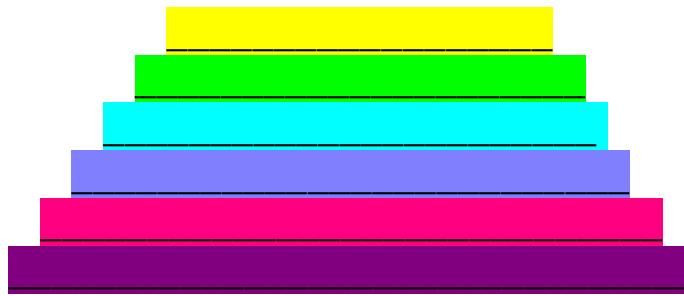


OUR FATHER



The first disciples of Jesus asked him, '**Lord, teach us to pray.**' Jesus then gave them a pattern for prayer that has come to be known as The Lord's Prayer.' There is much we can learn in Jesus' School of Prayer. Although most Christians can quote this prayer, they may have never taken time to meditate on each aspect of it.

In the book, 'The Jewish Background to the Lord's Prayer' the author Brad Young states that ancient writings contain prayers of the early Christians which are based upon the Lord's Prayer. Some of them take an hour to pray through. These writings often refer to the Lord's Prayer as '**the prayer**'. In Acts 1:14 we find the disciples gathered in the upper room. The Greek reads..... 'these all continued with one accord in **the prayer** and supplication.'

Back in the early 1980's I borrowed many cassette tapes from a Christian lending library in Florida. I would listen to about 10 a month, which took much time as I stopped and started the cassette player to take extensive notes on them. Malcolm Smith had a good series on the Lord's Prayer which was very helpful. His final message was on just the word Amen! We will share that insight in the future. We start with the first words of the prayer....**Our Father.**

One time while praying, I was planning to pray slowly through the various topics in the Lord's Prayer, but I never got past the words 'Our Father'. Before I knew it, an hour had passed. The word 'Our' had caught my attention and I began to reflect on all the saints that were included in that word. It was not just all the believers around the world in our day, but also those who have lived down through the centuries. We are part of a **BIG FAMILY!** It almost brought tears to my eyes when I thought of all the faithful saints in previous generations who passed the good news of Jesus onto the next generation. We are so blessed to belong to such a great movement that has done so much good for the world. They are a reflection of the nature and character of the God who chose us to be adopted as his sons and daughters.

'....you received the Spirit of adoption (sonship). And by him we cry 'Abba Father'
- *Romans 8:15*

Abba was an everyday word used in families when a child would address their father. It was a term of intimacy and relationship, but it was never used to address God according to prayer literature of ancient Judaism. - Source: scholar Joachim Jeremias

Jesus changed that as he called God 'father/abba' over 200 times in the four gospel accounts. In the book of John we find that Jesus referred to God as Father 156 times. Jesus

honored the Father from boyhood to the finish of his earthly life. While in the temple he proclaimed as a young teen, '*Did you know I had to be about my Father's business?*' Many years later he uttered these final words as he died on the cross. '*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*'

As God's children, we have the privilege of calling him Father, too. Max Lucado says it well:

It would be enough if God just cleansed your name, but He does more. He gives you His name. It would be enough if God just set you free, but he does more. He takes you home. He takes you home to the great house of God. - The Great House of God

To speak of God as Father refers to him as the **absolute sovereign God of creation**. It is the highest form of respect for there is no other like him. When God is called Father it also reminds us of our covenant relationship with Him. Through the blood covenant of Jesus, we have a secure relationship in the family of God. Father can mean source.

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. - James 1:16-17

There are those who have trouble seeing God as Father because they have had bad experiences with earthly fathers. We can be assured that God is a father we can fully trust and be comfortable with as we pray, Our Father in heaven. He resides in a place called heaven. The Bible says that God is Light, Love and Life. Heaven is full of each of those qualities in the absolute sense. In addition, heaven is pure, holy, peaceful, pleasant - where there is the utmost beauty, pleasure and provision beyond what one could think or imagine. We come to a living God who can hear us and speak to us. He revealed himself to Moses as the great I AM. We have much to discover about God, now in this life and far into eternity.

Before I went overseas as a missionary for several years, I often prayed Ephesians 3:14-21. God wanted me to be rooted and grounded in the love of God. The apostle Paul had a revelation of the Father as evidenced by his prayer. Here is some of it.

I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he strengthen you with power in your inner being so that Christ may dwell [settle down and feel at home] in your hearts through faith....

Paul suffered much for the faith, but his eyes were on the Father and the big family in heaven and on earth. He was often alone in dire circumstances, but he rested in the truth that beyond all of it.....there was a loving Father who is there to help us.

I remember one particular time as a young boy. At bedtime I went into my parents bedroom and Dad was already in bed. I crawled up to him and embraced him before I went upstairs to my bedroom. His face felt a little rough from the stubble on his face that had formed since his shave in the morning. However, I felt joy and peace as he smiled at me. I knew Dad loved me and would take care of me because I belonged to his family. Dad was a quiet man but he was a good man. Several words remind me of him, ones I shared when I spoke at his funeral.

Howardmy dad's earthly name
Helen.....his wife
Honest.....he was man of his word and I never heard him use foul language
Humble his life and good example did his talking
Herdsman.....he was not very mechanical, but he was a good dairy farmer and cow man
Hard worker.....he worked harder than any man I knew
Horses..... he loved horses and taking us and grandkids on buggy rides
Humor.....he was easy going and loved to laugh
Heart.....like myself, he had childhood rheumatic fever, only his caused heart damage
Honorable.....he had a good reputation and honored God. He respected Sunday as God's day and
never baled hay on Sunday even if rain was expected on Monday, even though
other farmers did.
Heaven my father is more alive than I am for he has graduated to heaven to be
with Jesus his Savior

You now know a little about my earthly father. We will share some more messages about my heavenly father. Thanks for taking time to take this journey with us. May we all come to know and love God more each day. He is awesome! I remember the first time I saw Mount Shasta in Northern California. Even from a distance it was incredible. How much better to be there on it. The picture of it was taken from Bethel Church in Redding, California which is 60 miles away!

MOUNT SHASTA

PICTURE BELOW ON NEXT PAGE

Mount Shasta can be seen as the snow covered peak in the background.

It is majestic, high and awesome.

***GOD IS MORE MAJESTIC, HIGH
and AWESOME !!!***

