

Experiencing Father

The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. Zeph.3:17

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. Luke 3:21-22

If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Jn. 14:23

*Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Jn.17:3
Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 1 Jn. 1:3*

Bible Passages: 1 Jn. 1:3, 2:15; Eph. 3:14-21; Phil. 1:9-11; Ro.5:5; Phil. 1:8-11; Ro.8

1. Having a close loving relationship with your heavenly Father is one of the most important reasons you exist. Most people have heard the concept that God is love. However, there is a big difference between knowing this information about God, and actually experiencing God as a good and loving Father. It is your heavenly Father's deep desire that you commune with Him very deeply all the time. This is not a false promise, a mere theory, or Christian rhetoric. God is a real Spiritual Being, the Father of all creation, and He longs to be relationally close to you. The word "father" in Hebrew means "source". God is your Source for everything.
2. Christ was sent to earth by Father to pay the penalty for your sin, so that you could have a right relationship with Him. He has done everything possible to live in a close relationship with you, including the death of His son. He has been pursuing you throughout your whole life. He wants to win your heart with His mercy and love. Christ brings you to Father, and keeps on revealing Father. Jn. 14:9-14; 17:6,26
3. Father is very "likeable". He is kind, gentle, merciful, patient, and understanding. He has a great sense of humor. There is no Being more likeable and loveable than your heavenly Father. He is the nicest Person in all creation. He is not mean or angry. He does hate evil, but He doesn't hate you.
4. Father not only loves you, He likes you. Even more, he adores you. You are His delight. His affection toward you is beyond measuring, even when you are sinning. His love does not go up or down based upon your performance in life.
5. Father doesn't want you to try and become "good" so that you can fellowship with Him. He wants you to fellowship with Him and then as a result you will become "good". In other words, we don't have to become good to get God. We get God and end up becoming "good".
6. Father wants you to place your shame, guilt, sin, and failure under the blood of Christ. It is the blood of Christ that pays the penalty for all broken covenants. When you "blow it", your first instinct should be to run into Father's arms, not away from Him.
7. What we believe about God will determine our willingness to relate to Him. Our true belief system about God has been shaped more by experiences in our childhood than the teaching we received as adults. That is because God's original intent was for natural parents to be the embodiment and revelation of His Spiritual reality. Your experience with father and mother determines your true convictions about God. God's strategy to reveal Himself through the natural family was not withdrawn because of sin. God will reveal Himself through His Word and Spirit, but He also chooses to reveal Himself through the human agency of fathers, mothers, and

family. Our earthly parents and other influential adults created the mental, emotional, and volitional (motivation & will) filter which is the lens by which we view and experience God. God will not reverse this governing kingdom principal just because humans fail to accurately reveal the Father heart of God. Your heavenly Father is full of tender affection and love for you. However, you may not know this at a heart/spirit level due to the way you were raised. Our natural parents profoundly shape the way we perceive and relate to God. The degree to which they accurately revealed what God was like, usually determines how we relate to God as Father. Had Adam and Eve never sinned, each child would have been exposed to perfect love. This would have taught them how to receive love and life from their heavenly Father. Our whole person (body, soul, and spirit) is built for intimacy and love. Any lack of love from our parents teaches our hearts to distrust Father. Any abuse of authority trains our hearts to separate from and disobey God. Our present emotional hurts usually have roots in the unhealed and unforgiven hurts of the past, especially those that occurred with our parents. The relationship with our parents is primary and foundational for our well-being and happiness in all our relationships. Our wounds can be healed, but it takes several important steps. **First**, each sin (omission – things that should have been done but weren't, or commission – sinful things that were said and done) needs to be identified, confessed, repented off, renounced, forgiveness received and given, curses broken, demonic oppression eliminated. **Second**, each person needs to give and receive blessing, honor, acceptance, and love to all people. **Third**, because of God's mercy extended to all parties (based in Christ's' shed blood and sacrificial death on the cross), we ask God to release His abundant grace to flood into the places where His love, wisdom and power haven't been experienced. God's mercy, love, grace will heal the past and flood us with His Life beyond anything we can imagine.

8. Father/Mother Flaws: The Lens Through Which We View Father God ("Experiencing Father's Embrace" by Jack Frost, pp. 113 to 124)
 - A. The "good father" cannot ultimately be The Ultimate Source of provision, love, and life.
 - B. The "performance-oriented father" tends to give affection and affirmation around successful achievement thus misrepresenting God's unconditional love for who we are.
 - C. The "passive father" makes no great demands on his children, and usually does not proactively initiate love, support, and affirmation.
 - D. The "absentee father" is usually physically and emotionally distant and/or uninvolved.
 - E. The "authoritarian father" sternly demands immediate, unquestioned obedience from their children without having won their hearts through intimate affection and affirmation.
 - F. The "abusive father" harms their children through harsh verbal assaults, volatile behavior because of drugs, alcohol, mental/emotional instability, or physical or sexual abuse.
9. The four basic needs that were to have been met by our parents, so that our bodies, souls, and spirits learned to trust our heavenly Father:
 - A. The need for unconditional expressed love and affection.
 - B. The need to feel secure and comforted emotionally, physically, spiritually, and practically.
 - C. The need for praise and affirmation.
 - D. The need for a purpose in life.
10. Your actual theology (convictions about God as Father) is revealed by how you live, speak, spend your time and money and how you respond to pressure. The Bible says, "watch your life and doctrine closely." 1 Tim. 4:16 Your life will reveal your actual views about Father (doctrine). Be self-aware (watch yourself closely), so that you can confront "orphan" behavior. Do not rationalize or blame others for your attitudes and actions. Take responsibility for your "life and doctrine".

11. There are several practical steps you can take to experience a deeper reality of Father's presence, love, and blessings.
 - A. How we deal with our earthly parents and our spiritual parents (like church leaders) will determine the extent to which we experience the mercy and grace of our heavenly Father. Earthly/natural and spiritual parents are one of the largest and most important "portals" into the Father's heart. "Honor your father and mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you." Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:1-3 One of the first and most important keys to unlocking an intimate relationship with Father is to honor our natural and spiritual parents. Honor occurs by 1.) forgiving, 2.) blessing, 3.) obeying, 4.) loving.
 - B. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Matt. 5:7, 6:12-15
 - C. Judge and you will be judged. It is the law of sowing and reaping. Matt. 7:1; Gal. 6:7-10
 - D. Bless and you will be blessed. Ro. 12:14;
 - E. Ask your natural and spiritual parents to bless you. Gen. 27
 - F. Learn how to use the Word of God as the "vehicle" into His presence. Col. 3:16; Heb. 4:12
 - G. Learn how to gaze on Christ through the eyes of your heart. Christ will perfect your faith. Heb. 12:2
 - H. Learn how to bless your own personal spirit using God's Word. 1 Thess. 5:23
 - I. Learn how to pray in the Spirit throughout the day. Jude 1:20; 1 Cor. 14:4
 - J. Come to your Father alone, in secret. Learn the power of quietness and rest in Father's presence. Learn how to "wait on the Lord". Matt. 6
 - K. Frequently pray the Bible passages that ask God for a greater revelation of His Fathering love: Eph. 3:14-21; Phil. 1:9-11