

~Lesson Six~

## God is our Loving Father

What do you think about when someone says, “dad or father?” Do you have fond memories sprinkled with many happy moments, or memories of loneliness and possibly fear? No matter what your father was, or is to you, your Heavenly Father is the Father Who has and will always love and care for you! This week I am going to give you some insights about God being your loving Father, so you will hopefully want Him to be your Dad.

### Day One Christians are God’s Adopted Children

The moment you become a Christian, you become a child of the God of the universe. Have you ever truly thought about what that means? John the Apostle said in John 1:12-13,

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (NASB)*

Why did God want us to be His children? It’s because He loves us so very much! 1 John 3:1a says,

*See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; (NASB)*

Romans 8 talks about how God sent the Holy Spirit to live within us, which enables us to be His adopted children. What the Spirit does is He gives us an eternal family relationship with God, and an awareness of that relationship. Before the Spirit is dwelling in us, God loves us but He is separated from us and is not in a relationship with us.

*For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...Romans 8:15-17 (NASB)*

To fully grasp what Paul is talking about in Romans you need to understand what adoption meant in the first century Roman culture. This is because Paul had the Roman adoption system in mind as he wrote. The first step in the adoption process was that the child would be symbolically sold by the old family

to the new family. Then if the adoption was legally sanctioned, the child would lose all rights to the old family, while gaining full rights and privileges in the new one. The child would have all debts cancelled from his past and would become co-heir to his new father's estate. The child would in all ways become the child of the new father.

As Christians, we are adopted into God's family from our old way of life. This old way of life was living in slavery to sin. This slavery to sin came from us being born with a sinful nature that only disobeyed God (Romans 5:12). Since we lived in a state of constant sin against God, we were accruing an awful debt towards Him. (If you remember, the debt of one sin is death.) However, Jesus paid the debt we owed God! He also bought or redeemed us out of our old life, which enabled us to be adopted into God's family. This was all accomplished by His suffering and death on the cross for our sins. As God's children we gain the full rights and privileges of a daughter of God on this earth. We also inherit all the benefits, riches, and promises of heaven.

1. **Read Romans 5:18-19 & 6:17-23, Ephesians 2:1-7, and Colossians 2:13-14.** Since Jesus paid the debt from your sin, do you think you are precious to Him? What do you think of the fact God wanted to adopt you? Does it make you feel loved and adored? Since you are God's child what is your inheritance?
  
2. **Read Ephesians 1:3-6.** When we think of adopting a child, we think of a parent choosing to love and make a child his own. Think about this principle for a while: God who spoke all things into being, Who is Sovereign over the entire universe, chose you to be His beloved daughter. That's a wow principle! How do you feel about God choosing you to be His daughter? Do you think He loves you?

## Day Two God Redeemed Us to Adopt Us

Some of you might be wondering, “what does the word redeem mean?” The idea of redemption or redeeming comes from three Greek words in the New Testament. The first word means “to buy or purchase, or pay a price for something.” The second means “to purchase out of the market.” The third word means “to set free.” You might be thinking, “that’s nice, but what in the world do those words have to do with my relationship with God? They sound like a wild, lose all your money because you purchased too much, and didn’t return anything shopping spree in some market place.” What’s so funny is, in a very lax way, they could mean that. (Jeremiah 32:7-10 is an everyday example of the word redemption.)

Let’s get serious and put redemption in the framework of our salvation. (In scripture adoption and redemption work together, so I will be repeating information some. Please just bear with me! I do believe you will benefit from me explaining both terms in-depth.) Romans 5 and 6 inform us, we are all born into slavery to sin, starting from Adam’s and Eve’s first sin. Everyone’s sin demands punishment, which is eternal death. Romans 6:23 says,

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NASB)*

Yet, when Jesus died on the cross He paid the price our sin demanded. His death was the price for our redemption from slavery to sin and eternal punishment. How much a person is willing to do or pay for something shows the worth that item is to the person. We can safely say, “We are worth a lot to God!”

*...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NASB)*

Jesus redeeming us also brought us back to the freedom of choice Adam and Eve had before they sinned for the first time. This is because before we were redeemed, sin was our slave master; we could only do what sin wanted us to do. We were enslaved to it and had no choice but to sin. Yet, if we have believed in Jesus Christ, then He has redeemed us - our sins (past, present, and future) are completely forgiven. I can struggle with guilt. So the knowledge that Jesus’ work has cleansed me from all my sins is a comforting thought! Is it for you?

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace... Ephesians 1:7 (NASB)*

This enables us to be set free from our bondage (to sin) just like a slave is set free, and adopted into God's family.

*...in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. Galatians 4:5-7 (NASB)*

1. **Read Psalms 49:7-9 & 15, 1 Corinthians 6:20, Titus 2:14, and 1 Peter 1:13-19.** Since Jesus loved you and paid for your redemption by His blood, how should you live? How does redemption show God's love for you?

