

*"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." -Luke 15:20*

These words clearly depict a picture of our heavenly Father that crush my heart and motivate me to respond to Him. The perspective of God being our Father was accentuated by Jesus. His disciples asked him in Luke 11 if he could teach them to pray. He responded, "When you pray, say: Our Father..." This was revolutionary. Up until this moment, the covenant name for God was Yahweh. The Old Testament emphasized God's holiness and the demand for humility in man.

While this is still true and never changes, Jesus revealed to us something new about God that shook the Jews and it should stir us as well. He offered a richer revelation - Jesus brought out the gentler side of the Divine nature. 'Father' has now become His covenant name. Christians are His children, His sons and daughters, His heirs. To those who are Christ's, the holy God is a loving Father - they belong to His family. Now they may approach Him without fear and can always be sure of His fatherly care and concern.

John the Apostle emphasizes this relationship as well in his gospel and letters. He writes in John 1:12, "Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." In John 3:1-2, he articulates, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" Jesus familiarized men with this idea.

Where the Old Testament spoke of who God was in character, the New Testament emphasized who God could be to us from a relational place. The name "father" was on the lips of Jesus at every turn - "the Father, my Father, your Father, our Father, Abba, Father" was used to describe Him constantly. He even mentioned to Mary Magdalene prior to His ascension, "I am ascending to my Father, and your Father..."

Do I grasp this truth and identity? Do I have the full assurance within that I am Abba's child? If so, my life and my relationship with Him will continue to change in a drastic manner. Two days after John Wesley's brother Charles' conversion, he penned a hymn. Let me share two verses that highlight the fatherhood of God:

"O how shall I the goodness tell, Father, which thou to me has showed?  
That I, a child of wrath and hell, I should be called a child of God..."

The Apostle Paul embraced this idea of God as our Father in Romans 8:14-15, "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about our adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."*



Nick

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, the young people of Dunklin Memorial Church set out to Panama City to spend five days at Camp Centrifuge. The church supported them in this endeavor which created an opportunity for them to be with other members of their generation from around the nation. They celebrated the goodness of the Lord and were placed in an environment that focused on life-change through relationship with Christ. Right now, probably more so than ever, this generation needs to be prayed for and encouraged to walk with Him. The battle for truth and their minds and souls has been amplified to a point of reckoning. Our goal is to demonstrate through words and actions just how profitable it is for them to apprehend their Savior and cling to Him above all else. Messages some of them are receiving from other places are diametrically opposed to the message of life, love, and truth that the Word and life in Christ offers them. Please partner with us in prayer for these young people to be captivated by Him above all else.



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