

**Slide 1**

## **Like Father, Like Son**

### **JOHN 8:37-45**

#### **Introduction**

1. Many, if not all of us have heard the expression, "Like father, like son."
2. This expression and the expression, "like mother, like daughter," are proverbs which indicate there are similarities between parents and children, not just in the way they look, but also in the way they behave.
3. This is true for two reasons:
  - a. Our children inherit certain physical traits from us when they are born.
  - b. As they grow up, they are influenced by what they see us doing and saying.
4. When they reach adulthood we find that in many ways, they act as we do.
5. Did you know that this phrase is found in the Bible?
6. In Ezekiel 16:1-43, the prophet Ezekiel tells a parable in which he compares Jerusalem to an adulterous wife.
7. In verse 44, Ezekiel said, "Behold, everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb concerning you, saying, "Like mother, like daughter."
8. In our text tonight, John 8:37-45, we find Jesus still speaking with the Jews in the temple.
  - a. First, He challenges the Jews concerning their ancestry.
  - b. Second, He questions them in regards to their parentage.
9. In both of these we find those things which we must consider when it comes to our own lives and who we are most like.
10. Let's look at what Jesus had to say.

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## **I. Descendants of Abraham? (John 8:37-40)**

### **A. "ABRAHAM IS OUR FATHER" (v. 39)**

1. The Jews considered Abraham the greatest figure in all of religious history.
2. Abraham was called "the Friend of God".
  - a. By Jehoshaphat in his prayer(2 Chr. 20:7).
  - b. By God through His prophet Isaiah who declared him to be "My friend" (Isaiah 41:8)
3. The Jews believed themselves to be safe and secure with God because they were descendants of Abraham.
  - a. In Psalm 105:6, the psalmist addressed the Israelite as, "O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!"
  - b. Through his prophet Isaiah, God spoke to the people of Israel and said, "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend" (Isaiah 41:8).
4. They believed the favor which Abraham had gained with God was due to his goodness.
5. They likewise believed that Abraham's favor with God extended to them because they were his descendants.

**2a**

6. Much like the Jews, there are still those today who try to live on . . .
  - a. *A pedigree and/or a name.* They continue to claim a special place for themselves because of some great deed or accomplishment by a family member in the past. We should never allow a family name to excuse our inaction. Instead, we should aspire to our own actions which glorify God.

**2b**

- b. *A history or tradition.* There are those congregations which seek to live on the spiritual accomplishments by members of that congregation in the past. However, if we keep drawing on our spiritual capital from the past, but never building new capital, the time will come when that capital is exhausted. *No man or church can live on the achievements of the past.*

**Slide 3****B. "IF YOU ARE ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN, DO THE DEEDS OF ABRAHAM"**

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you." (v. 37).

1. Jesus conceded the Jews' claim to be Abraham's descendants (v. 33) — "We are Abraham's descendants".
2. However, He argues that their desire to kill him indicates they have a different spirit from Abraham.
3. This is the opposite of what Abraham did.
4. In Genesis 26:5 God identifies Abraham as one who "obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws."
5. In Genesis 18:1-8, when a messenger from God came to him, Abraham welcomed him with all eagerness and reverence.
6. Whereas, Abraham had welcomed God's messenger, the Jews were trying to kill God's messenger.
7. Jesus was asking them how they could call themselves descendants of Abraham when their conduct was so different from Abraham's.
8. In verse 38, Jesus introduced a series of contrasts:
  - a. I and you, contrasting Himself with the Jews.
  - b. Jesus speaks of what He has "seen" verses what they have "heard".
  - c. Finally, there is the contrast between "My Father" and "your father".

- The point is they were following different fathers.

