

My Father Is ...

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Jesus revealed the Father by living as a Son of the Father.

¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. (John 14:11-NIV)

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Matt 11:27-NIV)

This might be a surprise to you, but many world leaders and famous people have grown up as orphans. Fatherless. With absentee dad in childhoods. You would think the opposite. Perhaps you know some of these who lost a parent, or both or were orphaned. The list reads like a Who's Who of World History: Alexander the Great, Hitler, Fidel Castro, George Washington, Napoleon, Queen Victoria, and the list includes founding figures of world religions, the Buddha, Mohammed, and Confucius.

As we travel back in time, we can identify many writers, philosophers, and artsy types to round out the list: Rudyard Kipling, Charles Dickens, Sabastian Bach. And it is often the pain of absentee parents, like a dad, that gives rise to the creative expression about their emotional trauma and hardships in life.

Emotional trauma can drive these individuals and many sitting here today, possess a need to be in control. Which drives many to positions of authority, or to engage in activities that are sabotaging. At the heart is often the desire to change their world; for some it's for the worse, for others it's for the good. Many go on a quest to right so many societal wrongs.

For the few that have made a name for themselves in history, many millions sit in the shadows of an emotionally handicapped life because of some childhood trauma, most often connected to their father.

And what is true of human history, is equally true of biblical history. Many biblical figures have suffered some type of childhood or youthful trauma in their upbringing.

Jephthah the judge had a dad that was immoral, His father was a Gileadite; his mother a prostitute, (Judges 1)

Esther has no dad in the story of her life, likely raised by an uncle,
²⁰ But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up. (Esther 2-NIV)

Joseph was sold into slavery as a young man, *Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for many days. (Gen 37:34-NIV)*

...and don't forget the most famous biblical character, Jesus Christ, likely his dad Joseph died after 12 and sometime before his public ministry began. Because only Mary is present at Jesus first miracle.

And for each of us, the journey to grow in a personal relationship with a compassionate loving God as our Father, may take some extra work and additional insights from God's word as to what that looks like.

So, God decided the best way to show his compassionate love was to reveal that love through his Father-Son relationship. God the Father and God the Son in perfect union and harmony.

When it was time for God to reveal himself as Father, to a lost world, there was only one person in the universe uniquely qualified to pull off such an enormous task. The reason that Jesus came was not just redemption, he came to provide reflection.

To be a mirror of God as Father. Jesus said, *"if you really know me, you will know my Father as well. (John 14:7-NIV)*. Now, think about this with me. Perhaps this has slipped past your thinking mind. Your theological mind. Jesus is the way, but the Father is the destination. Jesus is the way, truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me, as verse 6 reminds us.

Where is the way or road leading? To the Father. For 1000's of years God's people knew God as El Shaddai (all powerful), Jehovah (eternal God that is unchangeable), and many other pre-Christ names. Jehovah Shalom (my peace), Jehovah Nissi (my banner), Jehovah Jirah (my provider), Jehovah Rapha (my healer).

In the Old Testament God followers chose from the many metaphors, most often determined by their need.

When you choose the name for God, and there are so many names for God, we just identified several - if you choose one or two, you come up with a God identified by only a fraction of his whole. Most of all there is little personal engagement.

God is a father and a friend and a king, and a judge and a warrior.

And if you choose 1 or 2 over the others, instead of holding them all together, if you have a loving God that only offers love, or a holy God that only punishes, if you have any combination of this OT God, your view of God is limited. Partial. Fractional. This is not the scriptural God. Each quality, metaphor and image of God is critical.

We get stuck or stagnant with God because there is some aspect or character quality of God we don't know. There are a couple challenges to knowing and having a relationship with the God of the OT.

The relationship was not personal. He is the God of Israel, not so much the God of the individual. And because there are so many options to choose from in the way of names for OT God, often a relationship with the God of the Old Testament was very limited to your need at the moment. If you needed peace, you called on Jehovah Shalom. If you needed provision, you called on Jehovah Jirah.

Today you ask your Father in heaven, who all is of the provisions wrapped up in every OT name, to pour out his protection, provision, peace and promise. And all of this is done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The clearest example of how limited the personal relationship was with the God of the OT, since **God's name-Yahweh** was so sacred, God's people would never say it, only write it. God's people who don't say Yahweh, are now able to say, know and experience God fully as Abba.

¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, "Abba,^[b] Father." (Rom 8:15-NIV)

Abba is the Aramaic name for Father. What was the name that Jesus revealed to the disciples in John 14? Father. As you read John 14, you will discover it is the name Father. Jesus came to manifest the Father.

God is not the Father of all people. He is the Father of all believers. God becomes the Father to each believer in Jesus when they allow Jesus Christ substitutionary death to atone for their sins. The Father enters into a covenant relationship because of Jesus' death on the cross.

At the point of repentance, confession and faith, the Holy Spirit changes your relationship with God from being an enemy of God, to being adopted as a son. *Gal 4:7, tells us, ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.*

Since you are God's child, God is your Father.

Jesus came to reveal and manifest who the Father was, Jesus did not come to give an introduction. To talk about God as Father. He came to manifest. *He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation. (Col 1:15)*

Jesus came to reveal and demonstrate who the Father was. By doing the works of the Father and offering the words of the Father.

¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. (John14:11-NIV)

Jesus revealed the Father by living as a Son of the Father.
He was never frightened of the Father.

Jesus never failed to know what the Father asked of him.

Jesus never lived in anxiety about his future with the Father.

Jesus lived knowing he had a Father in heaven. Jesus whole life was driven by one mission-to manifest the Father's love, compassion, and purpose. That's why Jesus came. Only a son, can introduce a Father.

I cannot reveal the Father. No preacher can reveal the Father. Only Jesus can reveal the Father. And he is revealed in God's word through the power of the Holy Spirit. If you are to know God as your Father, it happens through Jesus.

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Matt 11:27-NIV)

Now, what will happen in your life as you know God the Father through Jesus Christ?

Your identity will change. If you are frustrated with who you are in your identity, look to Jesus to give you the right identity. He will reflect the Father's opinion of your identity.

Knowing, and being known, loving and being loved by God the Father will steer you clear from the **performance trap**-I must meet certain standards to feel good about myself.

Steer you clear of the **approval trap**-I must have others approval to feel good about myself.

Steer you clear of the **blame trap**-those who make mistakes, blow it deserve to be punished.

As you know and are known by God the Father, as you love and are loved by God the Father through Jesus Christ, **your self-worth will improve.** You are hard on yourself. You neglect yourself. You punish yourself. You are ashamed of yourself. You don't like yourself. Learn to think like Jesus, feel like Jesus and act like Jesus and you will gain the right kind of self-worth with God as your Father.

Finally, look to Jesus to give you the **right kind of security** with God as your Father. If you are afraid of God the Father, stop that because Jesus is the bridge. If you are anxious about a relationship with God the Father, that can change because Jesus is the bridge.

As we will see in a few minutes, in Psalm 103 written by David, this Psalm is a prophetic glimpse of God the Father,

My Father is forgiving and healing, (vs 3)

My Father is loving and compassionate, (vs 4),

My Father is able to restore of your strength, (vs 5),

My Father is slow to anger, (vs 8),

My Father is the remover of sins consequences, as far as the east is from the west, he has removed our sins, (vs 12),

My Father is eternal, (vs 17),

My Father is king and ruler over all, (vs 19),

King David gives us a glimpse into the future of what this New Testament relationship with God as Father would look like, in one of the greatest Psalms 103, here we have a picture, an illustration of who My Father is...

The first time God presents Himself as Father of Israel is in Exodus 4.

²² Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.' (NIV)

The portrayal of God's Fatherhood in the book of Exodus is in accordance with a Father's main characteristic: Possession.

God as Father is telling the enemy, Egypt, Satan, the devil, that a Father will stop at no lengths to deliver a son out of bondage. Setting the son free for a Father's purposes.

The next time we are introduced to God as Father, his son also called God's people are on a journey to the promised land.

Entering the Promised Land, Israel was led by the Father-God who would fight for them and care for them.

*³⁰ The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, ³¹ and in the wilderness. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a **father** carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place." (Deut. 1-NIV)*

Now, remember this word, place, in Duet 1:31. I underlined it. It shows up in John 14:2, (I prepare a place for you), and it will show up in Psalm 103:16, (and its place remembers it no more)

Moses recounts Israel's journey and reminds them why they should not have been afraid to go into the promised land.

