

KNOWING GOD AS OUR FATHER

Perhaps the most reassuring, intimate title of God shared in the Bible is "Father."

No matter what our need, we have the privilege of turning to the Sovereign of the universe as a child might turn to an earthly parent.

The Father is always there to guide, provide, and protect.

What a privilege we have to draw near to the Lord in a close and loving relationship *made possible through His Son, Jesus Christ*.

SERMON POINTS - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples how to approach God in what is often called:

"The Lord's Prayer," a model for us to follow.

He said, **Matt. 6:8-13** "Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray, then, in this way: '**Our Father**, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil."

We can know God as Father because of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, God is called the Father of the Hebrew nation.

However, individuals couldn't claim His fatherhood in any special way for themselves.

In contrast, **the New Testament reveals** that each believer can relate personally to the father as part of a loving, intimate relationship with their Maker.

Jesus referred to God as Father –

Jesus revealed the Creator to us, not as a transcendent, distant deity, but as a loving, heavenly Father.

- *In the model prayer*, Jesus instructed His disciples to begin their prayers with "Our Father ..." Matt. 6:9

He explained the importance of doing the will of the Father

Matthew 7:21 - True and False Disciples - “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed,

Matthew 26:39 - He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, **“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”**

Fourteen times in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ refers to God as **“your Father” (Matt. 5-7).**

When outside the tomb of Lazarus, He said: “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.”

John 11:41 - Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted His eyes and said, **“Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**

The night before the crucifixion, Jesus began His prayer, “Father, the hour has come ...” (v. 17:1).

John 17:1 - Jesus Prays for Himself - Jesus spoke these words, lifted His eyes to heaven, and said: **“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,**

Jesus always addressed God as Father, and the message of the New Testament is that we are invited to experience a similar relationship with the Lord.

The apostle Paul also knew God as Father.

Paul began each of his epistles with a reference to Christ. ***Paul’s theology is based on this intimate relationship;*** we are children of God, part of His household, and joint-heirs with the Son, Jesus Christ.

The message of the apostle’s letters is that **we can know our Maker,** not just in His greatness, **but as a capable and loving Parent.**

Through Jesus Christ, we can know God as our heavenly Father.

In a sense, the Creator is the Father of all humanity.

However, it's only through trusting in Jesus that a person becomes a child of God (Gal. 3:26).

Galatians 3:26 - Sons and Heirs - For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Some people claim that it doesn't matter if someone believes in Christ, he or she can still have an intimate relationship with God as Father. But that's not what our Savior said (**John 8:42**).

John 8:42 - Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me.

The good news is that anyone can call on the name of Jesus and become one of God's children.

Paul says we "have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Romans 8:15).

Romans 8:15 - The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

He lavishes us with affection: "How great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called children of God".

1 John 3:1 - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Our actions, in general, will reflect that we belong to Jesus (v. 10).

1 John 3:10 - **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 God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

Thankfully, even if we fail from time to time, **our relationship with God** is sealed and secure.

Jesus said of His followers, John 10:29 - "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand".

How does God express fatherhood toward us?

A good dad cares for and provides for his children.

Jesus revealed a loving Father who ...

***Desires to have an intimate relationship with us.**

A friendship with God is possible through Jesus Christ.

- We can be honest with Him and share our struggles.
- **He is ready to help us overcome temptation** and eager to provide for us.
- **Knowing God as Father** gives us fellowship and a sense of oneness with Him.

***Wants to communicate with us.**

When we pray, He listens.

- When He speaks, we can recognize His voice.

Jesus said, Matthew 7:7-8 - Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking - “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

- God is like a good dad who delights in meeting the needs of his children.

Matthew 6:6 - But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

***Loves us unconditionally.**

The Lord is committed to us based on His own loving nature, not a sinless performance.

The word “unconditional” may not appear in the Bible, but God the Father loves us just as He loved Jesus (John 17:23).

John 17:23 - I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

***Meets all our needs.**

Our Father knows what we need before we ask (Matt. 6:8).

We don't have to be anxious about basic provision; He will provide necessities, just as He does for the birds (6:25-26).

- **No human parent can always be available to help.**
- But we have a loving Father Who never leaves us (John 15:26-27).

John 15:26-27 - The Work of the Holy Spirit - "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

***Disciplines us.**

The fact that God corrects us is one of the signs that we are His children (Heb. 12:5-11).

Hebrews 12:5-11 - 5 And have you completely forgotten **this word of encouragement** that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because **the Lord disciplines the one he loves**, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. **Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace** for those who have been trained by it.

- **Just as earthly parents discipline their kids to help them develop character, the father corrects us so that we will grow in holiness.**

- It's not pleasant to be chastised, but **discipline eventually leads to a harvest of righteousness.**

***Guides us to do the right thing.**

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Psalms 32:8 expresses a similar reassurance: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will advise you with My eye upon you."

CLOSE:

Which one of the statements about God as Father is most encouraging to you, and why?

Have you ever experienced divine discipline?

In what ways is the Lord currently correcting an area of your life or challenging you to a higher level of integrity and fruitfulness?

The Father guides us to do what is right.

When are some moments you've clearly experienced His direction?

What is something He's speaking to you about right now?