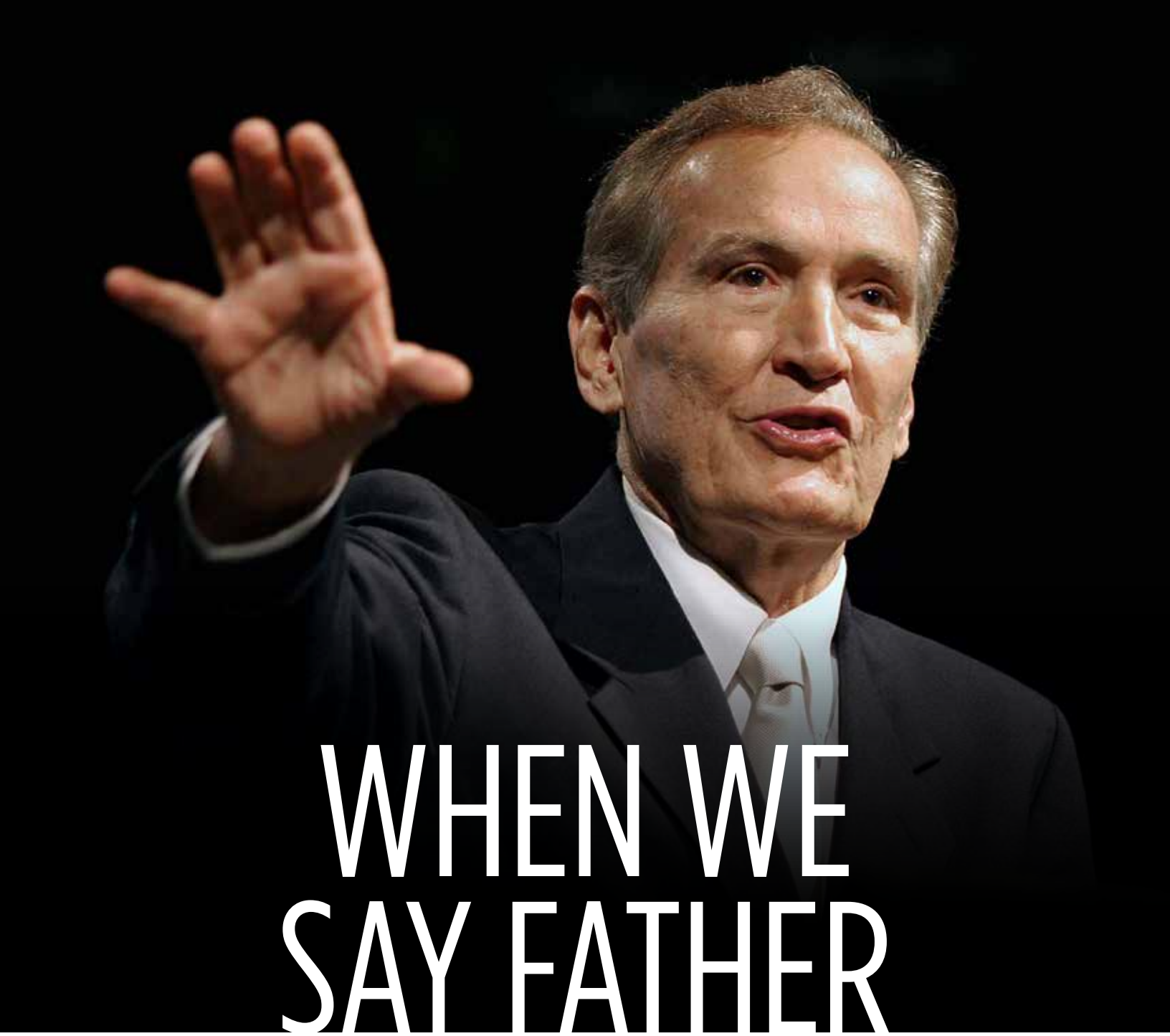

WHEN WE SAY FATHER

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS

When We Say Father

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When We Say Father

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 6:5-13
LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1684

There is nothing more important than knowing how to pray. Adrian Rogers says, "Nothing can stand against the man who can pray, because prayer can do anything that God can do... and God can do *anything*."

Matthew 6:9 shows us how to address our God when we pray: "After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name..." What happens when we say, "Father"?

First, we express God's very nature. He is a father. 1 Corinthians 8:6 says, "But there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things in Him."

