

Introduction to the Spiritual Supplements for the Fathering in 15™ Lessons



So you've decided to start working through the Fathering in 15™ lessons from the National Fatherhood Initiative. Congratulations! You've started on a journey that will help you to be the best Dad that you can be. It will take some work, but stick to it!

As a Dad you have a unique and valuable role to play in the lives of your children, as well as in the life of their mother. These lessons will walk you through many important basics about your role as a father. One very important principle to keep in mind through all of these lessons is that you can learn the skills needed to be a great Dad, even if you didn't have a good father role model in your own upbringing.

So what are these "spiritual supplements", and why have we made them available to you? We know that these Fathering in 15™ lessons will be read by a wide variety of men, with a wide variety of backgrounds. Some will have a strong belief in God, some will have already discarded spiritual beliefs as nice "fairy tales", and some will have other viewpoints in between. In any case, there are spiritual concepts related to each of these lessons and you might want to consider them as you work through each lesson.

One of the most common, but incorrect, ideas we hear is that God and the Bible are all about following a set of strict rules. But the most important idea to have about the Bible is that it is ultimately about relationships, first with God himself and then with the other people in our lives.

The Bible tells the story of a very well-respected and educated man who asked Jesus this question:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law (that is, in the Bible)?"

And the Bible says that Jesus replied:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Take a moment to think about what Jesus is saying is most important. He didn't say to follow a bunch of rules, instead he said that you should first focus on your relationship with God, then focus on your relationship with the other people in your life.

As you work through the Fathering in 15™ lessons you will be learning a lot about how to improve your relationship with your children and their mother. That is, how to improve the second set of relationships that Jesus talked about in the above story. But what about the first relationship, your relationship with God? Jesus said (and we as an organization believe) that this is your most important relationship and, if you have that relationship right, God will help you with the other relationships in your life.

Simply put, that is why we've made these "spiritual supplements" available to you, to help you learn how God and your relationship with Him will help you improve in each of the lesson topics. If you already have a personal relationship with God then you are ready to use God's wisdom to help you be a better father. If you don't have that kind of relationship then we suggest that that might be the place for you to start.

The Bible is a very big book but what it has to say about how to have a personal relationship with God can be summarized in a few simple ideas, as follows:

- God loves you and wants you to have a good life. Jesus said: "I have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)
- Our human nature causes us to act selfishly, and to act contrary to God's plan for our lives; this is called sin. Or, as the Bible puts it: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) This sinful nature creates a separation from God that we cannot overcome by ourselves.
- God knows we cannot overcome this but, because of his love for us, he sent Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins. As the Bible says: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)
- Finally, each of us needs to accept these truths and ask Jesus to come into our life. Again, the Bible says: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Once you have your relationship with God in order, then you will be better able to draw upon the spiritual insights presented in each of these supplements.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about this introduction, the Fathering in 15™ lessons, or these spiritual supplements. We're here to help!

Now let's move forward in your plan to be a better father!