

Calvary Chapel El Monte

Essentials of the Faith

Session 3 – God the Father

It is imperative that our view of God is rooted in the pages of Scripture. We must not interpret Him according to our own experience, perceptions, or expectations.

In spite of the feminine movement on planet earth, God is **not** female, He is both masculine and Father. There is no such being as "Mother Nature."

As our Father, God loves us, provides for us, protects us, guides us, disciplines us, and much, much more.

In this session we will skim the surface on the Fatherhood of God, in the hopes that it stimulates a lifelong relationship between God and HIS children. We will also touch on the challenges some might have in relating to God as Father.

I. The Old Testament revealed God as Father to Israel, sporadically.

Under the Old Covenant we do find God portrayed as a Father. This portrayal, however, is surprisingly rare in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament God is specifically called the Father when speaking to the Nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:6 (NKJV) "Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? *Is* He not your Father, *who* bought you? Has He not made you and established you?"

Isaiah 63:16 NKJV) "Doubtless You *are* our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, *are* our Father; our Redeemer from Everlasting *is* Your name."

Isaiah 64:8 (NKJV) "But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; we *are* the clay, and You our potter; and all we *are* the work of Your hand."

We also see God as the Father of certain individuals, 15 times in the OT

In reference to Solomon:

2 Samuel 7:14 (NKJV) "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men."

In reference to the fatherless:

Psalms 68:5 (NKJV) "A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, *is* God in His holy habitation."

In reference to the Davidic King

Psalms 89:26 (NKJV) "He shall cry to Me, 'You *are* my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.'"

At times the father imagery is present, although the term "Father" is not used.

Exodus 4:22 (NKJV) "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.'"

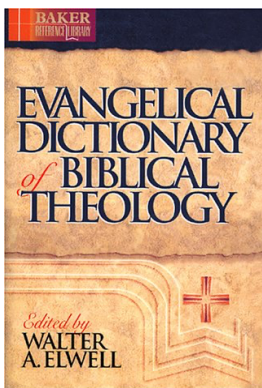
Deuteronomy 1:31 (NKJV) "and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place."

Deuteronomy 8:5 (NKJV) "You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you."

Psalms 103:13 (NKJV) "As a father pities *his* children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him."

Malachi 3:17 (NKJV) "'They shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.'"

II. In the New Testament Jesus invites us to embrace God as Father, intimately.



A large portion of this next section has come to us from **Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology**

The teaching of the Fatherhood of God rises radically with the coming of Christ, for "Father" was His favorite term for addressing God. It appears on His lips 45 times in the Synoptic Gospels and over 100 times in the Gospel of John.

The exact term Jesus used (while speaking Aramaic) is found three times in the New Testament (Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6) (Abba) but elsewhere in the New Testament the Greek word is used (pater).

The uniqueness of Jesus' teaching on this subject is evident for several reasons.

For one, the rarity of this designation for God is striking. There is no evidence in pre-Christian Jewish literature that Jews addressed God as "Abba."

A second unique feature about Jesus' use of Abba as a designation for God involves the intimacy of the term. (Abba, Daddy, Father)

The designation of the Fatherhood of God is found only 15 times in the Old Testament, but 145 times by Jesus in the 4 Gospels.

It may seem "Regular Religion" nowadays, but in Jesus' days it was Radical!

John 5:16-18

This was not just **a way** Jesus taught His disciples to address God; it was **the way**.

Luke 11:1-2

3 Words to describe how God is our Father:

1. Creation

2. Regeneration

3. Adoption

Malachi 2:10 (NKJV) Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?

John 1:11-12 (NKJV) He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Romans 8:15 (NKJV) For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

(See also Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5)

What an awesome thought that is, that if you're a Christian GOD IS YOUR FATHER! We are born-again into His family, and we are adopted into His family!

We need to let that truth sink in!

1 John 3:1a (NKJV) "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

(Other key passages – **Matthew 6:25-26, 32; 10:29-31; Luke 11:13**)

It should be pointed out that although **Jesus** addressed God as "Father" and taught His disciples to do the same, He Himself never referred to God as "Our Father."

This teaches us that His "Sonship" was different from that of His followers. He was by nature the Son; He was the perfect Son from all eternity; believers are "sons" (children) through adoption and the second birth.

Let's read a few Scriptures and see if you notice something implicitly in the following passages **Matthew 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6; 7:21; 10:32-33**.

(Jesus' unique relationship is clearly seen) where Jesus refers to "your" Father and "My" Father but never "our" Father.

We see this in the New Testament as well, which emphasizes the Fatherhood of God. In the Pauline letters God is described as "Father" over 40 times. It occurs in blessings (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3), doxologies (Romans 15:6), thanksgivings (2 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3), prayers (Colossians 1:12), exhortations (Ephesians 5:20), and creeds (1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6).

For Paul this fatherhood is based not so much on God's role in creation but rather on the redemption and reconciliation He has made available in Jesus Christ.

The description of God as "Father" is under attack today in many so-called circles. It is charged by some that this leads to a false view, that God is a male, a man, just like us, or that if we hold this view, it devalues women.

It's so tragic to see people miss the point! How do we know God? (Revelation)

While it's true that God is not a "man" (Numbers 23:19) and yes, He is a Spirit (John 4:24) without sexual parts, but as we've learned repeatedly in this course, it is imperative to yield to the way God has revealed Himself to us – and what we discover is that He, God is our Father!

III. As children living in a fallen world only our Heavenly Father demonstrates Fatherhood, perfectly.

Perceiving God as a loving, caring, and perfect Father can be a challenge for us if we haven't experienced that type of "Father-Figure" in our own lives. When some believers who were let down by their biological father in the past, hear the theological truth of God as "Father," they cringe and struggle, because unfortunately and mistakenly they transfer the traits of their human father to their Divine Father.

While earthy fathers can, at times, have certain remote similarities to Father-God, the true essence of fatherhood is found in God, not in men.

Some people dismiss this part of the doctrine of God.

Vance Fry in his article written for Focus on the Family, wrote the following:

"God...as a father? It sounds nice. But I knew better. A real father was in a home — not on a throne. Yes, God was the powerful Creator, the source of wisdom, truth and love — but He wasn't going to be there to help a kid with his math homework, throw a football around, or build a dog house together. The Architect of snowflakes and solar systems wasn't available for taking teenage boys out for breakfast to talk about the birds and the bees."

(Abuse, absence, neglect, rejection)

And yet God the Father, in all His glory, is best understood as a holy, loving, intimate, and all-powerful Pappa.

It's life-changing to realize and internalize what the Bible teaches, that we have a Heavenly Father who loves us and watches over us, every moment of every day of our lives.

(How to overcome the misrepresentation; how to improve our representation)

(The difference between pictures and reality)

Vance Fry, *"I tell my kids that just as a photograph can never capture the full experience of something, the pictures we have available to understand God are limited by our inherent inability to recognize the depth of His glory and goodness. The*

image of an earthly father, as a way of understanding God, is a good picture — and it's made clearer the better dads do their jobs — but it is still just a partial glimpse at something much bigger.”

A Few Categories for Fathers:

1. Life and Love (Physical - Malachi 2:10, Spiritual, New, Abundant)

2. Protection, Direction, and Perfection (Maturity)

3. Family, Fun, and Forgiveness (Prodigals)

A Father's words, inspiration, strength, hugs, smiles, time, and even adventures.

I've experienced this all...with my heavenly Father. Praying you will too.