When we say Father, we also expect His nurture. Calling Him Father implies that we are His children. When we become Christians, we are supernaturally born again. His very life comes into us. We can find great comfort in knowing we have His care. We also have His correction. Hebrews 12:7 says, "for if you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as Sons, for what son is He whom the father chasteneth not?" Adrian Rogers says, "When God saves you, He doesn't fix you up where you can't sin anymore, but He sure does fix you up where you can't sin and enjoy it anymore."

We also have His companionship.

Again, we are told by Pastor Rogers, "I'm so glad that our heavenly father never gets so busy that he doesn't have time just to close his ledger and talk to you like there's no one else on earth and nothing else for Him to do. You can come to Him anytime, any day, and talk to Him and call Him Daddy."

And we have His compassion. A true father would die for his children. That is exactly what God the Father did when He sent Jesus to take on the sins of the world.

Lastly, when we call Him Father, we exalt His name. The name of Jesus is above every name. When we hallow that name, recognize, revere, and rely upon it, we find that we have great power in prayer.

Life Application

Adrian Rogers says, "We don't bring our shabbiness to God. When we pray, we pray in the name of Jesus." When you pray today, call Him Father; express His nature, expect His nurture and exalt His name.

When We Say Father

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1) INTRODUCTION
   a) There is nothing more important to the Christian life than prayer.
      i) The time will come when, more than anything else on this Earth, you will want God to hear your prayer.
   b) Prayer is the key to the Christian life.
      i) There is not a failure in our lives but that proper prayer would have prohibited that failure.
      ii) We do not have a need but what prayer can meet that need.
      iii) There is not a sin in our lives but what the prayer of confession will cleanse.
      iv) There is not a temptation that proper prayer cannot aid in overcoming.
      v) All of our needs, failures, and temptations are wrapped up in prayer.
   c) Prayer can do anything that God can do, and God can do anything.
      i) It has well been said that there is nothing that lies outside the reach of prayer but that that lies outside the will of God.
   d) Our greatest need is to learn how to pray.
   e) Matthew 6:5-13
      i) This is a prayer that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us.
      ii) He did not give us this prayer simply to rattle off.
         (1) As a matter of fact, He warned us about vain repetition.
      iii) This is not a prayer necessarily to be memorized and repeated.
         (1) You don't say prayers; you pray prayers.
            (a) Prayer is talking with God.
            (b) Prayer is not rattling off some phrases, even if they have come out of the Bible.
      iv) If this prayer meets the need of your heart and is expressing the exact desire that you feel, then you may pray those exact words.
      v) Jesus did not say to pray this prayer, He said to pray in this way.
         (1) This prayer is to be a guide or a lesson in prayer.
   f) In today's message, we will look at Matthew 6:9 and what it means when we come to God and call Him our Father.

2) WHEN WE SAY FATHER, WE EXPRESS HIS NATURE (MATTHEW 6:9)
   a) It is the nature of God to be a Father.
   b) Different people have called God by different things.
      i) Aristotle the philosopher called Him "The Unmoved Mover".
      ii) God has been called "The Eternal Unknown" and "The Absolute Unknown".
      iii) To the irreverent, He is "The Man Upstairs".
      iv) 167 times in the Gospels, Jesus called God "Father".

c) There are people who do not want us to pray to God as Father, and many of them call themselves Christians.
   i) There has been a movement in churches to remove the idea of God as Father from the Bible, the hymnal, and from the prayer life of the church.
   ii) There are worshippers who challenge language that describes Him as male.
   iii) The image of "God the Father" is coming under assault.
      (1) Some people picture God as a cloud, a formless spirit, Mother Earth, etc.
d) The Lord Jesus said that when we pray, we begin with "Our Father".
   i) Matthew 6:9
   ii) We are not just ascribing human attributes to God.
      (1) We don't first look at ourselves and say that God is like us.
e) Divine Fatherhood is not a reflection of human fatherhood.
   i) Human fatherhood is a reflection of divine Fatherhood.
      (1) It is important that we understand this because some people have had cruel fathers, harsh fathers, or weak-willed, effeminate fathers.
      (2) We don't get our idea of God from human fatherhood.
   ii) We set the standard for human fatherhood by understanding what God is like.
      (1) It is what God is like that every human father should understand and endeavor to be.
         (a) Not that we make God in our image, but that we might conform more and more to the image of God.
f) It is not an analogy when the Bible says that God is a Father.
   i) It does not mean that God is like a father; God is a Father.
   ii) This is not what God is like; it is what God is.
g) 1 Corinthians 8:6
h) 1 Corinthians 15:24
i) Who is He? Father. Where is He? In Heaven.
j) In the Greek, "in Heaven" means "in the Heavens"; it is plural.
   i) The Bible speaks of three heavens.
      (1) First heaven: the atmosphere
      (2) Second heaven: the stars
      (3) Third Heaven: where God dwells
   ii) "We see the first heaven by day, we see the second heaven by night, and we see the third Heaven by faith."
      (1) Our Father is in all of them.
   iii) God is only a breath away and can hear a prayer that is only a whisper.
   iv) And yet, He is far enough away that He fills the universe, and nothing escapes His notice.