The two Fatherly qualities that Israel and each of us should stand on are: A Father will fight for you and a Father will care for you.

Now, we come to the 4th quarter of this sermon, I want to open the door, and give you a glimpse of this Father, that Israel was protected by and cared for by, and a picture of the same Father you and I enjoy today. A father that has compassion for his children.

As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. (Psalm 103:13-NIV)

In Psalm 103, I see 5 Fatherly qualities your Father, the one Jesus will introduce in John 14, is offering to his sons and daughters in Psalm 103. Remember, God's love in OT, is Father love in NT.

So let me suggest 2 questions, what does it mean that God is a Father, and how should we respond. What does it mean? How should we respond?

1. My Father is compassionate. *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; (vs 13)*

This word compassion is a deeply emotional experience by God for each of us. This deep emotion by God for us often gets lost in the English translation.

The Hebrew word used here is an unbelievably deep emotional word. It means to be overwhelmingly in love with somebody. It is used often in reference to the kind of love that mothers offer their children.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has born. (Is 49:15)

Sorry men, moms are the truest illustration for the depth of emotional love that a Father God bestows on his children. Let that sink in. It is moms love for the newborn, that best illustrates the kind of love that a compassionate Father has for his children. (vs 13)

A Father's compassion is like the kind of love, that is rooted biologically in a mom's attachment to the child that she is nursing. Ok, got that. A Father's love starts there.

Attachment to each of us with a love that is so deep, only a nursing mom's activity can convey the true meaning.

2. My Father is aware of my limitations. *...for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. (vs 14)*

God loves us because we are dust. Dust is a metaphor for failure. Loser. We are a wreck. We are fragile. We are finite. Dust is just blown away. Dust is a picture of being broken, falling apart. Flawed. Sinful.

Here is our perspective of God. When we are doing right and pleasing to him, he loves us more. These verses do not teach this. When we are dust, in the dumper, depressed, disillusioned, distraught, difficult, despondent, God loves us more.

God is emotionally involved and attached to his children because we are idiots, dust and at times a big disappointment. God is involved with his children no matter what we do. Whatever you do, good or bad, you are absolutely loved by a compassionate Father.

You need the Father's love just because you are a child. Not because of anything you give to the Father. Just because you are a child.

3. My Father is not a payback Father. *... He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. (vs 9-10)*

God the Father's anger is not a payback anger. God the Father does not pay us according to our sins. He is angry that we sin. The anger is not tit for tat.

If your children inconvenience you, cause you pain in some way, a natural way to respond is to let the child experience payback anger. In payback anger you are trying to frighten the child. Trying to scare the child. Trying to emotionally beat up the child. What you are doing is trying to pay back the child. Payback anger.

You hurt my feelings I am going to hurt yours. You embarrassed me, I am going to embarrass you. Payback anger never works. It always poisons. God never gives payback anger to his children.

God's anger exists because we have broken fellowship with him, but God has the ability to reconcile that broken fellowship and not pay us back for our sins. That is what Jesus came to do in the NT, and offer a relationship with a Father, who is not a payback Father.

Because Jesus already took the Father's anger on him, on calvary.

4. My Father is loving and forgiving.

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (vs 11-12)*

I love these verses. A Father's love has no upper limits. And You can never exhaust the reach of a Father's forgiveness.

Your Father is unconditionally in love with you at all times. Even though you are dust. And that love has no bounds. No limits. You can never exhaust the well of his love.

And you can never fathom the reach of his forgiveness. The extent of his forgiveness. The vastness of his forgiveness.

God is compassionate like a father because He knows how we are formed (Psalm 103:14), and our life is so temporal (Psalm 103:15).

Father,

Today I surrender my life to your Son Jesus Christ to cancel my pile of sins. In exchange, as a son or daughter I receive your compassionate love and unlimited forgiveness that does not pay me back for my sins.

Today I also, enter into an even deeper, more personal and pleasing relationship with you God, El Shaddai, Elohim, Yahweh, Jehovah Jirah, as my Father. My Abba.

In Jesus Name.