We can do something very harmful to ourselves after we have been redeemed from slavery. We can choose to go back into slavery to sin and we often do. Here's an illustration of how ridiculous that is. This young woman was a sex slave and someone bought her out of slavery to her slave master or her pimp. They redeemed her out of slavery, not to use or abuse her, but instead to make her their cherished adopted daughter. Then as time went on, she decided slavery wasn't so bad after all, so she willingly chose to go back to what she did in slavery. She also allowed her pimp to have power over her when in reality he had none. You would label that young woman dysfunctional to say the least! Yet we do the same thing as Christians when we decide to sin! Ouch! Maybe we should call ourselves sin-functional when we willingly choose to sin.

2. Before we are Christians, we could only choose to sin, so we were enslaved. **Read Ephesians 2:1-3.** As Christians, we are in God's family and not enslaved to sin. However, we have a responsibility with our freedom from sin. It's just like the choice Adam and Eve had in the garden, which was to choose whether we will serve God or serve sin. **Read Romans 6:12-23.** What does Romans 6 tell us to do as Christians? How destructive is it for us to go back to bondage by deciding to sin?

3. Jesus is our example of who we should serve. **Read Matthew 20:25-28, John 13:1-17, Galatians 1:10, Colossians 3:23-24 and Philippians 2:5-17.** Who did Jesus serve? How does Jesus show His love to us? Who should you serve as a Christian? Who or what do you serve now? (As I am writing this question I am thinking, "I fall so short of Jesus' example of serving." I certainly serve myself more than God. I feel this would be a great time for all of us to prayerfully ask the Spirit to show us when we are serving ourselves instead of God.)

Another angle to what we were redeemed from is: Before we were Christians, we were also enslaved to some type of laws or works. In other words, we tried to be right before God by our own works. The Jews tried to keep the Old Testament laws. The rest of us did whatever things we thought seemed right for us to do. However, the problem was, we could never fully live up to God's standards of right because we were in slavery to sin.

Nevertheless, Jesus did something we could never do! He fulfilled God's righteous law for us. He was born a Jew which meant He lived under the Old Testament law His entire life and never broke even one of them. He died under the penalty of the law for our law breaking, not His. (In other words, He died for our criminal acts towards God, not His own.) In dying for our sins He paid our guilty sentence, which enabled Him to redeem us from any claim a law had against us for not following it.

Jesus also placed us in His family where we have been set free from the need to follow any works or law to satisfy God and avoid eternal punishment. This is because Jesus did all the work that was ever needed for us to be right before God. Do you grasp what I just said? I think it is just hard for us (for me) to fully grasp what Jesus did for us, maybe because we don't understand how lost and helpless we really are without Him!

However now as God's adopted daughters, we can throw away our list of dos and don'ts because now we live by faith in Him (Hebrews 11:6). We now follow God because we love Him (Mark 12:30), not out of legalism. We now have the power we need to follow Him by His Spirit living within us (Ephesians 3:20). Simply put, God is now our loving Father, and we are in a loving relationship with Him.

4. **Read Romans 8:1-4 and Galatians 2:16, 20 & 3:1-13.** Jesus has redeemed us from having to do any works or laws to satisfy God's righteous standard. However as His children why should we follow Him? How do we follow Him (by what)? Who has He given us so we have the power to do His will?

### **Day Three    God is a Loving Parent Who Truly Cares for Us**

When my mother was diagnosed with cancer, I went to live with my father's mother, my grandmother. I was about five at the time. She had this knack of criticizing me without me realizing she was being critical. I thought she was just being truthful about how crummy I was. My father lived with us, but stayed away a lot (because his mother did the same thing to him), so he was not very involved in my life. I felt abandoned and lonely.

Do you ever feel abandoned at times by your family or by other people? I think that if we are honest with ourselves, we have all felt abandoned and lonely. Abandonment hurts no matter whom it is from, but when it is from people who should love us, it devastates us, doesn't it? It hurts so much that you feel your heart has been pounced on. Did you know in Psalm 27:10, King David said his parents had forsaken him, but God had not?

Some of you who are doing this Bible study are parents, or love a child like your own. So you understand how strong a mother's love for a child can be. I think a mother's love for a child is the closest human love to God's love. However God tells us in Isaiah 49:15-16, His love (if you can imagine it) is even stronger than a mother's love, this is why He will never forsake us nor forget us.

*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed [written] you on the palms of My hands (NASB)*

I know at times it seems like God has abandoned or forgotten us, because of what has and is happening to us! I went through a situation awhile back, where I wondered where God was because of the severity of this trial for me. God showed me through the lives of both Jesus, and Joseph in Genesis, that He was still very much with me and that He can use the evil against us for good. He also

uses trials to make us what He wants us to be (James 1:2-4). In those hard times, you need to get into His Word even more, asking the Spirit to speak to you! (I must confess, I think it was this situation that got me to finally rewrite this Bible study on God's love.)