3) WHEN WE SAY FATHER, WE EXPECT HIS NURTURE (MATTHEW 6:9)

a) We have the Father's care.
   i) God will take care of us like a father takes care of his children.
   ii) Not only do we have a duty to God, He has a duty to us.
      (1) We are His children, and God has a responsibility to take care of His children.

(a) He will not go on vacation and leave us alone.

iii) God is not the Father of all people.
(1) There is a wrong doctrine that many people sentimentally believe.
(a) It is called the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men.
(2) God, in a spiritual sense, is only the Father of those who have been born into God's family.
(a) Some will say that since God is the Creator of all, then He is the Father of all.
(i) God created rats, buzzards, and rattlesnakes, but He is not their Father.
1. He is their Creator.
(b) John 1:11-12
(c) John 8:44
(i) In this passage, Jesus was speaking to the unsaved religious leaders of His day.
(d) We become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ.
(i) Galatians 3:26
(e) God becomes our Father, not by creation, but by conception when we are conceived of the Holy Spirit of God and are twice-born into the family of God.

iv) Matthew 6:26
(1) Not "their" Heavenly Father, but "your" Heavenly Father.
(2) What farmer would feed his chickens and neglect his children?
(a) When we are saved, we are God's children.
(i) God has a responsibility to us.

b) We have the Father's correction.
i) Matthew 6:14-15
ii) God is not a doting Father.
(1) God is a Father who demands and commands respect of His children.
iii) When we are wrong, He will correct us.
iv) Hebrews 12:5-7
v) When God saves you, He does not fix you up where you cannot sin anymore; but He fixes you up where you cannot sin and enjoy it anymore.
vi) God does not chastise the unsaved.
(1) He leaves them alone.
vii) God deals with us as sons; He deals with them as a judge.
viii) God deals with us now; He deals with them later.
ix) Romans 2:5
(1) The unsaved man is just treasuring up wrath until the day of wrath.
x) God deals with His children on a cash basis; He deals with the devil's children on a credit basis.
xi) The minute we get out of fellowship with God He begins to deal with us.
(1) He does not wait for the judgment.
xii) The unsaved man is living on credit; saving up wrath against the day of wrath (judgment day).
xiii) The fact that the Father chastises us doesn't mean that He doesn't love us; it means that He does love us.

(1) God loves us too much to let us live in sin.
xiv) God is not rejecting us when He corrects us.
(1) It is the sin in our lives that He is rejecting.
c) We have His compassion.
i) Matthew 6:8
ii) God is a Father who compassionately wants to meet our needs.
iii) Psalm 103:13
iv) Lamentations 3:22
d) We have His companionship.
i) Our Heavenly Father is not so busy that He does not have time to speak to us.
ii) When we say "Our Father", He is always ready to listen.
iii) Sometimes when the telephone rings, we don't really want to answer it; but if it is our child, we are always ready to talk to him or her.
(1) Because a child has an entry that nobody else has.
(2) Our Lord was saying that when we say "Father", we are not coming to Him in some other relationship.
(a) We are coming to Him as a child comes to a parent.
(i) There is a relationship between a child and the parent.
iv) Corrie Ten Boom said, "When you pray, don't wrestle, just nestle."
(1) Just come to God as a Father.

4) WHEN WE SAY FATHER, WE EXALT HIS NAME (MATTHEW 6:9)

a) Matthew 6:9
i) In this verse, the word "hallowed" means to speak with reverence.
b) We must recognize His name.
c) We must reverence His name.
d) We must rely on His name.
e) When Jesus said, "Hallowed be Thy name", what name was He talking about?
i) He was talking about the greatest name of the ages, and the one name above all names that is supreme.
(1) It is the name of Jesus.
(a) John 17:6
(b) Philippians 2:9
(i) There is no name above His name.
ii) When Jesus said, "Hallowed be Thy name", Jesus was interjecting Himself here.
(1) When we pray, we come in the name of Jesus.
(2) When we pray, we come through the Lord Jesus Christ.
f) John 14:13-14

5) CONCLUSION

a) When we say "Our Father", we express His nature, we expect His nurture, and we exalt His name.
i) That is the way our prayers should begin.

