

Our Heavenly Father

Key Scripture

“SEE WHAT [an incredible] quality of love the Father has given (shown, bestowed on) us, that we should [be permitted to] be named and called and counted the children of God! And so we are! The reason that the world does not know (recognize, acknowledge) us is that it does not know (recognize, acknowledge) Him.” 1 John 3:1

Portion for the Journey

All true prayer must begin with the true recognition of God as our Father and the knowledge of His paternal love. It is highly significant that Jesus began His teaching in “the LORD’S PRAYER” with “Father.” Knowing God as “Father,” is foundational to all of our prayers. Our prayers must begin with true Father and Child relationship with the Father! This revelation will transform our ability to pray in faith and allow us to draw close in order to build a true relationship with Him. It also predisposes us to believe that He will hear our prayer. Andrew Murray said, “The words [Our Father] are the key to the whole [of the Lord’s] prayer, and to all prayer. It takes a life time to study them, it will take eternity to understand them fully.” ¹

As Christians, it is easy to take God’s name as Father upon our lips without fully comprehending the incredible price that was paid for us to know Him as our Father! The LORD revealed Himself through many names in the Bible. In the Old Testament, He is Elohim, the Creator and God of all mankind. He is Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel. He is El Elyon, Most High God...King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Ancient of Days, God of the Armies of Heaven, El Shaddai. The list goes on and on because He revealed His Character and personality through hundreds of names. Israel trembled at the presence of the LORD and shrunk back from coming near to Him. He is the great I AM. His Name, Yahweh, was considered too holy to take upon the lips of mere man even to speak. Until Jesus came, no one dared to call Him Father. Above all else, God was believed to be unapproachable and feared in His awesome holiness and majesty. Jer. 31:9; Isa. 63:16

- He is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).
- He is the God Moses met with on Mount Sinai, cloaked in clouds, wrapped in smoke like that of a furnace, descending in fire, of the thundering, lightning flashes and the smoking mountain top Ex. 20:18-21; Ex. 19:16-18; Heb.12:18-19; Deut. 4:11,12; 5:22-27
- Jehovah who caused the mountains to quake at His presence Hab. 3:10; Isa. 64:3; Judges 5:5; Ps. 18:7
- The Holy and Unapproachable Light Ex. 3:2, 2 Sam. 6:3-7; Ex. 19:9,12; 2 Sam 6:6

When Jesus revealed the God of Israel was His Father, His Words were not accepted by the Jews. They were incensed when Jesus spoke in such intimate terms of His relationship with the Most High God. This was a truly revolutionary concept and many not only could not accept the possibility, they thought it was heresy. It is thus highly significant that of all the possible names and titles for God in the Word, Jesus chose “Our Father” as name by which we speak to Him when we approach His throne in prayer.

¹ Andrew Murray on Prayer, p. 330, "With Christ in the School of Prayer," 1901

The Father is the source of our origin and the One who gave us life. In the beginning we were created in His image and likeness and He gave us dominion to rule over the earth. In the Hebrew, the word 'image' is 'selem' (Strong's 6754) and this word means, 'to copy or be like God in essential nature, having the same internal and external characteristics, such as righteousness, knowledge, holiness. He made us to have the same intellectual, spiritual and moral qualities, with His ability to reason, His personality, and capacity for relationship.' The word for 'likeness' is 'demut' (Strong's 1823), meaning 'similitude, form, pattern, resembling and containing the inward image and moral likeness, coming from His breath instilled in us.' When Adam and Eve sinned, they no longer had the capacity to produce offspring in God's image, but instead their children were created in Adam's sinful image and corrupted nature. They lost dominion on the earth to Satan. Jesus came so bring us back to the Father. Through His death and resurrection, those who are born again are new creations, being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. Jesus died so we could know the Father and enter into the same relationship with the Father that He has had since the beginning of eternity. Only those who are born again through Jesus Christ have the right to call God the Father. He wants us to take our place in His Kingdom with the glory of the heavenly upon us. Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 5:1-3, Col. 1:15-23; Rom. 8:26-30; 2 Cor. 6:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15-23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:39-49; 1 John 3:1-2

Jesus is God's only begotten Son. He has been with Him from the beginning. He is the only one who has truly seen God as the Father. "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (John 1:18) The phrase, "only begotten" comes from the Greek word, "Monogenes" and it is literally interpreted as "the only one of the same family, the unique one." Jesus is the first and the last eternally. Yet, Isaiah 41:4 says that He is "the first and **with the last**." He is the only begotten one, the first born, but He is joined by those who come to the Father through Him, who are declared to be sons and daughters of the King. John 17:1-12; Ps. 45:10-17