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## II. Children of God? (vv. 41-45)

### A. "WE HAVE ONE FATHER: GOD" (v. 41)

1. The Jews did not appreciate Jesus' insistence that their conduct negates their claim to Abraham as their father.
2. His charge in verse 41 — "You are doing the deeds of your father" — makes them spiritually illegitimate children.
3. They responded, "We were not born of fornication (sexual immorality, ESV), We are not illegitimate children," (NIV84) (v. 41b).
4. Throughout the Old Testament the fact is repeated that God, in a special way, is the Father of His people Israel:
  - a. God commanded Moses to say to Pharaoh: "Thus says the Lord, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn'" (Exodus 4:22).
  - b. When Moses was rebuking the people for their disobedience, his appeal was, "Do you thus repay the Lord, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father who created you, who made you and established you?" (Deuteronomy 32:6, ESV).
  - c. In Isaiah 63:16 , the prophet Isaiah speaks of his trust in God:

"For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not recognize us. You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Your name." (Isaiah 63:16)
5. While affirming their own paternity, the Jews may also be alluding to the irregularities connected with legitimacy of Jesus' birth.
  - a. In Jesus' second visit to His hometown of Nazareth, following His teaching in the synagogue and the miracles He performed, those who watched Him

- grow up asked, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary . . .?” (Mark 6:3).
- b. Sons were always identified by their fathers, not their mothers, even when the father was dead.
  - c. It is very likely that in a small town like Nazareth there had always been a question as to the identify of Jesus’ father, especially since Mary was pregnant with Him before she and Joseph were married.
6. No doubt, there were those among the Jews who had picked up on this bit of gossip and were now using it against Jesus.

**Slide 5****B. “YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL” (v. 44)**

1. Jesus responded to the Jews’ statement that they had one Father — God (v. 41).
2. He tells them that proof of God as their Father lies in whether or not the “love” Him (v. 42a).
3. Jesus identifies two things which tie Him to God:
  - a. “I proceeded forth and have come from God” (v. 42a).
  - b. “I have not come on My own initiative, be He sent Me” (v. 42b).
4. Jesus then asked them a question, “Why do you not understand what I am saying?” (v. 43a).
5. He then provides the answer: “It is because you cannot hear My word” (v. 43b).
  - a. In other words, they are spiritually deaf.
  - b. They refuse to hear and they refuse to understand.
  - c. A person can stop his or her ears to any warning.
  - d. He or she will hear only what they wish to hear.
  - e. If they go on closing their ears long enough to the things of God and opening their ears only to that which encourages their desires, they will

reach the point where they can no longer hear what God says.

- ❑ This is what the Jews had done.

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6. It is for this reason that Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father” (v. 44a).

7. He then points out two characteristics of their father — the devil:

- a. “He was a murderer from the beginning” (v. 44b).

This is most likely a reference to the sin of Adam and Eve. Through his successful temptation in the Garden, he robbed Adam and Eve of spiritual life and brought death to the entire human race (cf. Romans 5:12).

- b. “He is a liar and the father of lies” (v. 44c).

1) Jesus said that the devil, “does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (v. 44 b-c).

2) The devil characteristically loves falsehood.

3) Every lie issues from the devil and accomplishes his work.

4) Falsehood always hates the truth, and always tries to destroy it.

8. Jesus said to them, “because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me” (John 8:45).

## Conclusion

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1. What is it that you and I should take away from these things which Jesus said in the temple all those years ago?
2. First, we must be careful that we do not depend on the name or reputation of someone who has gone before us.

- a. The Jews were depending on the faith and righteousness of Abraham.
- b. Our parents, grandparents or some other ancestors may have been spiritual giants in their time.
- c. However, neither you nor I can trade on their legacy of faith. It is by our own walk with God that we will be judged and through our own life of faith that we will draw others to Christ or push them away.

**7a**

3. Second, as a congregation, we cannot live on the spiritual accomplishments by members of this congregation in the past.
  - a. In Revelation 3:1 we find our glorified Lord saying this to the church at Sardis, “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”
  - b. Other congregations around them apparently thought they were an effective church, but Jesus said, “you are dead.”
  - c. Any church which keeps drawing on the spiritual capital of its members from the past, but not building any new capital will eventually find itself bankrupt.
  - d. No man or church can live on the achievements of the past.

**7b**

4. Finally, we should stop to consider who it is that we most seek to emulate.
  - a. Jesus told the Jews that they wanted to fulfill the desires of their father — the devil.
  - b. The devil “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44), but Jesus came so that you and I “may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).
  - c. Satan has not concern for truth, but Jesus came into this world to “testify to the truth” (John 18:37).
    - ❑ You and I must make a decision as to which we want.
5. Is God your father? Is it evident in your life?
6. If not, then why not make the decision to change your life and emulate the Only one who can give you true life.