(1) Just talking to God as a Father.

b) Is God your Father?
   i) Do you have the right and the authority to pray in Jesus' name?
   ii) John 1:11-12
   iii) Have you received Him?
      (1) You can receive Him right now.

c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.

d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
   i) Romans 3:23
   ii) Romans 10:9-10
   iii) Romans 10:13
   iv) Acts 16:31
   v) John 3:16

When We Say Father

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 6:5-13
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Take your Bibles and go back to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 6 and in a moment we're going to begin reading in verse 5. The passage that we have before us today deals with the subject of prayer. There is nothing more important to the Christian life than prayer. And you better listen today because the time will come when more than anything else on this Earth you will want God to hear your prayer. Prayer is the key to the Christian life. I don't have a failure but what it is a prayer failure. That is, there's not a failure in my life but that proper prayer would have prohibited that failure. I don't have a need but what prayer can meet that need. There's not a sin in my life but what the prayer of confession will cleanse and the prayer for protection will protect me against in the future. I'm saying, dear friend, that there's not a temptation that I am facing that proper prayer cannot aid me in overcoming. All of my needs, all of my failures, all of my temptations, it's all wrapped up in prayer.

Prayer can do anything that God can do, and God can do anything. It has well been said, there is nothing, nothing that lies outside the reach of prayer but that that lies outside the will of God. Our greatest need is to learn how to pray. And let's listen to the Master Prayer, the Lord Jesus, as He tells us about prayer. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 5 through 13, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

Now here is a prayer that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us. He didn't give us this prayer simply to rattle off. As a matter of fact, He warned us about vain repetition. This is not a prayer necessarily to be memorized, though I hope you will memorize it, but not necessarily a prayer to be memorized and repeated. Often we get in a convocation of saved and unsaved alike, and someone will say, "Now let's all stand and say the Lord's Prayer." Well, you don't say prayers, you pray prayers. There's a difference. Suppose you and I are sitting in your living room and you say to me, "Say a conversation." Prayer is talking with God. It is not rattling off some phrases, even if they have come out of the Bible. Now if this prayer meets the need of your heart and it is expressing the exact desire that you feel, then you may pray those exact words, but Jesus did not say, "Pray this prayer." Jesus said, "Pray in this manner. Pray in this way." This is a prayer that is to be a guide, a lesson in prayer.

Now, we're going to spend many weeks together in this prayer, this model prayer that our Lord gave. And so we're going to take it a phrase at a time. Look in Matthew 6 verse 9. Jesus said this, "After this manner therefore pray ye: after this manner, pray ye: 'Our Father which art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy

name.'" And that's all we're going to talk about today is verse 9, "Our Father which art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy name." The title of the message today, "When We Say Father." What does that mean, that you and I can come to God and pray and call Him our Father? Three things: Number one, when we say Father, **we express His nature,** because it is the nature of God to be a Father. Who is this God to whom we pray? Well, different people have called Him by different things. Aristotle, the philosopher, called Him the Unmoved Mover. Huxley, in our day, called Him the Eternal Unknown. Arnold called Him the Absolute Unknown. In Star Wars, He's the Force. To the irreverent, He's the Man Upstairs. But do you know what Jesus called Him? 167 times in the Gospels alone, Jesus called Him Father, Father. Now what does that mean? That we can address the One to whom we pray as Father?

Did you know today in America there are people who do not want us to pray to God as Father, and many of them call themselves Christians? Did you know there is a great move in churches today to remove the idea of God as Father from the Bible, from our hymnal, from the prayer life of the church? Here's an article that was in The Wall Street Journal, and I want to read a part of it to you. The title is "The Lord's Name: image of God as He loses its sovereignty in America's churches." "More worshipers challenge language that describes the Supreme Being as male. Long Beach, California, the First Congregational Church here looks every inch a bastion of religious tradition. Inside the imposing Italian renaissance structure, graced with delicate rose windows or mahogany pews and a grand old pipe organ. Then the Sunday service starts. Quote, "May the God who mothers us all bear us on the breath of dawn and make us to shine like the sun and hold us in the palm of her hand," intones Mary Ellen Kilsby, the pastor. Unorthodox? Some would say so, but no longer unique. The ancient Western image of God the Father is coming under assault. Although still relatively unusual in most of America's 350,000 Christian churches, Gospel like this is making inroads among church leaders who have begun purging hymnals and liturgies of references to God as male. "I don't think our conception of God will ever stand again," says Joseph Howe, Dean of Vanderbilt University's Divinity School in Nashville, Tennessee. In his public utterances, Dr. Howe alternately refers to the Deity as she, then He. "I don't think anyone would want to defend a view that God values males more than females, but that's exactly what traditional language does," he says.

