

The Father's Heart of Love

Discovering the Wonders of Our God

We become like the image we bear—the image carried deep inside. For many of us the Father's image has been distorted by Adam's nature, earthly parents, and misguided church teachings. Jesus came to reveal what the Father is really like. A father's love.

Here is a genuine marvel: Jesus, because He is fully human and fully divine, restores to us a true Image of who we are and of what our Father is really like. All false images of ourselves and of our God are alike demolished and replaced by looking to Jesus! It is an incredible thing that God can restore these two glorious images, once lost and broken through the Fall, by means of revealing the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Danger of a Distorted Image

We have been created in God's Image to be *bearers* of His Image - not just reflect His Image. Image is everything in the spiritual life. Not the image we can recite, but the image we "bear" or carry deep within our heart.

The image we hold of God the Father hidden away in our heart of hearts will determine:

- 1) How we will seek the Father
- 2) How we will respond to what He allows in our lives
- 3) How we will act towards others.



Jesus kept His spiritual eyes constantly upon a true vision of the Father's heart of love for Him and for us. All that He did flowed out of that ongoing faith connection. This is the all-essential matter of keeping the heart rightly set. Unfortunately, the idea we have of Father God is often misshaped by Adam's nature, earthly fathers and church tradition. It can be a fallen image buried in our heart distorting the true Image.

Consider the powerful influence of these three image-shapers:

- 1) **Adam's nature** is in us, still seeking to hide from God in guilt and fear of punishment, ashamed of our sinful "nakedness."
- 2) **Our birth fathers** (and mothers) may have been uncaring, distant, over-bearing, unaffectionate, abusive, threatening, harsh in discipline, angry in punishment, and sinful - creating powerful, but false impressions of what God the Father is like.
- 3) **Our spiritual fathers** (and mothers), even beloved pastors and teachers may have planted wrong images of the Father as being different from Jesus in His ways with us - less loving, more judgmental, easily offended, stern and strict.



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None of these distorted images reveal the Father's heart of love. They actually resemble the enemy's 'dark heart' instead. These false images must be cast down! We cast them down first by forgiving the ones who sowed distorted images in us, and then by renouncing the lies that were planted and confessing the truth in their place.

The Image Formed by Family

Our fathers (and mothers) can contribute to a distorted image of Father God because they are as a god to us when we are little - teaching us right from wrong and exercising power over us. As children we are looking to see God in our fathers - all the more so since our hearts are blocked from knowing the heavenly Father's love and Presence by the sin nature.

No earthly father entirely measures up, but a solid foundation of affection, love and proper discipline makes a huge difference in forming who we will become. The lack of this solid foundation leaves a void, often a hurting wound, which the enemy has many ways of poisoning.



There are crucial things we all needed our fathers to say to us, but which many of us never heard:

*I love you.
I'm proud of you.
You're a good child.
I'm glad you were born.*

Every home needs a godly father. Godly order in scripture shows us that the head of the woman is the man; the head of the man is Christ; the head of Christ is the Father. The father sets the emotional tone of a household and provides the moral framework for living in the family. The first word babies often say is "dada." Children are left as "spiritual orphans" when fathers are not covering their families with godly love and discipline.

Statistics give us a sense for the emotional and societal damage caused by failed fathering. In the USA over 90% of prisoners are males; 95% of those on death row hated their fathers. Many prisoners don't even know who their fathers were.

The "father wound" is pervasive and deadly. We all carry the "first father wound" stemming from Adam's sin. Many of us also bear the "birth father wound" from our parents, a "father in God wound" from our religious upbringing and a "father impostor wound" from the enemy's direct working.

The "father wound" carries a societal curse - a heavy consequence "in the land." Small wonder that so much restoration is needed in our own day.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Yahweh comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.
Malachi 4:5-6 WEB



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Clarifying Our Image of the Father

People often think they begin with knowing God the Father. Actually, we only know about Him by name as Father God but relate to Him more as "the great high God" - distant and unknowable until a living faith through Christ is birthed in us. Jesus came to reveal the Father personally and much more intimately as Abba, just as He also came to baptize us with the Holy Spirit.

The order of the three great pilgrimage festivals that Israel was commanded to observe reveals spiritual realities about our new life in Christ which are very interesting. Passover came first in early spring, prefiguring Jesus the true Passover Lamb. Next came Pentecost in late spring, a celebration of the "early harvest," which exactly coincided with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Early Church. Finally, Tabernacles, the great Feast of Harvest, arrived at the end of summer after a long growth period.

Drawing a trinitarian analogy to the Festivals, Tabernacles, therefore, relates to the Father. An intimate relationship with the Father is not automatic - it often comes only after a long period of growth (if at all), but it is absolutely necessary for establishing our hearts in sufficient grace that we may dwell (tabernacle) with our God.

Our Father's Glorious Grace

The revelation of the Father's glorious grace began in the Old Testament. God the Father revealed His glory - the glorious nature of His grace-filled Being - to Moses.

