



EVERLASTING FATHER

— 2018 Advent Devotional —

Awana®

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

— Isaiah 9:6, ESV —

The term “father” carries so many different connotations. For some, it’s a term of comfort and joy that has been developed over time and forged by a loving and caring relationship. For others, it’s a vast well of deep sadness that drips with pain and wounds that never seem to heal. For still others, the term is a great mystery, as the presence of a father has always been missing in their lives.

The fatherless epidemic sweeping our world is enormous. The primary need in a child’s life right now is not better education, material possessions, or access to wealth. The number one need, proven to make a difference beyond anything else, is the active presence of a loving and caring adult. During

this Christmastime, when our thoughts point to the incarnation, we can see vividly why the Son of God ushered Himself into the world through a family.

Our Advent passage in Isaiah contains the great announcement of Hope to the world — and there is Hope in this message for everyone. The child who already finds joy and love in the arms of a father recognizes here a love that will never depart. The child whose life bleeds with the scars of betrayal and mistrust finds here a Father who will bring comfort and healing. And the child who wanders this world alone and rejected finds a Savior who will never leave, born for us this day in the city of David, now seated on a throne that will have no end.

Our Savior has these divine qualities that set Him apart from our expectations and experiences. It's interesting that Isaiah calls the Messiah "Everlasting Father." Even though Isaiah isn't writing with a complete understanding of the Trinity (he's not saying that God the Father and God the Son are the same person), he illustrates that Jesus will display these divine qualities—just as we see Jesus doing in the Gospels.

Jesus is kind, compassionate, principled, a leader. He expresses care and concern and calls disciples to Himself. He takes up the mantle of the misfits, the downtrodden, and oppressed. He is courageous and, as the Scripture describes Him, filled with grace and truth.

Jesus is the perfect Father, and the whole world is invited to His table. He is without end, everlasting. His presence cannot be erased by death. His impact cannot be silenced by the neglect and stain of sin. His kingdom will be filled with adopted heirs.

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and oppressed.**

This is tremendous Hope for our broken and decaying world. During the next few weeks, as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's incarnation, may we thank and worship our everlasting Father, and may our hearts continue to crave and desire His eternal impact.

Rev. Chris Marchand
VP Partner Solutions



Questions for You:

- How would your kids describe you as a parent? Take a moment and ask them.
- Who needs your fatherly influence in their life right now? One of your children's friends, a child who lives on your street? A child who needs to be sponsored somewhere in the world?
- Your influence is finite, but God's is eternal. How are you preparing your children (biological or spiritual) to thrive as disciples of Christ when you are no longer able to be with them?

Questions for Kids:

- What do you think God is like? Can you list some words that describe Him? Use this as an opportunity to talk about Jesus being our Everlasting Father.
- What is the most important thing a father can do for his children?
- What is something that your father does that you wish would never end?