Jesus is the exact representation of the Father (Heb 1:3). God the Father is exactly like Jesus! John 8:19; 14:7, 9 His words constantly pointed the way to knowing His Father and seeing His great love for His children. Jesus' first recorded words in the Bible were focused upon the Father, as were His last words upon the cross. (Luke 2:49; Luke 23:46). Jesus came to introduce us to the Father. He was devoted to sharing the Father with His disciples; Matt. 6:6-15, 31-33; 7:7-11; 11:25-30; 13:43; John 4:21-23; 14:1-15,26; 16:23-28; 20:17; Acts 2:33; Rom. 1:7; 8:15-17; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 5:20; Col. 1:12; 1 Thes. 3:13; 1 John 3:1; Jude 1

Meditate on the Fatherheart of God toward us as His Children: "And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)! Father! Therefore, you are no longer a slave (bond servant) but a son; and if a son, then [it follows that you are] an heir by the aid of God, through Christ." Galatians 4:6-7 (AMP)

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God. And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory." Romans 8:14-17 (AMP)

Father: The word "Father" expresses intelligent apprehension of a relationship and contains elements of not only love but also respect and honor for the head of the family. The name "Father" in the Greek is "Pater" a term that not only establishes family relationship, but also carries the reverence and respect for the head of the family.

“Abba’ is the name for ‘father’ in the Aramaic language. It is considered to be a term of endearment, like “Papa,” or “Daddy.” It is a word that conveys great love and respect of the child toward the parent, borne out of the knowledge of the parental tenderness and affection of the Father toward His child. The name also communicates the childlike confidence in Him that equates to unquestioning trust. The filial relationship of a child toward the parent not only includes intimate relationship but also the respect and behavior that befits an offspring toward one’s own father. A slave was not allowed to address the master by this name, only an actual offspring could take this name on their lips. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament describes “Abba” as one of the first words framed on the lips of infants, betokens of unreasonable trust that a child has for its parent. It further expresses intelligent apprehension of a relationship. Abba expresses the freedom that love releases in intimate friendship and trust. When Abba is used with Father, it is an expression of the love and intelligent confidence of the child.”

The only time that Jesus used the name “Abba Father” was in the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of His greatest agony. His other recorded prayers all addressed God as “Father.” As the Son of God, Jesus said He came to show us the Father. He prayed that we could know the Father in the same way that He knew Him. In His last recorded prayer before His crucifixion, He prayed, “I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are.” Mark 14:36; John 17:11

Paul teaches us that we have been given the privilege of calling “Abba, Father!” because the Holy Spirit now dwells in our hearts when we are saved. In Romans, he teaches that in ourselves we could not call God “Abba Father,” We can cry, “Abba, Father!” through Jesus, the Son of God, who has given us the spirit of adoption so are God’s children! He assures us, “The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” In Galatians, Paul clarifies that it is the Spirit of His Son, sent into our hearts, crying “Abba, Father!” By this we know we are no longer slaves but an adopted child, and also an heir, through God. Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:4-7

The Greek word ‘Patēr’ (Strong’s 3962) comes from the root meaning ‘nourisher, protector, upholder.’ Pater is the originator of the family or company of persons who are anointed with the same Spirit as Himself. Our Father is called the “father of lights” or one who provides illumination for our physical and spiritual mercies. The word Father, placed here at the beginning of this prayer, includes two grand ideas, which should serve as a foundation to all our petitions: 1st. That tender and respectful love which we should feel for God, such as that which children feel for their fathers. 2dly. That strong confidence in God’s love to us, such as fathers have for their children. ~~Adam Clarke Commentary

The Old Testament reveals to us the name “Aman” which is translated literally “tender, nursing Father.” In this name God reveals Himself as our nurse and our faithful establisher. Isa. 66:12-13 (AMP) This is the name from which we get the word “Amen” that we use at the end of our prayers! (See Names of God: Jehovah Aman) Most of God’s other names describe a facet of His attributes and character. The name “Father” defines His relationship with us. It is a name which establishes our access to Him in the nearness and love possible by our relationship with Him. Not everyone can come before the Father in this close intimacy. Only those who are born again through Jesus may have this assured access.

