
 Yes, God made a positive difference! No, I've never thought of God in this way before
You may give more insights on the back of this page →
11. **How did God practically lead you to view Him as your Father?**
(Continue on back if necessary)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
12. **Has your experience with God positively affected the way in which you "father" and care for your own children?** Yes No Explain _____

★The following questions may require more space. Please feel free to share on the back →

What did your mother do RIGHT in raising you alone?

What did your mother do WRONG (or areas she could have improved) in raising a young man?

Please provide the following information if you are willing to share your story with others.
This material is being considered for a book on the "Widowed-parent".

Name (optional) _____ e-mail _____
Address _____