



October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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## Turning To God's Trustworthiness

### 1. Reject the FALSE NARRATIVE:

THE DEADBEAT GOD

### 2. Embrace the JESUS NARRATIVE:

GOD IS A LOVING FATHER

*My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. – Luke 10:22 NLT*

*“Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” – Mark 14:36 NLT*

*I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom every family in heaven and on earth is named [that Father from whom all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name]. – Ephesians 3:14-15 AMP*

## Fatherhood Found In A Prayer

### 1. GOD IS PRESENT

*Our Father, which art in heaven... Matthew 6:9 KJV*

### 2. GOD IS PURE

*Hallowed be thy name... Matthew 6:9 KJV*

### 3. GOD IS POWERFUL

*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven... Matthew 6:10 KJV*

### 4. GOD IS A PROVIDER

*Give us this day our daily bread... Matthew 6:11 KJV*

### 5. GOD IS A PARDONER

*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors...Matthew 6:12 KJV*

### 6. GOD IS A PROTECTOR

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, AMEN - Matthew 6:13 KJV*

## WHAT IS YOUR CUP?

*The Father that Jesus addresses in the garden is the one that he has known all his life and found to be bountiful in his provision, reliable in his promises and utterly faithful in his love. He can obey the will that sends him to the cross, with hope and expectation because it is the will of Abba whose love has been so proved that it can now be trusted so fully by being obeyed so completely. This is not legal obedience driven by commandment, but trusting response to known love. – Thomas Smail, The Forgotten Father*

***Into your hands I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God! – Psalm 31:5 ESV (compare with Luke 23:46)***

***Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. – 1 Peter 4:19 ESV***

### I Will Turn To God by...

- Memorizing **1 Peter 4:19**
- Trusting him even when I don't understand his plan.
- Loving the Father-God the way Jesus did.
- Surrendering my life, for the first time, to Christ as my Savior.

1. How would you respond to a person who says, “I have trouble calling God ‘Father’ because my biological father was not very good”?
2. When you read through the six aspects of good parenting above, that God himself exemplifies, which one or ones get the most of your attention? Explain.
3. Has there been a struggle to see God as your Father in one of these six areas?
4. What is your “cup”? How have you dealt with it? What have you learned about God or yourself through that experience?
5. Name three blessings in your life. Why is it so important to emphasize the greater blessings in our lives, that far outstrip the momentary trials that we face?
6. How does Jesus’ own relationship with his Father help you gain a better picture of God as your Father in the midst of much suffering? How does Thomas Smail’s quote above help you gain a better perspective?
7. Read this prayer aloud to one another prayerfully, as you help one another face various trials: *Our thoughts are not Your thoughts O Lord, and our ways are not Your ways. We confess to You that we cannot see Your divine hand in our suffering at times. Help us, we beg You, to see that in this evil there is some purpose, beyond our grasp and comprehension. Our minds are confused. Our hearts are in distress. Our wills are lost and weak, and our strength is gone, as we see innocence caught by the sins of the world and the power of the devil—a victim of senseless suffering and pain. Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy! Do not prolong the agony! Do not allow the pain and suffering to increase! We know not what to ask You; give us the grace only to say, “Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Give us faith, for we believe, O Lord; help our unbelief. Be with your children and suffer with us; heal us and save us, according to Your own saving plan, established before the creation of the world. For You are our only hope, O God, and in You we take refuge: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

# SOUL TRAINING – COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

## A Personal Transformation Exercise

### The Principle:

You may have read the title “Count Your Blessings” and rolled your eyes a little. The truth is that counting your blessings is a powerful spiritual exercise. God has given us so many things, big and small, that so many times go unnoticed. We rarely take enough time to slow down and notice the details. We spend most of our time thinking about our problems and ways to solve them. This isn’t always a bad thing, but we need to train ourselves to look for the good more often than the bad. Each day, God is at work providing for us, even though we cannot always see it. This week, instead of rolling your eyes or thinking that this exercise is cheesy, prayerfully and seriously think about the blessings in your life. “Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.” (James 1:17)

### The Plan:

This week, the plan is simple. Get out your journal, or a blank piece of paper, and literally make a list of things that are blessings in your life. Don’t try to be complicated, instead keep it simple and specific. The goal this week is to try and list 100 things. That sounds daunting, but when you get going, I promise that it’s much easier than you think.

If you are having trouble, try not to do this all in one sitting. Keep your list where you can add to it throughout your day and week. Jot things down as you see and/or notice them. Maybe take a short period of time to sit outside or relax in your favorite spot without any distractions (phones, tablets, TV, books, games, etc). If you are having an especially hard time, here are a few things to get you started:

1. Summer
2. Coffee
3. Good Friends
4. Pizza
5. My Dog
6. Naps
7. Laughter
8. A Sunny Day
9. Books
10. Baseball
11. Christmas