

Basics

of Christian Living

Understanding the Love of the Father

The aim of this study is to help you understand that God is your Father and to realise the difference it makes to know how much God loves you.

Key Scriptures:

Matt.6:19-34; Rom.8:15-16; Matt.7:11; 1 John 3:1

Definitions:

When we talk about God as Father, it is important that we don't imagine that he is like our imperfect fathers. God is the perfect Father; he is all that you could ever hope a good father might be and much more besides.

Truth - What the Bible Teaches

- Jesus came to *reveal* God as the Father (John 1:18; 14:1-11)
- Jesus came to *reconcile* us to the Father – to remove the barrier of our sin and give us open access into the presence of our heavenly Father (Rom.5:1; Eph.2:16-18)
- Those who *receive* Jesus become children of God (John 1:11-13)
- God as Father *rejoices* in our coming to him as a loving father would rejoice over the return of a son who had been separated from him (see the story of the lost son – Luke 15:11-32)
- We have to *realise* just how much our heavenly Father loves us.
 - He adopts us as his own (Eph.1:5; Rom.8:15-16)
 - He values us and cares for us so that we don't need to worry about anything (Matt.6:19-34)
 - He knows how to give good gifts to us (Matt.7:11)
 - He delights to bless us and share his kingdom with us (Luke 12:32)
 - He fills our life with grace and peace (Rom.1:7– everyone of Paul's letters begins with a greeting like this)
 - He blesses us with every spiritual blessing (Eph.1:3)

- He disciplines us out of love and for our good, and not out of anger or with malice (Heb.12:7-11)
- He strengthens and comforts us (2 Thess.2:16)
- He loves us just as much as he loved Jesus (John 17:23)
- Knowing the love of the Father is what keeps us from the love of the world (1 John 2:15-17)

Application - What Difference It Can Make To Our Lives:

- We don't have to obey God out of fear or duty, but out of love and the desire to please our good Father.
- When we pray, it is not to be thought of as a nervous plea to a judge or ruler, but an intimate conversation with a loving father.
- When we are aware of needs, we don't have to worry but know that God cares for us and will provide everything that we need, and bless us with good gifts.
- When we think about our future, we can be confident in the fact that God only wants the best for us
- If we sin and wander away from God, we can know that God disciplines us for our good, to lead us back to him and to help us to grow spiritually

Something to Think About:

Why do you think that really understanding the love of the Father will help us to live good lives? What difference should it make to the way we think about ourselves and our future?

A Key Thought:

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! (1 John 3:1 NLT)

So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him? (Mattt.7:11 NLT)