YOU LEARN WHAT’S IMPORTANT FROM YOUR FATHER  
(John 8:37-47)

John 8:37-47 - I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. 38 I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” 39 They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. 41 You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” 42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot hear to hear my word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

Psalm 105:6, 7 – O descendants of Abraham, his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones; He is the LORD our God.

Again, Jesus will contrast the temporal with the spiritual. These Jews’ earthly ancestor was Abraham and they easily made that connection. But he turns this truth on them by saying that one way you can tell who a person really is is who their father is. Fathers have a way of passing on what is important to them.

What was important to Abraham? The Scriptures give us a clear picture of this man and his relationship to God. Paul wrote this later in the New Testament:

Galatians 3:6, 7, 9 - Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham... So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

If Abraham was a man of faith, his children will also believe. These Jews wanted to kill Jesus, a motivation he confronts them with again. Their thoughts and acts proved they were not the legitimate spiritual children of Abraham.

[Jews] believed that Abraham had gained such merit from his goodness that his merit was sufficient, not only for himself, but for all his descendants, too... Their works had revealed their true sonship, for a man can prove his kinship to God only by his conduct.

William Barclay, The Gospel of John
If you had a childhood like mine, everybody in the neighborhood knew who your parents were. I couldn’t get away with anything. But if I did something good, that might get back to my parents, too, and reflected well on them.

Right after David killed Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, Saul had one question:

1 Samuel 17:58 - And Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?” And David answered, “I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

There are things that are important to me because they were important to my dad. For example, I attribute my love of music to him in large part. Conversely, he never took me hunting, so that’s not something I spend time with now. Our fathers (or father figures) are crucial to our development in our interests, hobbies, character, priorities, and values.

**ACCURATE ANCESTRY**

If the Jews were mistaken about being the spiritual offspring of Abraham, who was their spiritual father? Jesus reserves some of his harshest and sharpest words for them here when he tells them, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.” Remember, earlier in the chapter we’re told these Jews believed Jesus.

Here were revered and self-important spiritual members of the nation and Jesus shocks them with a huge accusation. But this is in keeping with what he taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:15-16, 18 - Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. **By their fruit you will recognize them**... Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

It’s possible John had this very passage from John 8 in mind when he wrote this to the readers of his epistle later in the first century.

1 John 3:8, 10 - [The person] who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work... **This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.**

Jesus couldn’t be clearer. What you believe and what you do reflect who your spiritual father is. The Jews believed in the Law and followed their own selfish pride. Jesus said they would have loved him if they were true spiritual sons of Abraham.

**THOSE WHO PROFESS LOVE FOR GOD YET REJECT THE ONE WHO PROCEEDED FROM GOD CANNOT BE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD. BY REFUSING TO EMBRACE JESUS, THE JEWISH LEADERS COMPLETELY UNDERMINED THEIR CLAIM THAT GOD WAS THEIR FATHER.**

John MacArthur, John Commentary

The Jews embodied what Jesus says about the devil later in this book of John.

John 10:10 - **The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**

**CHRIST’S ARGUMENT IS THIS: “WHOEVER IS A CHILD OF GOD WILL ACKNOWLEDGE HIS FIRST-BORN SON; BUT YOU HATE ME, AND THEREFORE YOU HAVE NE REASON TO BOAST THAT YOU ARE GOD’S CHILDREN.”**

John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of John

---

**BIBLE STUDY**
Legislators and Staff (During Session)
Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.
(ZOOM)