"The roots of the debate over what to call God are often traced to a book by Mary Balley called Beyond God the Father, a critique of patriarchal religion that bluntly states, "If God is male, then male is God." A number of theologies or a number of theologians warned that language shapes reality and unless the church changes his imagery, it will effectively endorse gender and race bias, and by insisting on God as Father," they say, listen to this one, "traditionalists risk deifying a mere word, committing the sin of idolatry." So, if you call God Father, now, they say, why that's idolatry. There is a Greek word for that. It's bologna. All right.

"As society becomes aware of the issue of injustice, the society's language has to change to mirror that," says Letty M. Russell, a Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School. Listen to this statement, "The way to respect the original words is to retranslate them as our understanding of their meaning changes." Now that's the way you respect the original. Just retranslate it. I've never heard such double-speak as that. "The Reverend Kilsby's preaching has encouraged her congregation toward eclecticism as they gather over coffee after Sunday Service. Members talk about how they picture God, as a cloud, a formless spirit, mother earth." And on and on it goes and gets more nauseating as it goes.

Jesus our Lord said, "When you pray, you begin "Our Father." "Our Father." Now we're not just ascribing human attributes to God. We don't first look at ourselves and then say, "God is like us." That's not the idea. No, no, no, no. Divine fatherhood is not a reflection of human fatherhood, but vice versa. Human fatherhood is a reflection of divine fatherhood. And it's very, very important that you understand this, because some people have had cruel fathers. Some people have had harsh fathers. Some people have had weak-willed, effeminate fathers. So we don't get our idea of God from human fatherhood. To the contrary, we set the standard for human fatherhood by understanding what God is like. It's what God is like that every human father should understand and endeavor to be. Not that we make God in our image, but that we might, my dear friend, conform more and more to the image of God.

This is not an analogy when the Bible says that God is a Father. It doesn't mean that God is like a Father; God is a Father. It's not merely analogous. This is not what God is like; it is what God is. When we say, "Our Father" we express His nature. Put these verses in the margin, First Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 6, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things." First Corinthians 15 verse 24, "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Now this speaks of God's nature, intrinsically, God is a Father. And so, the very nature of God, when we say, "Our Father", we express His nature. "Our Father, which art in Heaven." Who is He: Father. Where is He: in Heaven. But in the Greek language, the word "in Heaven" is literally "in the heavens", it is plural. Is there more than one Heaven? Yes there is. The Bible speaks of three Heavens. The Apostle Paul was caught up into the third Heaven you will remember. You see, the first heaven is the atmosphere. The Bible speaks of, "The fowls of the heavens." That sphere, this ocean of air that envelops the Earth. The Bible calls that "the heavens".

Then the next heaven is where the stars are, the stellar heavens. The Bible says of those heavens, "The heavens declare the glory of God." The third Heaven is where God Himself dwells; Paul was caught up into the third Heaven. So you have three heavens. You have the atmospheric heaven, the stellar heaven, and the abode of God. And someone has beautifully said, "We see the first heaven by day, the second heaven by night, and the third Heaven by faith." And our Father is in all of them. "Our Father which art in the heavens." And so that means that He's right here with us, He's closer than the air we breathe, He's only a breath away, and He can hear a prayer that's only a whisper. And yet, He's far enough away that He fills the universe and nothing escapes His notice; that is the nature of the one to whom we pray. We say, "Our Father." And when we say, "Our Father", number one, we express His nature, do you have it?

Number two, not only do we express his nature, but **we expect his nurture**. What do you mean by that? I mean that He's going to take care of us like a father takes care of his children. You see we are His children. Now, we always talk about our duty to God, our duty to God and indeed we have a duty to God. But have you ever thought about it; God has a duty to you. We're His children. I mean God is honor-bound to take care of His children. God has a responsibility to take care of His children. He's not going to take a vacation to Acapulco and leave us alone. He, my dear friend, has a responsibility to take care of His children. We are His children.

Now, I want to say this, that God is not the Father of all people. There's this wrong doctrine that many people sentimentally believe. They call it the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men. But God, in a spiritual sense, is only the Father of those who've been born into God's family. You say, "No, God is the Creator of all and therefore God is the Father of all." Well, God created rats, roaches, buzzards and rattlesnakes; He's not their Father, He is their Creator. God is the Father of those who are

born into the family of God. Remember what the Bible says in John 1 verses 11 and 12, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God." As many as received the Lord Jesus, they have the authority, the right to become the sons of God. And then John chapter 8 and verse 44, you remember that, don't you? Jesus was speaking to the unsaved religious leaders of His day, and Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father you will do." You become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 3, it is very clear and very plain. Galatians 3 verse 26, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ."

