

Do You Know God Simply as God or God ~~the~~ *Your* Father?

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I. Introduction

It's good that a special day is set aside to honor fathers across the globe. We should honor them and acknowledge their role in our lives. Without the love, protection, provision, and guidance of a father, a child's life will be difficult to say the least. Where did mankind get the idea of fatherhood? What model should men follow who wish to be excellent fathers? Does God reveal Himself as a Father, if He does, what kind of Father is He?

II. Do You Know That God is Your Father?

The God of the universe decided to make us His children, it is astounding that a God who can make this universe appear out of thin air, who can make the heavens thunder and the mountains quake, decided to make us His children. He would have been content to dwell with His Son and His Spirit for all eternity in a perfect and never-ending bond of love, yet He decided to invite us into this marvelous union. It's also amazing that when He decided to make us and adopt us as His own, He did so with the most personal, meticulous, and tender care imaginable. He made sure to provide everything we needed to thrive: the breath of life, a beautiful home, wonderful food, a satisfying career, protection, an amazing spouse that fit like a tailor-made glove, and the concept of family, including fatherhood, Genesis 2.

And when we walked away, He decided to rescue us knowing it would cost Him a Son, soon after God made us and showered us with His incredible love, we walked away from Him. Satan convinced us that we could live independently from our Heavenly Father. But our Father's love wasn't deterred. In fact, it reached new heights. Instead of walking away from us, He ran to our rescue, knowing full well that it would cost Him His beloved Son, Genesis 3.

God wants us to know that He is our Father, always, some of us grew up never knowing our father, some had a father but it would've been better if they'd never known him. God wants us to know that though our earthly father may've forsaken us, He will never abandon us. Instead, He will always take care of us, Psalm 27:10. There are many gods in this world (1 Corinthians 8:5) and to find favor with each one of them requires much work on our part. But the God of creation requires nothing of us to become His children and receive His love. In fact, He does all the work; He's the one who gives birth to us, John 1:12-13 (cf. James 1:18; Galatians 3:26; 1 Corinthians 8:6). God yearns for us jealously; He doesn't like it when we give the love that rightly belongs to Him to another. He is our Father and we are His sons and daughters, 2 Corinthians 6:16-18. He wants us to know this so deeply—the fact that He will always be our Father—that He's placed His Spirit within us and it cries out along with our spirit that we are His children! Romans 8:16 (cf. Galatians 4:6). We are so His and so beloved by Him that He wants us to imitate Him as dear children, Ephesians 5:1.

He showered us with His love, as incredible as it may sound, God made us His children because of His incredible love for us, 1 John 3:1.

He protects and guides, especially from our true enemy: Satan, He's given us the Spirit of His Son, which gives us direct access to Him as our Father, Galatians 4:6. And when we call on Him, He helps us, Hebrews 4:16. Every time Satan attacks all we have to do is put ourselves under God's control, resist the Devil's lies, and Satan will flee, James 4:7. God wants nothing better than for us to bring all our troubles to Him, that's how much He cares for us, 1 Peter 5:7.

He's not just your Father, He's your "Daddy," in Scripture God is called Father, Psalm 68:5; Mathew 6:9; Ephesians 3:14-15. But He's not just our Father, He wants us to call Him "Daddy." This implies that He longs for our relationship with Him to be close, intimate, and filled with trust, the kind of trust that a child places on their "daddy," Galatians 4:6.

He's always thinking of you, over and over in the New Testament epistles God reveals that He wants us to be surrounded by His *grace and peace*. This is how He begins many of the New Testament letters: Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:3.

He disciplines instead of punishes, every child eventually disobeys his father and will incur his discipline. So it is with us and our Heavenly Father. When we disobey Him, He disciplines us. But there's a difference between discipline and punishment: Punishment seeks to inflict enough pain to discourage the offense from reoccurring. It wants the person to suffer for their wrong. It focuses on the past and the person's guilt which can lead to fear and shame. In a word, it's retribution. On the other hand, discipline focuses on the future and seeks to produce the character of Christ in those who fail. It seeks to equip the individual with the necessary training that will lead to maturity and fruitfulness. They don't suffer for their wrong per se but face appropriate consequences. All this empowers them to have a better future. That's why in every verse of Hebrews 12:5-11 you see the word (*chasten or discipline*) which means *training or instruction* which is attained by *discipline, correction*. God's not looking to punish us, but to lovingly correct us for our own future benefit.

