

## SUMMARY

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What is more useful to understand about a person – his past actions in a given set of circumstances, or his overall character that resides behind his actions? The record of a person's actions might be an indicator of his character, but knowing his actual character is far superior in predicting what he might do in circumstances that have not yet happened. Given endless possibilities, a universe of circumstances we might face, the best way we'd be able to have reason to trust him would be based upon his character – the fiber of his personality and from which his responses would come.

## KEY POINTS

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### Nature and Nurture

In our previous discussion, we considered the influencers in our lives. We asked whether these people had helped, hindered, or left neutral our knowing, understanding, and trusting Father God.

In the debate of nature versus nurture, we are born with dispositions (nature), yet must learn command over our actions. Actions are filtered through our beliefs, our Narrative, shaped by our influencers (nurture). We cannot escape the truth that our interactions with persons who play a role in our life make impressions that color and steer our viewpoint. Yes, we alone are responsible for our actions. Yet, the basis of who we are that informs our actions are shaped much by these influencing people in our lives.

### Sizing up our influencers

So, consider your influencers, the people who have closely interacted with you, those who have helped shape you.

How would your influencer compare to the following description?

(S)he is someone who I believed had a clear view of the truth, conducted their life very well without mistakes, had a steady hand and never failed in responsibilities, always put my interests first regardless of mood or circumstance, never failed to seek reconciliation nor held a grudge, could always be trusted to be near to respond, and always protected me despite the cost.

This would be an amazing person. And, if an influencer, would be a priceless and mighty force in your life. Yet, the truth is that a person of this sort is rare, and by strict definition, impossible. Placing the measuring stick next to the best person you have ever known, experience shows us that real people traverse the scale, all the way down to the despicable.

### Sizing up Father

Now, carefully consider that statement again, and rather than a view towards your human influencer, look through it towards Father God:

Father is someone who I believe has a clear view of the truth, conducts His life very well without mistakes, has a steady hand and never fails in responsibilities, always puts my interests first regardless of mood or circumstance, has never failed to seek reconciliation nor held a grudge, can always be trusted to be near to respond, and always protects me despite the cost.

The statement reflects this month's study which included restatements of the Lord's Prayer:

God is near, present  
God is pure, Holy  
God is powerful and the King Who rules His realm  
God cares, provides for us  
God pardons our sins against Him  
God protects, rescues us from trials and evil

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
**Matthew 6:9-13**

### **Who He Is; Who we believe He Is**

Do you sense any hesitance in seeing Him that way? If so, you're a fellow, fallen human.

The goal of this exercise, and more so the Goal of the Lord Jesus Himself, is to help us see the inconsistencies of our heart in relation to the truth He tells us about the Father He knows. This is the Father Who strives to rescue us, to bring us back to our intended place before Him.

Last month, we read that the models (influencers) in our lives, good or bad, can be a blessing – if we take care to test our narrative and weigh it against the true Model. Jesus taught the Prayer to reveal Father to us, and also to help us see the inconsistencies between our views and Reality. His Goal is to help us know, understand, and trust the Father He trusts. This long transformation is our Sanctification.

Can we believe Jesus' explanation of Father? Can we realize the contrast between His (and our) Father and the influencers who have shaped our expectations of God? Here, we are to see the truth about Father, and repent of the notions that might stand in our way:

God's fatherhood must define what human fatherhood ought to look like, and not the reverse. (James Bryan Smith)