God becomes your Father, not by creation, but by conception when you're conceived of the Holy Spirit of God, when you are born, twice born, you're born into the family of God. And because you're His children you have **His care**. Now look if you will in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 26. Look at it, Matthew chapter 6 and verse 26, "And behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather in the barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them." Not their heavenly father, your heavenly father feedeth them. "Are ye not much better than they?"

Now here's the logic of our Lord. He's saying, "What farmer would feed his chickens and neglect his children?" That's what He's saying. He's saying, "Look you're My children. You're better than animals." There's a difference between animals and human beings. The animal rightists don't seem to understand this. But there is a distinct, intrinsic difference. You are a child of God. You're not a beggar. God has a responsibility to you. You have the Father's care.

But not only do you have the Father's care because you're His child, you have the Father's **correction.** Look in Matthew chapter 6 and look in verse 14 and 15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Now this is one of many examples where we find out that not only do we have the Father's care, we have the Father's correction. God is not a doting Father. He is a Father that demands and commands respect of His children and tells us that when we're wrong, He's going to correct us.

And by the way, let me give you another great verse to put in your margin, right here, that deals not only with the Father's care, but the Father's correction. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 5 through 7, "And have you forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" That's a very wonderful passage of Scripture. And what God is saying is, that His correction as a Father is proof of your sonship.

Now, you may be a member of Bellevue Baptist Church or some other church, and you may be living in sin, high, wide, and handsome. And you're saying, "Well, God never chastises me. God never corrects me. God never lays the whip on me." Well don't brag about it. Friend, that's only proof that you've never been saved. "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If you receive not chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons?" Now God's not using street language or slang language there. What God is simply saying is, "If you were My child, I would've carried you to the woodshed." If you're living in sin, living in open rebellion against God, and God does not chastise you, it's just a sign that you've never been saved. When God saves you, He doesn't fix you up to where you can't sin anymore, but He fixes

you up where you can't sin and enjoy it any more. God will carry you, my dear friend, to the woodshed if you're His child.

And that's the reason some people don't understand this thing about Christianity. I've heard people say, "Well, when I got saved, I got into more trouble than I ever did before I was saved." Of course, of course. Now you enter into discipline. Now you enter into chastisement. God does not chastise the un-saved, don't get that idea, God leaves them alone.

In our family, when our children were little, if there was a fracas in the front yard, some sort of a disturbance, and the children out there acting up, and fighting or squabbling or whatever. And my wife would go out there or I would go out there and there'd be the neighbor's children and our children; whose children did we punish? Not the neighbor's children; we learned better than that. We're smarter than that. Just our own. "Whom the Father loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." The Lord does not chastise the devil's children, contrary to public opinion. He just simply leaves them alone.

You see, God deals with us as sons; He deals with them as a judge. He deals with us now; He deals with them later. The Bible says in Romans 2:5 concerning the unsaved, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." That is, the unsaved man is just putting wrath in the bank. He's just treasuring up wrath till the judgment day comes. God deals with His children on a cash basis, and God deals with the devils children on a credit basis. You know the difference between cash and credit?

When I was a little boy, I was about five. I went, one day, with my dad to the community grocery store on Georgia Avenue in West Palm Beach up on a hill. And my dad went in there to buy groceries, and my brother and I were there with him. He said one of the strangest things I'd ever heard a man say. He got a sack full of groceries and turned to the man behind the counter, and he said, "Charge it." And then he just walked out. I couldn't believe it. I said, "That is the most incredible word I've ever heard in my life." I'd never heard a word like that! "Charge it!" he said, and just walked out.

The next time he did that I watched. He said the same thing, "Charge it." I said, "I've got it made." I told my brother about it, we said we'll give it a trial run. We went in there, we had a little money in our pocket, but we got a soft drink, walked up to the man and said, "Charge it." He knew who we were. He said, "All right", and put it on my dad's bill. Boy, from there on we thought that we had discovered the key to Fort Knox and that lasted for several weeks. In and out of that store we would go, pick up some things, and there was the magic word, "Charge it."

Friend, one day my dad called us in. He said, "Boys, is this you? Have you done thus and such a thing?" And friend, right then I learned the difference between cash and credit and I've never forgotten it 'til this day. You see, God deals with His children on a cash basis. The minute I get out of fellowship with God, God begins to deal with me. God doesn't wait till the judgment. But the unsaved man is just simply living by credit; he is treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

The fact that the Father chastises me doesn't mean that He doesn't love me. It means that He does love me. God loves me too much to let me live in sin. When I say Father, when I say Father, because I'm His child, I have His care. He wouldn't feed His chickens and neglect His children. Because I say Father, I have His correction. He loves me and He deals with me lovingly. It doesn't mean that when He scolds me or when He whoops, whips me, that doesn't mean He doesn't love me.

