

LESSON 3:

THE FATHER HEART OF GOD

Big Idea: God is not distant—He is a loving Father who restores His children.

Scripture Anchor: Luke 15:20–24, Romans 8:15



WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD "FATHER"



FOR SOME

The word *father* brings comfort—strength, love, and safety. It evokes warm memories of being held, protected, and cherished.

The truth is, our view of God often gets distorted by our experience with earthly fathers. If our dad was absent, we assume God is absent. If our dad was harsh, we assume God is harsh. But what if our filter is wrong?



THE PRODIGAL SON'S HOMECOMING

Instead of rejection, the Father in Jesus's parable **ran toward him**, wrapped him in a hug, and threw a party, demonstrating unconditional love and restoration.



FOR OTHERS

The word *father* brings pain—absence, disappointment, or even anger. It's a word wrapped in wounds that haven't healed.

JESUS REVEALS THE FATHER'S TRUE NATURE.

Jesus came to reveal what the Father is really like. He told a story that changes everything—a story of a runaway son who wasted everything, yet found a Father who didn't reject him or scold him.



ABBA, FATHER

"The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

— Romans 8:15

Abba is an intimate word—it's like saying Dad, Papa, or Daddy. It's the word a child uses when they climb into their father's lap, when they need comfort, when they know they are safe and loved.

Here's the truth we're exploring today: God is not a distant judge waiting to condemn you. He is not an absent dad who forgot about you. He is the Father who runs toward you, restores you, and calls you His own—no matter where you've been or what you've done.



THREE TRUTHS ABOUT OUR FATHER

Let's explore each of these life-changing truths together, visualized below:



GOD IS A LOVING FATHER

His heart beats with deep compassion for His children, offering comfort and care in every moment.



THE FATHER PURSUES US

He actively runs toward us, even when we try to run away, always seeking to bring us home.



THE FATHER RESTORES OUR IDENTITY

He doesn't just forgive; He reclaims who we truly are, restoring our inherent worth and purpose.

TRUTH #1: GOD IS A LOVING FATHER

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him."

— Psalm 103:13



HIS HEART BEATS WITH COMPASSION

God is not a cold, distant authority. His heart beats with deep compassion for His children. Like a tender father, He feels for us, offering comfort and care.

Romans 8:15 reminds us that we are adopted sons and daughters who can call God Abba, not fearful slaves.



THE "BIKE FALL" MOMENT

Imagine a child falling off their bike, scraping a knee, and running to their dad. The dad doesn't lecture or list rules. Instead, he picks them up, wipes tears, kisses the wound, and says, "You're mine. I've got you. You're safe."



LOVE BASED ON POSITION, NOT PERFORMANCE

That's the Father's love. God's love isn't based on what you do; it's based on **who you are**—His child. It's a warm embrace that says, "You belong to Me."

WHEN THE FATHER SEES YOU



YOU'RE FAR OFF

Still making your way back, perhaps covered in the mess of your choices.



HE SEES YOU

His eyes have been watching the road, waiting and longing for your return.



HE'S FILLED WITH COMPASSION

His heart breaks with longing and overflows with love at the sight of you.



HE RUNS

He doesn't wait; He lifts His robe and sprints tirelessly towards you.



HE EMBRACES YOU

Before you can even finish your apology, you are enveloped in His loving arms.

This is Luke 15:20 in motion—the Father who pursues.

TRUTH #2: THE FATHER PURSUES US EVEN WHEN WE RUN

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

— Luke 15:20

God doesn't wait for you to clean yourself up. He doesn't stand at a distance with crossed arms, tapping His foot until you've proven you're sorry enough. **He runs toward you in your mess.**

Think of "Find My iPhone." Even when the phone is lost, the signal is still on. The owner can see exactly where it is. [God always knows where you are, and His heart is set on finding you.](#)

Ezekiel 34:11 says God Himself searches for His lost sheep. He doesn't delegate the job. He doesn't send someone else. **He comes Himself.**



You can run fast, but you'll never outrun the Father's love.

TRUTH #3: THE FATHER RESTORES OUR IDENTITY

In the story of the prodigal son, the father didn't just forgive—he **restored**. The son came back expecting to be treated as a servant, but the father gave him three powerful items:



THE BEST ROBE

A covering that declared his position as a son, not a slave. It was a symbol of honor and acceptance, signifying his rightful place in the family.



A RING

A signet ring represented authority and family identity. The son was restored to full sonship with all its privileges and responsibilities.



SANDALS

Servants went barefoot; sons wore shoes. The sandals declared: *"You belong here. This is your home."* They affirmed his status as a free member of the household.



This act wasn't just forgiveness; it was a complete restoration of his identity and dignity. God's heart is to do the same for us.

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"
— 1 John 3:1

God doesn't just accept you back grudgingly. He restores you to your true identity, replacing shame with profound blessing.



Isaiah 61:7 promises that shame is replaced with a double portion of blessing. God doesn't just forgive your past—He reclaims your future, empowering you to walk in the fullness of who you were created to be.

LIVING AS CHILDREN, NOT ORPHANS

When you understand the Father heart of God, your entire life shifts. You stop living like an orphan and start living like a child.



ORPHANS STRIVE FOR APPROVAL

Working endlessly, they feel a constant need to earn validation, never finding true rest.



CHILDREN REST IN ACCEPTANCE

Secure in their Father's love, they work from a place of peace, not a desperate need for approval.



ORPHANS COMPETE AND COMPARE

Viewing others as rivals, they constantly compare themselves, fighting for recognition and fearing displacement.



CHILDREN CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT

Rooted in their Father's unconditional love, they can genuinely celebrate others' successes without envy.



ORPHANS HIDE THEIR TRUE SELVES

Fearing rejection, they wear masks, keeping their vulnerabilities hidden and living in isolation.

If you know Him as Father, you'll stop running from Him.
If you trust Him as Father, you'll walk with confidence.
If you rest in Him as Father, you'll know your true identity.



CHILDREN COME HOME OPENLY

Even when they stumble, they run to the Father, knowing He welcomes them with open arms and unwavering love.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO LIVE IN THE FATHER'S LOVE



PRAY "ABBA" DAILY

Start your prayers by saying, "Abba Father, I belong to You." Let that intimate name remind you of how close He is.



TRADE SHAME FOR SONSHIP

When shame whispers lies about your worth, declare the truth: "I am God's child, fully accepted and deeply loved."



REFLECT THE FATHER

Show compassion or forgiveness to someone who doesn't deserve it—just like your Father does for you every single day.

UNDFTD CHALLENGE

Write it down: On one side of a card, write one lie you've believed about God as Father. On the other side, write the truth from Scripture that replaces it.

Pair up: Share with someone in your group and pray for each other, asking God to replace the lie with His truth.

YOU ARE HIS CHILD

YOU'RE NOT A MISTAKE

YOU'RE NOT ABANDONED. YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN. YOU'RE NOT TOO FAR GONE.

YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE FATHER WHO RUNS TOWARD YOU.

"I am not an orphan. I am a son, I am a daughter of God. My Father loves me, accepts me, and restores me."

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Each day this week, thank God for one way He has shown His Father heart to you. At the end of the week, share your story with a friend—let them hear how the Father is pursuing you.

May you experience the healing, freedom, and joy that come from knowing God as Abba—your perfect, loving, pursuing Father.

