

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

What does it mean to you to have God as your heavenly Father? In my experience I have had a struggle with that. When I was in the 4th grade my father left home, never to return, so the term FATHER was a bad experience for me. And for everyone of us growing up - the closest thing to God that a child sees is his Daddy. In counselling I've discovered that a person largely projects the experiences and treatment of their earthly father over to their heavenly Father, and that is destructive to a meaningful relationship that significantly effects one's life. The only way to correct that (or any other wrong beliefs about God) is to transform your mind by the truth about God. First, I want to expose some further:

MISCONCEPTIONS

"Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man" - the common liberal teaching is that God is everyone's father and that we are all brothers. This is only true in one sense - in the sense of creation. Mal.2:10, "We all have one father, has not God created us all?"

But in the sense of RELATIONSHIP - God is not the father of all men! John 8:44. The Bible characterizes two families: The children of God and the children of the devil. Only those who have trusted in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for their sin have been born again into the family of God (Jn.1:12, our spiritual rebirth certificate).

Past Philosophies - still reflect today's attitudes.

Aristotle - "The unmoved mover"

STOICISM - "The major essential attribute for God was "Apatheiu" - the inability to experience any feeling. The argument was simple and logical. They reasoned that if a person can feel love, he can be hurt. If a person can feel joy they can feel sadness. Therefore, God can't feel anything or He could be hurt (all based on the premise that God can't be hurt). So their gods were totally passionless, emotionless and incapable of feeling anything emotionally. Apathetic and indifferent. MANY CHRISTIAN FATHERS ARE LIKE THAT but not God, our Father." (MacArthur)

Benjamin Franklin - "Clock winder God" - Deistic - just started us up and left.

EPICUREAN - "They said the supreme attribute of God was "ataraxia", term meaning complete serenity, complete calm, perfect peace. Now they said that if gods get involved in human affairs they would lose their serenity - lose their calm or coolness. So the Epicureans concluded that God was completely and totally detached from the world today - Deistic view - there's a power that gets it going then walks away because he doesn't want to get involved. Many people, even Christians, think God is apathetic or indifferent (as the Stoics) or detached and totally uninterested and isolated from every human condition, an impersonal force. Yet God is so personal He desires us to call Him "Our Father." (MacArthur)

OTHER MISCONCEPTIONS - a "wishy washy grandad" or "Santa Claus" whom we call on for special gifts, or the "man upstairs" largely ignored except in times of severe crisis. Some Christians even see God as a parachute, a comfort to know He is there but you hope you will never have to use Him!

MISCONCEPTIONS COMMON AMONG CHRISTIANS - Great tyrant, judge, dictator with iron rule, who will pounce vengefully on His subjects for the slightest infraction!
No, God does not walk around wrathfully carrying a club with a nail in it!

Jesus Christ rejected all that wrong thinking and characterized God as the all wise, all powerful, all loving Heavenly Father! Jesus acknowledged the Father as judge and king, but revealed God mostly as an intimate companion whom we can reverently call Daddy. The Aramaic word Jesus spoke in mostly was ABBA - "Daddy." Greek word - "PATER." (Jesus probably spoke Aramaic more than Greek).

In Jesus' day, no Jew called God, "Father". In fact, because of their legalism - setting up manmade systems of rules for spirituality and holiness - the Jewish religious system of the day lost all closeness to God as even their "National Father". Let's begin to unravel this progressive revelation of God as Father throughout Biblical history.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FATHERHOOD OF GOD IN OLD TESTAMENT

There are about 20 references to the Fatherhood of God in the Old Testament: observe what they reveal about God's relationship to His people specifically:

Ex.4:22 - "Israel is My son, My first born" (Father, more nationally than personally).

Deut.14:1 - "You are children of the Lord your God." FAMILY IDENTITY.

Deut.32:6 - "Do you thus repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who bought you, He made you and established you!" OWNERSHIP.

II Sam.7:14 - "I will be his Father, he will be My son, I will chasten him." DISCIPLINE.

I Chron.22:10 - "He (Solomon) shall be a son to Me and I will be his father."

I Chron.28:6 - "For I have chosen him (Solomon) to be a son to Me and I will be a father to him." PERSONAL INTEREST.

I Chron.29:1- (David's prayer) "Blessed art Thou O Lord God of Israel, our Father forever." NATIONALLY.

Ps.68:5 - "God is a father to the fatherless." COMFORT and PROTECTION. (There are 40 references in Scripture to "fatherless". See study: "Biblical Instructions Regarding the Fatherless and Widow"). God's role to the fatherless:

Ps.27:10 - "When my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will take me up."

Ps.10:14 - "The Lord is the helper to the fatherless."

Ex.22:23 - "The Lord hears the cry of the fatherless."

