

The Father Heart of God

Text: Rom 8:15 *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father".*

Gal 4:6 *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father".*

Introduction: What do you think of when you hear the word "father"? Do you think of protection, provision, warmth, and tenderness? Or does the word "father" paint different kinds of pictures for you? God reveals Himself in the Bible as a gentle, forgiving Father, intimately involved with each and every detail of our lives. However, every person seems to have a different idea of what God is like, because they unconsciously tend to attach the feelings and impressions that they have of their own earthly father to their concept of their Heavenly Father. Each person's own experience with human authority is usually transferred over to how they relate to God. Good experiences bring us closer to knowing and understanding God, just as bad experiences can create distorted pictures of our Father's love for us. The Bible says, **"God makes a home for the lonely" (Psalm 68:6)**. What if you have been failed in some way by parental authority? So many have suffered hurt and rejection by their families that it is hard for them to see God as He really is. I want to talk about six different areas of misconception concerning God and His love for us

1. A Fathers Authority: Have you ever come home to be greeted by the family dog? The foolish mutt will either cower away from you, trembling with fear, or leap upon you with an unwanted display of affection, demonstrated with tongue, tail, and dirty paws. The browbeaten puppy that cannot be induced to trust you has obviously been mistreated. The exuberant mongrel attempting to give you a facial with his tongue has obviously come from a loving home. So it is when God approaches man. Our past experiences dictate our response when God reaches out to us. A weeping prophet named Hosea heard the voice of God saying, **"When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from Me. They sacrificed to the baals and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them."** (Hosea 11:1-4 LB)

God's authority is not harsh and vindictive. He is unspeakably gentle and long-suffering. What horror is God seeing in the world at this moment? Our problem is that we, like the browbeaten puppy, shrink away from the One who we assume will be just like all the other bad experiences and people of authority who have hurt us in our lives. But He is not like that - He is perfect love. It was God who gave this command to parents in Ephesians 6:4: **"Parents don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord Himself approves."**(LB)

2. A Fathers Faithfulness: Do you distrust God? You are God's child and even now He calls your name, but maybe deep in your heart you doubt His faithfulness. As a child you may have experienced the complete absence of a father because of death or divorce. Maybe you were orphaned by the demands of your parents' career? Or is it just the childhood memory of broken promises or neglect that haunts you. Do you have an inability to sense His presence with you? Is your heart soft towards God or hardened with cynicism and distrust?. **"I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you... I am with you always even until the end of the age."**(Heb. 13:5; Matt.28:20 NASB). Few people know God in all His loveliness. Many of us are like the thief who died on the cross next to Jesus. Outwardly he saw a bloody, disfigured body, but soon he began to perceive the true nature of Jesus, and at the last minute,

entered by faith into the family of God. We too must see past the religious and commercial mutations of Jesus, and behold the God of Love who still stands with open arms saying, ***"I came that you might have life and that more abundantly."*** (John 10:10 NASB)

3. A Fathers Generosity: The truth is that God is innately generous. Creation shows an extravagance of color, complexity, and design that goes far beyond simple functional value. At this moment, high in the Italian Alps, a tiny white flower glistens in the sunlight. It has never been seen by the human eye in all of its seasons of bloom. It is not an essential part of the food chain. It was created by God in the hope that one day a son of Adam or a daughter of Eve might glance at it and be blessed by its beauty. We serve a truly generous God! The Psalmist said, ***"Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it."*** (Psalm 37:3-5 NASB)

4. A Fathers Affection: Do you have any idea how attractive you are to God? Many children, particularly boys, have had no physical display of affection from their fathers, or no real compassion when they are hurt. Because of our false concept of masculinity, we are told, "Don't cry son, boys don't cry." Jesus is not like that. His compassion and understanding are measureless. He feels our hurts more deeply than we do because His sensitivity to suffering is so much greater. You have forgotten most of your pains, but God has not. He has perfect recall of every moment of your life. Your tears are still mingled with His at this very moment. ***"I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love."*** (Hosea 11:4 NIV). Moses once invoked a blessing on each of the tribes of Israel. To one tribe he said, ***"You shall dwell between the shoulders of God."*** What a fantastic blessing! But that is where you dwell also. Whatever you become in the eyes of men, even a person of great authority, fame, or title, you will never cease to be more or less than a babe in the arms of God.

5. A Fathers Attentiveness: There is one attribute of God that not even the best parent can hope to imitate - that is God's ability to be with you all the time. As parents we just cannot give constant attention 24 hours a day. We are finite beings who can only focus on one thing at a time. Not only is God with you all the time, but He gives you His whole attention. ***"Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you."*** (1 Peter 5:7 LB). God is constantly thinking an uninterrupted stream of loving thoughts toward you as though nobody else in the world exists. You say, "How does He do that? How can He be personally involved with billions of individuals at the same time?" I don't know, but I know it's no problem for the Creator of the world. Perhaps the explanation is the speed of His thought. There are 5 billion people on this planet. God has created things in nature that pulsate at incredible speed. I have heard that the quartz crystal's molecular structure vibrates at the speed of 9 billion movements per second. If God could only think that fast, He could think a loving thought towards you about twice every second without straining His ability to relate to the rest of His children. Who knows how He does it? Just enjoy it! As far as you are concerned, it's just you and God. You don't have to get His attention, He's already listening. Don't worry about taking His time... it's all yours.

6. A Fathers Acceptance: We live in a performance-oriented society. Acceptance is always conditional - *if* you make the football team, *if* you bring home a good report card, *if* you look pretty, *if* you have money, *if* you win. The kingdom of this world is a kingdom of rejection. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of unconditional love. Many of us have an inability to receive God's love and approval. Yet ***"He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."*** (Zeph. 3:17 KJV). God already loves you. All through life you have had to perform and compete. Even as a tiny baby you were compared with other babies. People said you were "too fat," or "too thin," or had "his legs" or "her nose," but God delighted in your uniqueness and still does. It's when you bask in the love of the Father that you cause God to ***"rest in His love and joy over you with singing."***

Conclusion: If you see that you have been hindered in your relationship with God due to some kind of failure of parental love, then take these things to the Lord. You must find forgiveness in your heart towards anyone who has hurt you. If you don't, your bitterness will consume you and you will find no

peace with God. Realize, too, that you are not alone.. One of the keys for release is found in forgiveness. The important thing is that you go forward and get to know God for who He really is - not who you think He is. He is the Perfect Father. He always disciplines in love. He is faithful, generous, kind, and just He loves you and He longs to spend time with you. He wants you to receive His love and know that you are a special and unique person to Him. Will you receive God's love and affection? Won't you open up and enter into an intimate relationship with your true Father? He is patiently waiting for you to come.