

CHAPTER 1 **OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN**

Lesson 1 **Our Father**

“Where do you think Jesus has gone now?” Peter might have grumbled to John. “I want to eat breakfast, but there’s no telling where He is or how long until He shows up.”

“Well, go look down by the lake. That’s where you found Him yesterday morning, remember?” John could have answered. “Seems like a habit with Him — getting up early, wandering off to some quiet place to pray.” (Luke 5:16)

“How boring!” perhaps Peter replied. “I’d rather sleep, especially since we were up half the night with all those sick people! I’m hungry! Where is He?”

Day and night, Jesus’ disciples watched Him minister to hundreds of people. Each person was desperate, needing a miracle — a supernatural touch from God. Some were deaf; others were blind; a few were dying or demon possessed. They needed more than a Band-Aid and a lollipop. They had problems their family, their friends, and even their doctors were powerless to fix. They needed God, so they came to Jesus.

“How does He do it?” Peter prodded John.

“Do what?” replied John.

“How does Jesus spit in the dirt, make a mud pie, put it on the blind man’s eyes, and cause the guy to see? (John 9:1-11) How does He just speak a word, and a widow’s son is raised from the dead? (Luke 7:11-15) How does He do it?” Peter asked. “What’s His secret? Even the rabbis (teachers) don’t have such power.” [Matthew 7:28b, 29]

Day after day, as Peter and John watched, they learned that Jesus’ power to help others came from His relationship with God. He called God “Father.” He didn’t just know *about* God; Jesus *personally knew* God!

STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!

His prayers were not like the long prayers of the Pharisees (a particular group of Jewish religious leaders). When He prayed, Jesus just talked with God, His Father, and then He spent time quietly listening. One day, the disciples got it! The power came from Jesus' *relationship* with God. *He spent time with His Father and understood His heart!* Wow! To know God in such a personal way — was it possible for them, too?

They hurriedly found Jesus and with great excitement, they asked, “Lord, will You teach us to pray?”

Jesus replied,

In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Your Kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13

Jesus said He did not do anything by Himself; He did only what He saw His Father doing or what He heard His Father say to do. (John 5:19; 12:49, 50) Early in the morning, Jesus visited with His Father, watching and listening for wisdom and instructions about what His Father wanted to do through Him that day. (Mark 1:35) Sometimes He prayed through the night. (Luke 6:12) Then as Jesus began to heal the sick, deliver those tormented by demons, forgive sins, and bring the dead back to life, He showed the people the power of His Father's love. [Mark 2:10-12; Luke 4:32-36; 5:17, 24, 25; 6:17-19]

In the days that followed, the disciples prayed from their hearts — “Our Father” — and felt closer to God. This influenced everything they did and spilled over into other people's lives. There was power in knowing God as their Father! When sick and hurting people came to them for help, their hearts suddenly filled with God's love, and His POWER flowed through them. [Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:14, 15; 6:7, 12, 13; Luke 9:1, 2, 6]

The devil's works were destroyed! (Luke 10:17-19) Miracles happened and demons ran off, screaming in fear! By the end of the disciples' lives, thousands of people had come to know that God was *their* Father, too. They personally had experienced His love, forgiveness, healing touch, and delivering hand.

What about you? Does the thought of God being your Father scare you? Perhaps you knew a father who was not always gentle and kind. Sometimes human dads are stressed and bad-tempered and do and say hurtful things.

Your heavenly Father is not like that. God is a good Father all the time. He is not hateful, mean, or quick tempered. He does not love one child more than another — “...There is no partiality (favorite) with Him” Ephesians 6:9b. Heavenly Father's character is summed up in one simple phrase: “God is love” 1 John 4:8b. [John 3:16; Romans 8:39; Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 4:7-10, 16] His love for you is pure, never

wrong or selfish. He wants only what is good and wholesome for you, because you are His precious, beloved child. “For the Father Himself loves you” John 16:27a.

Did you know that Jesus is praying for you? Even now, He is praying that you will be healed of those past things that have hurt you and keep you from trusting your heavenly Father. [John 17:20-26] Every day, Jesus prays that you **STOP** a moment and let Heavenly Father pour His love into your heart. He cares for you and wants you to trust Him to take care of everything that concerns you.

Jesus wants you to **LOOK** and **LISTEN** every day to learn the ways in which Heavenly Father will talk with you.

Sometimes Heavenly Father will “show” you something. You may be reading your Bible and suddenly, you’ll “see” or understand something you never thought of before. Or perhaps you’ll “see” in your mind a picture or movie of something He is saying to you.

Sometimes, Jesus Himself will speak out loud to you.

But usually, Heavenly Father will speak quietly in your heart through the Holy Spirit.

However He chooses to speak to you, Heavenly Father wants you to become more and more confident of His love for you. As you grow in your relationship with Him, you will be able to share His love and power with others, too!

Today as you pray, call God “Father.” Talk to Him simply, from your heart, and listen for Him to talk to you. Don’t be afraid. He is good. You are safe with Him. He genuinely loves you. [John 10:27-30]

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER?

1. What about Jesus’ life made the disciples want to be like Him?
2. What did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to do?
3. When they prayed, what were the disciples supposed to call God?
4. What three things should we do when we talk with God?
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5. How does God usually speak?

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

1. “For His _____ is great toward us” Psalm 117:2a.
2. “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His _____ are _____ to their cry”
Psalm 34:15.
3. “Your right _____ has held me up; Your _____ has made me
great” Psalm 18:35b.
4. “The Lord is _____ and _____, _____ to anger,
and abounding in _____” Psalm 103:8.
5. “You will show me the path of _____; in Your presence is fullness of _____; at Your
right hand are _____ forevermore” Psalm 16:11.

PRAYER TIME

Talk to God simply — just as you would talk to your closest friend. You do not have to pray a big, religious prayer. God just wants to hear your heart.

Thank Him for wanting you to know Him personally, for wanting you to call Him “Father.”

- **STOP!** Take a moment to let His peace and love fill your heart.
Is something troubling you? Tell Heavenly Father. He already knows about it, but He wants you to “unload it” on Him, because He cares for you.
- **LOOK!** As you share your heart with the Lord, is He showing you someone who might be hurting?
Is He showing you a new way to handle an old situation?
- **LISTEN!** Do you hear Him speaking words of wisdom or instruction in your heart?
Tell Him some things you are happy about and say “Thank you!”

JOURNAL

If you received anything from God during this time, write it down so you do not forget it.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

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