Isa.10:1-3 - "The Lord punishes those who oppress the fatherless."

Deut.10:18 - "The Lord executes judgment for the fatherless."

Ps.146:9 - "The Lord supports the fatherless."

Ps.89:26 - "Thou art my Father, my God and rock of my salvation." SUPPORT TO HIS CHILDREN.

Ps.103:13-14 - "Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him, He knows our frame and He is mindful that we are but dust." COMPASSIONATE GRACE OF GOD, SENSITIVE, PATIENT (forgiving, merciful, loving).

Isa.1:2 - "Listen O sons that I have raised and reared up..."(stays with us, no "Deistic" mentality). NURTURING.

Isa.9:6 - "Everlasting Father". PERMANENT, ETERNAL COVENANT.

Isa.63:16 - "Thou O Lord art our Father, our Redeemer, Thy name is everlasting." SAVIOR.

Isa.64:8 - "But Thou O Lord art our Father - we are the clay, Thou art the potter, we are the works of Thy hands." HIS WORKMANSHIP.

Jer.3:19 - "You shall call Me "My Father: and not turn away from following Me." GUIDANCE.

Jer.31:9 - "I will lead them and make them walk in straight paths, they shall not stumble, for I am a Father to Israel." No Christian should have an identity crisis.

Hos.1:10 - "You are the sons of the Living God." LIVING IDENTITY.

Mal.1:6 - "As a son honors his father and a servant his master, if I am a father, where is my honor, and if a master, where is my respect?" REQUIRES HONOR AND RESPECT.

Even though God was revealed as Father in a national sense, there was still a personal sense of overall care, as any father would take care of his children. But again, only these 20 references. When Jesus Christ came, He related God as Father more than any other term.

In the four Gospels - God is referred to as "Father" 189 times.
In the Gospel of John - 124 times.

Perhaps the most significant introduction Jesus used to us referring to God as Father is in the Disciples prayer (Matt.6:9-15). When they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray", Jesus said, "Pray after this manner (or pattern), Our Father.." We believers have the right and privilege to address God the Creator, Awesomeness, Majesty, Power, Glory - Our Father.

- It's a title filled with richness and meaning, personal warmth, companionship.
- It's an affirmation of intimacy with God that is wonderous. The world worships gods that are unresponsive, distant, remote and surrounded by fear.
- It's the recognition that God is our loving, heavenly Father is where all prayer begins.

Note Rom.8:14-16 and Gal.4:6. "ABBA" - a term used in reference to God belonging to family relationship. In Jesus' day a small child called his father "Daddy" (or Abba).

Again, Jesus related God as our Heavenly Father more than any other key concept in revealing God to man/us! And HE is our Perfect Father - no matter what bad experiences, wrong concepts, or distorted views may have shaped our beliefs toward what a "Father" is and what he is supposed to do. Our focus as a child of God can be transformed when we look to our Heavenly Father, as revealed in the Bible.

I have studied over 250 references in the New Testament and was just overwhelmed at the information. "Seek and ye shall find" means in abundance too! But I couldn't help but think how many Christians unfortunately go for days, even weeks without acknowledging God as their Father. This beautiful family relationship is so enriching that God is saying by it, "I want to be an intimate part of your life!"

John 4:23 - the Father seeks us to be His worshippers. Read through the book of John and meditate on the perfect Father/child relationship. List the references and what you learn about the Fatherhood of God from them. (See pages 5 and 6).

Since God has used His Fatherhood to relate Himself to us more than any other relationship, we need to understand and to study it out!

- 1 - God is the perfect Father.
- 2 - He is the example that we as fathers should follow.
- 3 - It's only by my understanding how He has been this way to me that I will be motivated to be the same way.
- 4 - It's true that the closest thing to God that a child sees is his Daddy. That is the relationship people use most in forming their concept of God (unless they have meditated on the Scriptural revelation of the Fatherhood of God).
- 5 - So we must strive to be imitators of God (Eph.5:1) and as we transform our minds on these truths, we will be the kind of father that reflects God.

Father in heaven - "I want to be to my children/family what You are to me. Help me to understand that special place that you want to have in my life."

Now, let's take a closer look at some further teaching from the New Testament.

Did you realize that Jesus revealed "Fatherhood of God" more than any other concept about God? In the references below (and following) think through these 2 questions and record your observations.

1. What does Jesus Christ reveal about God being our Father?
2. What do we learn about our Heavenly Father from these New Testament insights?

Matt.5:45 - Your Father in heaven.

6:4-8 - Your Father sees in secret and will reward you openly. He knows what things we have need of, before we ask.

6:9 - "Our Father who art in heaven" - address God in prayer.