A daughter senses her Father's love through EXCRUCIATING pain! My mother was in tremendous back pain. On a scale from 1-10 it was now an 8 or 9 constantly. About eight years ago a doctor suggested getting cement injected into her back. She then got a second opinion and he told her, "It's good that you didn't get it done; it's very painful." But she was now in so much pain that she went to see a pain specialist who also recommended injecting cement into her vertebrae. This procedure, if it worked, would alleviate the pain immediately. But she was terrified that the procedure would hurt (or cause more pain). The doctor assured her that it wouldn't, since the x-ray showed her bones to be the consistency of butter allowing the needle to penetrate easily. She went to one final consultation, absolutely determined to say "no" and to look into it further but the doctor repeated again that her bones were like butter. And this time a peace came over her. So to her surprise she left saying "yes." On the day of the procedure, a dear sister in the Lord, Roxanne, and my wife took her. When they got there, they prayed with her asking God to reveal His presence to her. Immediately after they prayed, my mother felt a calming breeze envelop her and she felt safe like a baby that's been wrapped in a warm blanket. And she knew that God was right there with her. Roxanne and my wife didn't feel this breeze only my mom (the Hebrew word for Spirit means breeze, breath, wind, cf. Genesis 7:22). My mom didn't want to mention the breeze to them; she thought they'd probably think she was crazy or wouldn't believe her. She was now absolutely at ease about the procedure. That is, until the nurse came and got her and she was separated from my wife and Roxanne. She began feeling tremendous anxiety and fear. When the nurse came to give her an IV, she asked, "Will this help me relax?"

The nurse replied, "I wish it would, but no, it won't." When the nurse left, a sudden chill came over her, an absolute coldness that enveloped her with fear. Then she heard Satan say, "Now, it's time. You gotta get up and leave. Go!" She was so terrified and on the verge of running out of there, but then she heard God say, "Why are you afraid now that it's here? Why do you fear?" Then the doctor came in and said very calmly, "Don't be afraid, it's all going to be alright." And my mom felt peace again.

As the doctor began, he noticed that her bones were not like butter and had to use a drill and a hammer. Each time the doctor hammered into her back, she felt the worst pain of her life. In tears, she pleaded, "No more doctor, please, stop. No more..." And when he injected the cement, it felt like her back was going to explode. She kept pleading for him to stop. As he discussed the situation with his nurse, my mom could hear them but they didn't realize that she could understand what they were saying. The doctor felt horrible and was telling the nurse that he'd like to finish the procedure, but she was in so much pain. The nurse wanted him to finish so she could feel relief afterwards. But the doctor said, "We can't, she's in too much pain."

Something else incredible happened: when the pain began, in the midst of her tears, my mom thought of Jesus' crucified hands and feet and said to herself, "How can I complain about this pain. This is nothing compared to the unbelievable pain He went through for me because He loved me."

When it was over, the doctor asked her to sit up. And he was surprised when she did it on her own. He then asked her to step down and she again was able to do it on her own. But my mother was angry with him and said, "You told me that it wasn't going to hurt." He apologized and said, "I'm so sorry. This has never happened before; the x-rays were wrong. Your bones are not like butter." She left and that night she felt a lot of pain. When she woke up the next day the pain was at a 4 and she realized that for the first time in 10 years she was able to roll over on her side without pain. She was able to sleep in any position with hardly any pain.

She then understood what God had done: every time my mother heard someone give their testimony of God healing them, she doubted. And recently when she heard another woman's story in our church, how God had instantly healed her hip and leg pain, my mom started questioning God about her faith. I asked if she was angry with God but she said, "No, I wasn't angry with Him. I just kept asking Him, 'Why don't you hear my prayers, my pleas for healing? Is there something wrong with my faith? If there's something wrong with my faith, please tell me.'" But now that God put her through this, she understood. She told me, "I now understand that God loves me and that I am His daughter. Even if this only lasts another day, it's OK. I will never forget what God has shown me through this. He showed me the two forces: Satan who wants his captive, who won't let go of you; he keeps coming and coming holding on to you. But God is stronger; He will not let Satan win. The doctor did not know what was coming when he told me, 'Don't worry; it won't hurt' but God did. He knew I was going to feel this excruciating pain. But it was as if He was answering my questions about my faith. It was Him saying to me, 'You want to know about your faith, I'm going to show you. I'm going to show you the two forces and what I can do when you believe.' That's why He was there with me in the breeze. That's why the peace came over me. He's opened my eyes and I realize that I need to see everything differently. I need to be conscious of how I treat others; they are His children too. I will never forget. Although this was the worst pain ever, it was beautiful."

III. Conclusion

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!