It is only because of Jesus and through Jesus that we can find ourselves accepted in the Beloved to be His sons and daughters. Only Children of God can call Him Father and access His throne as freely as a child. Until Jesus came, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies one time a year and he did so under great fear of death. And we do not approach Him in an earthly dwelling place but before His very throne in heaven! We can call Him Abba Father with the same sense of intimacy and closeness that Jesus calls Him Abba! (Rom. 8:15;).

He came to provide a way to enter into His presence and declare good news that we are accepted as His beloved children. Jesus made it clear that if we do not enter the kingdom as children, we will not enter it at all. It is therefore worthwhile to meditate upon what He means by this condition of heart. Jesus taught His disciples that they can now know God as their Father and calls us to boldly approach His throne to pray to Him as our Father. Heb. 4:16, Matt. 19:14; Mark 14:36; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17

- a. Jesus was the perfect and only sacrifice acceptable to God to atone for our sins.
- b. Jesus is the only way to approach the Father (John 14:6)
- c. It was through His atonement that we find perfect acceptance in the beloved.
- d. He has become Our Righteousness (John 1:29; John 1:12, 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude).
- e. Jesus wants us to have the intimacy with the Father that He has with Him. (John 17:21)

When we are born again, we are admitted as members of His family with all of the privileges and rights as sons and daughters. Membership in a family is permanent and entitles us with access and the rights of inheritance. By granting us His name as Father, He brings us into His covenant and establishes the closest of all ties, the ties of a parent to a child. As we meditate upon God's character as Father and our relationship to Him, it is important that we do not forget all of His other attributes. He does not change! The only thing that has changed, is that we are now able to have a close intimate relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, our Savior and our eldest brother.
2 Cor. 16:17-18

We are instructed to pray to God, as "Father," because His foremost desire is for our prayers to be based on foundation of our relationship with Him. Jesus wants us to know the Father, so we can approach His throne with bold confidence.² A child is bestowed with freedoms and rights. Membership in a family is permanent and entitles one to access and inheritance from the parent. The name "Father" sums up in the fact that through Jesus we are redeemed and can now approach the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Almighty God as "Our Father." It defines our position as His child, a member of His family and establishes our place in His Kingdom for eternity. It is a name that speaks of an intimate, close relationship based on a permanent association bound by blood ties. "Our Father" is a phrase of adoration that is linked with love and commitment to one another. Andrew Murray said it so well, "The life of prayer has its joy in the infinite tenderness, care and patience of an infinite Father who is ready to hear and to help."³ It is the knowledge of the Father's love for His children that forms the foundation of all other teachings and defines His call to relationship and intimate fellowship. Rom. 8:35-39

In knowing God as our Father, we find aspects of His character only hinted at in all of his other names. A.B. Simpson, in his book, "The Life of Prayer" stated, "The name "Father" expresses the most personal, tender love and protection, care and intimacy...delightful, affectionate and intimate fellowship." He will meet every expectation we have ever had of the perfect parent, one who will never leave us, fail us or forsake us. In the Father, we find the name that offers us the greatest opportunity to have an intimate relationship, a close friendship with the Most High God as His son or daughter. Look up the verses and meditate on these characteristics of Your Heavenly Father and apply them to your own life and your own expectations of a parent. Are there ways that you have learned to relate to the heavenly father through your own earthly dad? Has this had a negative or positive impact on your ability to understand the Father's love? 1 John 2:13

Meditate on these aspects of God's Father Heart toward those who are His children.

² Knowing God as a Loving Father, From "Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict" by Rhiannon Lloyd, copyright 1998 by Mercy Ministries International, pages 41-47.