1. **Read Romans 8:28-39, also about Joseph in Genesis 50:15-20.** Are you feeling abandoned by God now? If so, ask Him to show you that He hasn't abandoned you. Be patient as He shows you. It takes time to get through to our hearts and minds, especially when we are suffering.

When you are lonely, think about these three things concerning God: First, He died so He could be with you. Second, His character also makes it possible for Him to be with you because He is always present. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "*I am with you always.*" I know some of you are thinking, "I can't see God, so it isn't the same as a person being there." That is true but God understands! He made us to want relationships. Third, He also lives within you, which is as intimate as He could get. Remember someday you will see Jesus face to face. In fact John 14:1-3 tells us that He is excited about seeing you face to face.

2. One of the positive things of being lonely is that you will probably have some time on your hands. Use those lonely times to get closer to God by spending more time in His Word and more time talking to Him. His presence can be found ever so sweetly during the quietness of these lonely times. King David knew this! Those lonely times drove David to God. We can see this in the Psalms he wrote. **Read Psalm 23.** If you are lonely ask God to let you see and feel His presence in some special ways. **Read 2 Kings 6:14-17.**

## **Day Four**    *God is the Good, Patient and Wise Father*

Being a good, patient, and wise Father just comes naturally to God. This is because His being good, patient, and wise, are three aspects of His character. My son is a very good father, but he certainly isn't good all of the time like God is. In many ways, my son is patient, but he has his limits like all of us. God has no limits to His patience; He is always patient with us. My son is a wise father, but his wisdom comes from his Heavenly Father. Did you know God created true wisdom? Since God created wisdom, we could say that all true wisdom is found through Him.

- 1. Read about God being good from Luke 18:19 and James 1:17.** Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
  
- 2. What does God being the Good Father mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer.** (Example: When I need a father figure to give me advice, shouldn't I go to God, Who throughout eternity, has wanted to be my Father? (1 John 3:1)).
  
- 3. Read about God being patient from Exodus 34:6 and 1 Timothy 1:15-16.** Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.

4. What does God being the Patient Father mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer. (Example: When I have sinned, shouldn't I call to the God who patiently waits for me to save me? ( 1 Timothy 1:15-16)).
  
5. **Read about God being wise from Daniel 2:20-23 and James 1:5.** Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
  
6. What does God being the Wise Father mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer. (Example: When I need wisdom, shouldn't I call to my Father Who created all wisdom? (James 1:5)).
  
7. As Christians we have the fruit of the Spirit because He lives within us. Goodness and patience are two pieces of that fruit. **Read Galatians 5:22-23.** Our society can think some things are good, when God thinks those things are sin. We could say that God's goodness is defined by what He calls good, not by what others call it. God's goodness is benevolent and kind. God defines patience as enduring things for Him, and waiting for His perfect timing. If you are a Christian and you don't have a very benevolent, kind, and patient attitude towards people, you aren't letting the Spirit control you. When you don't let the Holy Spirit control you, you won't have God's fruit. God promises to give us wisdom. We are told to ask for it. **Read James 1:5-8.** What is it exactly? Wisdom is the ability to apply God's knowledge to our lives. If you don't have wisdom, it is because you aren't letting the Spirit control you. Remember lesson 4 on the Holy Spirit.

## Day Five God is our “Abba Father”

The term daddy or *abba* is used quite frequently (nowadays) in the Christian community to address God. However we need to remember, only because Jesus’ Spirit is within us, do we have the ability and desire to approach God with the same confidence, and words of endearment and love that Jesus does. Humbling isn’t it, but so true? Jesus used *abba* to address God the Father in Mark 14. Mark 14:36a says,

*And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." (NASB)*

What does “Abba” mean exactly? It is the Aramaic word for father. It is a term of affection and expresses tenderness in much the same way the word “daddy” does. Since *abba* means father too, why did Jesus use the word father twice? It is to emphasize that God is “The Father” and that He is our loving Father. Haven’t you ever affectionately said someone’s name twice that you are close to and love?

1. Take some time and think about what you have learned about God these last weeks by doing this study, and about His love for you. Do you think God has earned the term *Abba* Father from you?

2. **End of the lesson application:** Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind one thing you learned from this lesson that He wants you to remember and make a part of your life. Be quiet before God and wait on Him to tell you. Write it down and ask Him to help you to do it!

God is the King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15-16) and you are His daughter, His princess. If you are thinking, “I am not God’s princess, that’s just someone’s cute idea. Where does it say that in God’s Word?” Think about this: God is the King of kings and you are His daughter. What conclusion do you come to?

## Bibliography

My ideas on the following topics come from the following sources.

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### **Abba**

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