

Our Image of God as Father

Romans 8:14-16 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

- For as many as are led by the Spirit of God – saved people. (We know this is what Paul is meaning for multiple reasons, but also because of a sister passage:
 - **Galatians 4:4-7** But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
- You did not receive a spirit of bondage *again* to fear
 - Without Jesus we are in bondage. Bondage to sin. Bondage to the law. These produce a fear of God. Fear of His wrath. Fear of His judgement.
 - Did not receive the spirit of bondage **again** - because that is what we had. We didn't get the same thing. We got something different.
- But you received the Spirit of adoption
 - Adoption at that time was different than now.
 - Adults were often adopted by others to pass an inheritance to.
 - When adopted, your entire past was gone. All debts cancelled, crimes forgiven, all legal standings wiped out, all past was gone.
 - You got a new name for the family you are now in.
 - Adoption was final. Once adopted you could never be abandoned.
- We cry out Abba Father –
 - Dearest Daddy. A familial term.
 - While we do approach an infinite, Almighty, powerful God worthy of all respect, admiration and devotion – He is first and foremost our Father.

- The Holy Spirit in us cries out a familial term for God. That is the cry that God puts in our hearts for Him, to know Him as Father.
 - The model prayer starts “Our Father.” That’s how Jesus taught us to approach God in prayer.
 - **1 John 3:1** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
 - **Ephesians 1:3-6** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
 - It was and is God’s ultimate plan for us – our purpose – is that we become His children.
 - **Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
- The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are God’s children – All aspects of God – the entire Trinity – is working to make us God’s children.

But what if we don’t have a good feeling when we think of God as Father?

The truth is that many people didn’t have a perfect father as their earthly dad.

I felt like my dad was distant and not personally invested in my life. And that translated to the way I approached God.

Maybe your image of your dad alters your view of God. It can be anything from small to terrible. Even good things may not accurately reflect God.

What does hearing these verses make you feel?

- **1 John 4:16** And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
- **1 John 3:1–2** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Many of us still live with an Old Testament image of God. Sometimes it is easier to think of Him as a pillar of fire than as Father. Or as a judge than a Father. Is it easier to think of His wrath than it is of a Father who loves us?

There is a truth to all of those images of God. He is a judge. He is a consuming fire. He does have wrath. God has not changed. But our relation to Him has changed.

God did not change, but we became His children. And that changes His response to us.

- **Romans 5:9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
- **1 Peter 2:24** who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.
- **Romans 5:1–2** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is easy to get our image of God from our image of our earthly dads. But we should get our image of God from Him. Through His word. Through His names.

- **1 John 4:8** He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The Names of God:

- Jehovah Jireh: The LORD our provider
- Jehovah Rapha: The LORD our Healer
- Jehovah Nissi: The LORD our Banner
- Jehovah Shalom: The LORD our Peace
- Jehovah Raah: The LORD our Shepherd
- Jehovah Tsidkenu: The LORD our Righteousness
- Jehovah Shammah: The LORD is Here
- And so many more!!!

This sounds like a God I really want to know!

I have heard people say it's a lot easier to relate to Jesus than it is the Father. But since they are the same God, the qualities we see in Jesus are the same as God.

- **John 14:8–11** Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

What do we see in Jesus?

- Unconditional love
- Accepting even with failure and sin
- Compassion
- Forgiving
- Truthful
- Kind
- Full of grace
- Joyful
- So much more!!!

Our fathers may need forgiving, just like on Mother's Day we forgave our moms.

Do the Blessing here.

After Blessing: If our purpose as created by God is to be children of God, then the way God most want us to relate to Him is as a perfect Father.

Protector, Provider, Healer, Counselor, Guide, Source of strength, wisdom, faith, courage, everything. We can fully depend on Him.

A Father's Blessing

A father's role is to protect, to provide, to bless, and to establish his children's identity.

First, I cancel every negative word spoken over you and I break the generational curse of an orphan mindset off of you, in Jesus name.

Maybe your father did that for you, maybe he didn't. Perhaps he abandoned you or abused you: sexually, physically, verbally, or emotionally.

Maybe he died before you were ready, or left you for some other reason.

Maybe he made you his pet, delighting in you so much that you haven't been able to break away to be your own person.

Perhaps he was distant, removed and showed no interest in you, or he terrified you with his anger and rage. Perhaps he made you the scapegoat for all his troubles, so that you suffered for things other people did to him.

Perhaps he blamed you for things that were not your fault at all. Maybe he worked too much or played too hard and never spent time with you, missed your ball games, your dance recitals, and your spelling bees. Maybe he spent too much time with you, forcing you to become the athlete or student or doctor or lawyer you never wanted to be.

Perhaps he left you in the care of hurtful, dangerous people. Maybe he didn't see or believe you when you went to him for help. Perhaps he was just too preoccupied with himself to see anything you wanted or needed then. I really don't know.

If you are willing to hear the words of a broken father speaking to you, please close your eyes for a few minutes.

I realize I am not your father, but please allow me to stand in for him, and in the place of your father, who may or may not have said any of these things. Please allow yourself to hear these words:

I ask your Heavenly Father to richly bless you in all the places I failed to bless you. I ask the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of His cross and blood to set you free now from any harsh or cruel words that I said... especially the ones you keep remembering over and over. I am so sorry. I ask the Lord to set you free from heart injuries you sustained from me or from others in whose care I placed you.

I ask the Holy Spirit to set you free from heartache, disappointments, dreads, grief, or rage you cannot resolve. And I'm so sorry for any other struggles I may have caused you. May you be healed from being ignored by me, or overindulged by me.

If I ever made you feel less than or not good enough am deeply sorry and ask you to please forgive me. May the Lord set you free from working so hard to please me when nothing ever would. May the Lord set you free from trying to get from me what I never had to give you. I am so sorry.

May the Lord set you free from blaming me for failing you, not because I need that, but so you can be free to grow, to receive, to achieve, and to be creative in ways you have not yet imagined.

May the Lord give you all the things I was unable or unwilling to give you. May the Lord guide you in ways I never could and grant you peace. May the Lord free you from the effects of my addictions, my anxieties and my anger.

May the Lord free you from feeling that you have to always be perfect or that you have to be what I expected you to be. I pray that God will help you to see that the hurt and pain I caused you came from my own childhood. It limited me, and I am so sorry if it has limited you.

I pray that God will remove from you any belief that you were not wanted or loved. I pray that you have no doubt that you are the gender you are supposed to be.

I pray that the Lord will release you from any unhealthy bond that you may have with me. I want you to keep all of the good that came from me, and give the garbage to God.

My beloved son, my precious daughter—I love you. I am so proud of you. I am so glad you were born.

I bless you with peace, that you might rest in who God has made you.

I bless you with wealth to assist you in carrying out the purposes of your life.

I bless you with physical health for a long life to serve our Father in heaven.

I bless you with self worth, that you may walk in the knowledge of the glory of your creation.

I bless you with self confidence to counteract all the negatives received in life.

I bless you with spiritual insight, that you may lead others in the paths of righteousness.

I bless you with compassion, that you may show mercy as mercy has been shown to you.

I bless you with knowledge so that you may teach others.

I bless you with the gift of love, that you may cherish others as God cherishes you.

I bless you with the spirit of purity, that you may walk holy and clean before others.

I bless you with the knowledge of your heritage — both natural and spiritual.

I bless you with trust, that you might accept others as they are.

I bless you with the ability to forgive so that you may receive forgiveness.

I bless you with the sense of family, that you will never be lonely.

I bless you with the eternal knowledge that you have your greatest reward ahead of you.

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.