Here's a little boy out in the yard. He's playing in the mud and he's covered with mud and his father sees him. His father may go out in the yard and take a hose and hose him off before he lets him come in the house. It's not the little boy the father's rejecting, it's the dirt. And when God corrects us, God is not rejecting us; it is the sin in our life that God is rejecting.

And when we say Father, not only do we have His care, and not only do we have His correction, we have **His compassion**. Look in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 8, He says, "Be ye not therefore like unto them," that is like the heathen, "for your Father knoweth what things you have need of. Your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask Him." Now what does this mean? It means when you say Father, He is a Father that compassionately wants to meet your needs. The Bible says in Psalm 103 verse 13, "Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." And we can come to God and know that God is compassionate toward us. God loves us. In my prayer time, I had such a sense of the presence of God because I knew that I was speaking to God, not as a Judge, not as a Ruler, not as a King, not as the Almighty; He is all of these things. But I could speak to Him as my Father.

I read something recently that brought tears to my eyes as I read it. On a cold wintery day, there was a man who had a massive heart attack; he lived alone. Somehow, they came and got him and took him to the hospital. While he was there in the hospital, he asked the doctor, "Is it serious?" The doctor said, "It is, perhaps, critical." He told a nurse, he said, "Would you call this number? It is my daughter's number. Would you call her? She's the only family I have. Would you please call my daughter, and tell my daughter where I am and what has happened?" The nurse said, "I will."

And she went to the phone to call the daughter. And when she called the daughter, she told the daughter what had happened and the daughter began to cry. And the daughter said, "You cannot let him die. Please don't let him die." Said, "I have not seen my daddy for almost a year. The last time I saw my father we had a terrible argument. I told my father I hated him. Those are the last words I said to him. I didn't really hate him, but I told him I hated him, and I haven't seen him for a year. Please don't let him die. I want to see him, I'll be there in 30 minutes." The nurse began to pray and say, "Oh God, don't let him die."

But a Code 99 was sounded and the people came to try to resuscitate this man who'd had another spasm and was sinking. And they worked over him, and the crew came and they worked over him and the nurse stood outside and prayed and said, "She's not here, don't let him die!" But after a while they stopped working over and pumping on that lifeless body; he was dead. And about that time, the daughter burst through the doors. The nurse stood aside and she watched as the doctors came out and conversed with this girl, and saw her drop her head and begin to weep without consolation.

The nurse, though it wasn't her responsibility, just could not let that happen. She went out in the hallway, and said to this daughter, "Would you like to at least go in to the room where he is?" And the daughter said, "Yes." She went into that room and just buried her face in the sheets and began to weep over the relationship that she'd had with her father. Not even able to tell him that she was sorry. And the nurse looked over there by the bedstead, there on the table by that bed, and there was a note. The nurse knew it was none of her business but she thought she'd read it anyway. She picked it up and this is what it said, "My dearest Janie, I forgive you. And I pray that you will also forgive me. I know that you love me. I love you too. Daddy."

I was just so moved when I read that. Because I thought, "That's just an earthly father, just an earthly father. But the Bible says in Psalm 27 verse 10, "When my father and my mother cast me off, then will the Lord take me up." When we say "Our Father", we're talking about one whose compassions fail not. When we say "Our Father" we express His nurture. We have His care. When we say "Our Father" we express His nurture. We have His compassion. When we say "Our Father" we have, dear friend, His companionship. Have you ever thought how fathers and sons are supposed to get along?

I read long ago or heard long ago about a man who was a bookkeeper. And this was back before the days of computers and this man took special pride in his ledgers. I mean he had every entry just right. It was just so. And he had his office at his home. And the children were told not to come in the office and not to disturb daddy while daddy worked and this man was in there making an entry in this journal when his little four-year old boy threw open the door and just ran full speed into the room and took a leap and jumped up into his daddy's arms while his daddy was in that swivel chair. When he did, he hit his daddy's arm and the pen went right across the page, ruined the whole page.