³ Andrew Murray on Prayer p. 331

- ♥ **Your Father created you, knows everything about you:** Ps. 139:1-4
- ♥ **He is kind and forgiving:** Ps 86:5; Jer 9:24; Mic 7:18-20; Eph 2:7; Tit 3:4-5; 1 John 1:9
- ♥ **Solid, Steadfast and Unchanging:** Heb. 13:5
- ♥ **He loves us:** Jer 31:3; Jn 13:1; 16:27 (AMP); Eph 5:1 (AMP); 1 John 3:1 (NIV, AMP); Lam 3:22-25
- ♥ **He is strong, gentle, patient, kind, and compassionate:** Ps 103:13; Mt 9:36; 14:14; Lk 15:20; 2Co 1:3
- ♥ **He delights in His children, takes joy and satisfaction in our presence:** Zeph. 3:17; Ps 147:11; 149:4; Prov 8:30-31; Ps. 37:23-26
- ♥ **He cares for us:** Deut 32:10-11; 1Pet 5:7
- ♥ **He calls us His beloved friends:** Deut 33:12; John 15:13-15; James 2:23
- ♥ **He relates intimately to us and calls us by name:** Job 29:4; Isa 43:1-2; John 10-14. 27
- ♥ **He gives us constant attention:** Deut 31:8; Ps 34:15; 139:16; Matt 28;20
- ♥ **He nurtures, establishing, teaches, guides us:** Ps 27:10; Hos 11:1-4; 1 Pet 5:10
- ♥ **He encourages and affirms us:** Isa 41:8-13; Luke 12:32
- ♥ **He is patient and gentle with us:** Ps 103:8; Matt 11:29; 2Cor 10:1; 1Ti 1:16; 2Pet 3.9
- ♥ **He instructs and guides us:** Ps 32:8; Isa 48:17; John 8:12; 14:26
- ♥ **He provides for us:** Ps 23:1; 34:9; John 16:24
- ♥ **He enjoys giving us good gifts:** Jer 32:40; Lk 11:13; Jas 1:17
- ♥ **He disciplines us as sons & daughters because He loves us:** Jer 46:28; Heb 12:5-11

Jesus did not instruct us to pray to “His Father” or “the Father” but to “Our Father.” In our Father, we are assured that we will never be alone. We are part of a family. Even though this name allows us to have a close, personal relationship with God, the Father, we are also brought into a family of believers and when we pray, our prayers are united with theirs as they ascend before His Throne. Most significantly, Jesus stands with us in the place of prayer. Meditate upon the significance of being able to join Jesus in the place of prayer before the Father’s throne. Have you considered prayer as joining Jesus in being about the Father’s business? How will this change the way you approach prayer? Eph. 2:18, 1 John 1:3

“Our Father” The phrase “Our Father” is significant in three ways:

1. God has become "**Our** Father" through our rebirth as sons and daughters of the LORD, so **we may stand with Jesus** in the place of prayer. No longer does Jesus alone refer to God as His father, we are His children, granted to **pray with Jesus** and "in His Name." When we pray, "Our Father" we are establishing our kinship with Jesus Christ, the Firstborn among many brothers. Jesus makes it clear that not everyone is given the privilege of calling God their Father. We cannot see the Father unless Jesus reveals Him. The word 'reveal' means to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up, to disclose, make known or manifest. The idea is to make manifest or disclose what before was unknown." (Matt. 11:27) We may call Him 'Father' because we are born again through Jesus, Our Savior. He spoke clearly that some people are classified with their father, the devil. (See Matt. 7:21-23; John 8:44)

2. Jesus is teaching us that we stand before His throne not only as an individual but **as a member of the Body of Christ**. We are to stand before His throne united in heart with other believers, in one mind and one purpose for the sake of the Gospel. We approach the throne of "our Father" as a corporate body devoted to His concerns.

3. The emphasis is that our prayers are not to be for ourselves alone, but directed to the Father **on behalf of all of our brothers and sisters in the LORD**. There is no "I," "My" or "Mine" anywhere in this prayer, instead the prayer focuses upon "us," "we" and "our."

Digging Deeper In the Word

1. Read Psalm 45 regarding the King's daughter. Do you think of yourself as a son or daughter of the King? How would this knowledge change the way you live? How would it change your prayers? Are you able to identify yourself as a son or daughter of the King? Allow these words to become spirit and truth in your life. Meditate upon them. Pray them for yourself and others.

2. Look up the following verses in your Bible. Make notes as to what the verses tell you about the Father and your relationship with Him. We need to allow these words to become spirit and truth in our lives. Meditate upon these verses; pray them for yourself and others.

f. 2 Pet 1:4	Eph. 6:1-3	Luke 11:13	John 14:6
g. Rom 8:15	1 John 3:1	John 17: 25-26	Isa. 64:8
h. Mark 14:36	John 8:42-44	James 1:17	Gal. 4:6
i. John 20:17	Acts 17:27-28	2 Sam 7:13-15 (AMP)	

3. Read the prayer in Ephesians 1:3-23. In the Spirit-filled Life Bible's Kingdom Dynamics, it states, "Paul says that he prays for people to receive "the spirit of wisdom and revelation," with the dual objective of their knowing Christ and understanding God's purpose and power in their lives. Such "revelation" refers to an unveiling of our hearts that we might receive insight into the "way" God's Word is intended to work in our lives. Write this verse on an index card and place it someplace where you will see it every day. Make a practice of praying this prayer for yourself, your loved ones, and for the Church.

What the Father is speaking to your heart?

How would you like to respond to your Father?