

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE [December 10/11, 2011]**

*Note: Beginning this week, all Life Group Notes will be available by 12pm on Tuesday each week and will refer to the previous weekend's message. LG Notes will be available in hard copy at the Welcome Center, via email and will be posted on the website at <http://www.myfirstchurch.com/life-group-notes>*

*Notes for the discussion leaders are in italics:*

### **Discussion Opener**

Describe some of the best characteristics of your earthly father.

### **Message Thoughts**

*One of the most unique relationships in life is that of a Father with his children. Dads tend to be tough on the outside but are almost always tender on the inside when it comes to their kids. Dads ache when their children ache, they feel a sense of pride when their children excel and will do anything in their power to help their kids accomplish what they want to accomplish.*

*This week, we continue our look at the Vintage Jesus using the descriptor of Everlasting Father. I draw your attention to the relationship that a Father has with his children because of the title, "Everlasting Father". It is easy to get sidetracked when we talk about Jesus as the "everlasting father." How can the Son be the Father? Jesus is not called Everlasting Father because there is confusion about the nature of God the Father and God the Son. Jesus is called the everlasting Father because of His father-like qualities. He is still God the Son, but His love and grace is like that of a Father with his children.*

### **Discussion**

1. What's the first thing you think of when you hear the word "father"?
2. Read Isaiah 9:6. Out of all of the things we tend to want from life in general and God in particular, why do you think He specifically gave us an "Everlasting Father"? What does this name tell us about the character of God?
3. Often, however we view our father is how we also tend to view God the Father. What are some common ways people tend to do this? How has your view of your father affected your view of God?
4. How does our culture and media tend to portray dads? How might this influence the way our culture portrays God?
5. Read Luke 15:11-32, the story of the prodigal son. Jesus told this parable to teach his disciples about our Father God. What do you learn about the character of God through this story? What does the father's reaction to his son in 15:20 tell you about God's love for you?
6. Share about a time God showed Himself as a father in your life.
7. Pastor David spoke about the fatherly trait of provider. During Isaiah's times, earthly kings would boast about being "fathers" to their people, being ones that the people could rely on for provision and protection. But Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus pointed God's people to the One who would constantly and eternally be their provider and protector. Read the following versus aloud. **Isaiah 9:7; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5-6; Matthew 28:18-20; James 1:17; Romans 8:31-32.**
  - a. *What do you worry about?*
  - b. *What areas of your life are you uneasy about? Jesus longs to be your everlasting Provider.*
  - c. *Which of these verses speak to your areas of uneasiness and worry?*
  - d. *What promises can you cling to?*

### **Prayer**

This week, pray specifically for any group members who are in need of an Everlasting Father. Pray that this Christmas they will experience God's love, peace and healing in a new and life-changing way.