When the father realized what happened, he threw the pen down and he said, "Son, haven't I told you not to come in here when I'm working. Look, son, what you've done. You've ruined the whole page. I've told you to stay out of this office when I'm working." Little boy's chin started to quiver and tears just welled up in his eyes and he said, "I'm sorry Daddy." Said, "I just wanted to sit in your lap, I just wanted to rub your beard." And when he said that it just broke the father's heart. And he realized what a mistake he'd made to throw off the love of that little child and to reject the love of that child. He said, "Son, I'm sorry. Daddy's sorry. These books are not that important," and he closed the book and he put his pen aside and took that little fellow up and hugged him, and just smelled his neck as a little scent that boys have and just hugged him up close. And then they went out and walked a while and talked about things that fathers and sons are supposed to talk about.

When I heard that I said, you know, I'm so glad that my heavenly Father it not so busy flinging out the sun, the moons and the stars and, and running this mighty universe that He does not have time to speak to me. There's not a time but when I say "Our Father" He's ready to listen.

I stay busy like most of you and sometimes I dread the telephone. The telephone rings sometimes. I'm right in the middle of something that I must get done. I'm facing a deadline. The telephone rings and I really don't want to pick it up, but I know I must and I pick it up. And I'm called by a lot of things. I have a lot of names. One of them is Adrian. One of them is Pastor. But one of them is Daddy. And when I pick up that phone and if on the other end it says Daddy or Papa, I tell you right away then I'm ready to talk. Ready to talk. It's because, you see, a child or a grandchild has an entry that nobody else has. And that's what our Lord is saying, that when we say Father, we're not coming to Him in in some other relationship; we have His companionship. There's a relationship between a child and the parent.

My daddy, when I was a little boy, would go to work. My daddy worked for East Coast Motors in West Palm Beach, Florida; it was a Buick company down there. My dad sold Buicks, and he was a good salesman. But I, when I was a little boy, I didn't understand what my dad did. My dad would just go to work. And he used to say one of the strangest things. He would say to my mother, he would say, "Well, I'll be home a little late, I'm going to see a party." I didn't know you could see a party; I thought you went to parties. But he had a phrase, "I'm going to see a party." I could never figure that out. Who, where are all these parties he's

going to see? I thought he worked. I didn't understand what my dad did. He would go off and come back home. But friend, I didn't have to understand what my daddy did to know my daddy; to love my daddy.

You don't have to be a great theologian to have a personal, vital relationship with Almighty God. Isn't that wonderful? I mean, you don't have to know how God runs the universe. You don't have to understand all of the intricacies of some sort of double-jointed theology just to know your Daddy. You can come to God in prayer and say, "Father!" I'm so glad that 167 times in the Gospel we're told to think of God as our Father.

Now, Corrie Ten Boom put it in a beautiful way. She said, "When you pray, don't wrestle; nestle." Don't you love that? "Don't wrestle; nestle." Just come to God as a Father.

Now here's the third thing and I want to be very quick about this. When you pray to God and you say Father, first of all you express His nature. He is a Father. He is a Father. You express His nature. Number two, you expect His nurture. He has a responsibility to you. And number three, **you exalt His name**. That's the third thing. Matthew 6:9, "Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name." Now the word hallowed means to speak with, with reverence, with reverence. You must r**ecognize His name**. You must **reverence His name**. And you must **rely on His name**.

What is His name? When Jesus said, "Hallowed be Thy name," what name was He talking about? Now this may surprise you, but do you know what the greatest name of the ages is? Do you know the one name above all names that is supreme? It's Jesus. Let me give you this. Listen to this, this will bless you, John 17 verse 6, Jesus said, "I have manifested Thy name. I have manifested Thy name." And then put that with Philippians 2:9, "God has given Him a name which is above every name." There's no name above His name. And when Jesus said, "Hallowed be Thy name", Jesus was interjecting Himself here into this thing. And so when you pray, you come in the name of Jesus. You come through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to recognize the name. We're to reverence the name. We are to rely upon the name. John 14 verses 13 and 14, Jesus said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "Our Father, hallowed be Thy name." "Hallowed be Thy name." "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."

When we say, "Our Father" we express His nature. When we say, "Our Father" we expect His nurture. When we say, "Our Father" we exalt His name. That's the way our prayer begins. Just talking to God as a Father. Could you pray and say, "Father". Up in the balcony, could you pray that way and say, "Father"? Oh, you say, "I could say it." Yes, you could say it but young man listen, is God your Father? Young man, have you been born again? Sir, do you know Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? Mister, if you were to die right now, would you go to Heaven? Are you certain of it? Is God your Father? Have you received Christ as your personal Savior? When you pray, do you have the right, the authority, to pray in Jesus name? "He came unto His own and His own received Him not. As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the children of God, the sons of God." Have you received Him?

You can receive Him right now. I want every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, I just pray that today many in this building will say an everlasting yes to Jesus Christ and be gloriously and eternally saved.

Now, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you

might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."

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