7:11 - How much more shall your Heavenly Father give what is good to those who ask (7:7-12).

10:20 - It is not you that speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking in you.

10:29 - A sparrow shall not fall to the ground without your Father...

11:25 - "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and have revealed them to babes."

11:26 - "Even so, Father, it seemed good in Thy sight."

11:27 - All things are delivered to me by my Father, no man knows the Son but the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whomever the Son reveals Him.

12:50 - Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven the same is....

13:43 - The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

15:13 - Every plant my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.

16:17 - Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

16:27 - The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels.

18:10 - Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven, there angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

18:14 - It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

18:19 - If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in heaven.

20:23 - To sit on my right hand and left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for who it is prepared of my Father.

26:29 - I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

26:39 - O, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but Thy will be done.

- Ask God to reveal to you and give understanding to this "Fatherhood" concept.

- Meditate on the perfect Father and Son relationship and what is revealed.

- The more you think of it, the more real it becomes!

- Because of Who He is, how should we respond to our Heavenly Father?

- Is this your relationship experientially? It can be, if you are in Christ.

ADOPTION - NO CHRISTIAN IS AN ORPHAN

Observe the beautiful concept explained in Scripture revealing the doctrine of the adoption of us by our Heavenly Father:

Deut.14:1

Deut.27:9

Deut.32:5-6

Isa.43:6

Isa.63:16

Jer.3:19

Jer.31:9

Hos.1:9

Matt.5:45

Lk.6:35

Jn.1:12-13

Jn.11:52

Rom.8:14-21, 29

11 Cor.6:18

Gal.3:26

Gal.4:5-7

Eph.1:5	1:3	Col. Heb.12:6-9	18:15
Eph.2:19	1:12	1 Jn.3:1	18:23
Eph.3:6	3:2	1 Jn.3:2	18:25
Eph.3:15	3:17	1 Jn.3:10	18:26
Phil.2:15	1:1	1 Jn.4:4	18:27
Heb.2:10-13	1:3	Rev.21:7	18:28

If you are really serious about expanding your concept of God as your Father, observe from the following verses insights revealing this truth to you. Each verse says something different about the Fatherhood of God.

John 1:14	1:1-2	John 10:37	17:11
1:18	2:10	10:38	17:21
2:16	1:2	12:26	17:24
4:21	12:6-8	12:27	20:17
4:23	12:9	12:28	20:21
5:17	1:17	12:50	Luke 2:49
5:18	1:27	13:3	10:22
5:19	3:9	14:2	22:29
5:20	1:2	14:6	23:46
5:21	1:3	14:7	Acts 1:4
5:22	1:17	14:8	2:33
5:23	1:2	14:9	John 1:3
5:36	2:1	14:10	1:7
5:37	2:13	14:11	8:12
5:43	2:15	14:12	1 Cor. 8:6
6:27	2:22	14:13	13:24
6:32	2:23	14:16	11 Cor. 1:3
6:44	2:24	14:20	6:18
6:45	3:1	14:21	Gal. 1:1
6:46	3:14	14:23	1:4
8:19	2 John 1:3	14:24	4:4, 2
8:26-30	1:4	14:26	4:8, 7
8:38	1:9	14:31	Eph. 1:2
8:41	1:1	15:8	1:17
8:42	1:2	15:9	2:18
8:49	1:6	15:10	2:14
10:15	3:2	15:16	4:6
10:29	14:1	15:23	2:20
10:30		15:24	
10:32		15:26	
10:33		16:3	
10:36		16:10	

John	16:15	Col.	1:3
	16:23		1:12
	16:25		2:2
	16:26		3:17
	16:27	1 Thes.	1:1
	16:28		1:3
	17:1		3:11
	17:5		3:13
	17:11	2 Thes.	1:1-2
	17:21		2:16
	17:24	Heb.	1:5
	20:17		12:6-8
	20:21		12:9
Luke	2:49	James	1:17
	10:22		1:27
	22:29		3:9
	23:46	1 Pet.	1:2
Acts	1:4		1:3
	2:33		1:17
Rom.	1:3	1 John	1:2
	1:7		2:1
	8:15		2:13
I Cor.	8:6		2:15
	15:24		2:22
II Cor.	1:3		2:23
	6:18		2:24
Gal.	1:1		3:1
	1:4		3:14
	4:4,5	2 John	1:3
	4:6,7		1:4
Eph.	1:3		1:9
	1:17	Jude	1:1
	2:18	Rev.	1:5
	3:14		1:6
	4:6		3:5
	5:20		14:1

These are not all the references in the Bible teaching us about the Fatherhood of God. Others not listed would probably overlap with these. I pray this study has deepened your own relationship to "Our Father." Remember, He is seeking worshippers. Are you seeking to be one?