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.'
Exodus 34:6 ESV

This is what Paul refers to when he tells us that our sins consist in falling short of God's glory. Our selfish and unloving choices in no way reflect our Father's glorious ability to shower love and mercy, grace and goodness, upon the whole of His creation.

So great is His glorious grace that our Father in heaven does not even hold our sins against us. He hates our sins and in His goodness, will patiently work to bring us to repentance so that we can be separated from them, all the while maintaining a Spirit of reconciliation towards us in His Great Heart.

It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, not counting up and holding against [men] their trespasses [but cancelling them], and committing to us the message of reconciliation (of the restoration to favor). 2 Corinthians 5:19 AMP

Our Father's Amazing Love

Our grace-filled Father affirmed His only begotten Son by expressing His love for Jesus in public displays of affection. There are three audible words of God which Jesus heard that are recorded



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for us in scripture. In all of them the true Father affirmed His Son: at His baptism, on the mount of transfiguration and before the cross.

Astoundingly, the Father has the same love for all who are in Christ by faith. If you are a believer, Father God desires to affirm and express His love to you. There is no one He loves more than you. There is no one He loves less than you - He doesn't play favorites. He loves us all as much as He loves Jesus!

If this scripture fails to move your heart, pray for fresh grace to be amazed by the stunning implications of what Jesus is saying about the Father's love for you.

I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. John 17:23 ESV

This Is What Our Gracious Father Is Really Like:

The Father delights to give us the Kingdom.

The Father has no darkness about Him.

He is the giver of every good gift.

The Father disciplines only in love.

It is His goodness that draws us to repent.

The Father is unconditional love.

The Father completely accepts us.

He is reconciled to us the way we are.

He favors us with right standing in His sight.

Your Father has never been angry with you.

Let Jesus Reveal the Father to You

Jesus came on a mission to reveal the Father and restore His true image to us. Both by His life and by His death His stated intention was to reveal the Father.

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?' John 14:8-10 ESV



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Here is the idea made simple: The Father is just like Jesus! The New Testament not only gives us permission, it makes it a requirement of faith that we cast down every image of the Father we may have been given that does not match up with Jesus.

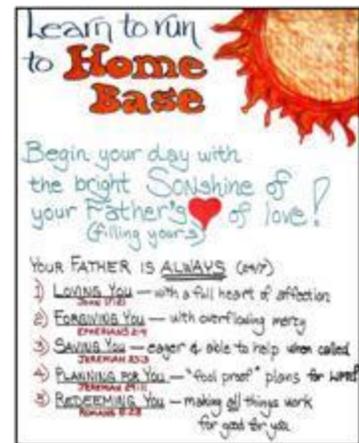
I and the Father are one. John 10:30 ESV

If this is who God really is to you and for you (and it is), then actually knowing and believing it will produce joy and peace in you and love through you in any moment of your life in which you touch this living reality by faith. Active, believing faith always has that kind of power. Faith is what puts us in touch with reality. Not to live in a faith like this is to live a bad dream from which One Day we will all be awakened in His Presence. Why not awaken now?

As we behold the true image of the Father our hearts become established. So let us learn to run to "Home Base." Begin each day intentionally checking to see if your heart really believes these five great liberating truths about God the Father.

Your Father Is Always:

- 1) Loving you - with full warmth of affection (John 17:23).
- 2) Forgiving you - with overflowing mercy (Hebrews 4:16).
- 3) Saving you - eager to help when called (Jeremiah 33.3).
- 4) Planning for you - for a hope-filled future (Jeremiah 29:11).
- 5) Redeeming you - all things working for good (Romans 8:28).



If your heart doesn't believe these truths, then it's time to roll up your spiritual sleeves and go to work, attaching your faith to His scriptures. Jesus said that believing the truth about God is our most important work. Repentance is turning back to the love that never turns away from you.

The Way of Restoration

Having our hearts restored to a condition of deeply trusting our Father to never fail us or forsake us will require recognizing the moments when we begin "serving" a lesser image of God: Feeling unworthy, anxious or driven to perform are clues we need to heed.

- 1) Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see any distorted images of the Father that you may be carrying: Forgive the ones who planted them; repent, renounce those fallen images.
- 2) Pray for Jesus to more fully reveal the Father to you: Repent, renounce all unbelief; confess the truth of His perfect love, abundant mercy, saving help, great plans and total redemption.

3) Turn to the Father and release gratitude for His never-ending love and grace-based way of saving You!

Prayer

Father, I confess that I have let the enemy and my own life experiences build up false images about You that have kept me from running to You. But those days are ending now! From now on I will fight to believe in the truth about You that Jesus is revealing to me. I will fight to run to You when I am tempted or in need. I will seek Your grace even in my places of deepest disgrace. Let Your perfect love cast out all of my fears!

Don't make Father do all the running - learn to run to Him!

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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