



## **Awaken 365 God the Father**

**Phil Playfoot  
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How does the Bible portray God as 'Father'?  
What significance is that for our relationship with God?  
How do we experience that relationship?

### **1. Introduction:**

In the Bible God is spoken of as 'Father'. (Proverbs 3:12, Isaiah 63:16, Malachi 2:10, Matthew 6:9, Mark 14:36, John 20:17, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6)

His Fatherhood is in relation to different aspects of God's nature and work.

God as a Creator



- God is frequently referred to as the Father of Israel, their creator and King. (Deuteronomy 32:6, Isaiah 63:16, and Jeremiah 3:19)

### God as a Protector and Provider

- God is the potter and His people are the clay. (Jeremiah 18, Isaiah 64:8 and Job 10:8-9)
- God is called the "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows". (Psalm 68:5-6)
- He is a protector who provides for the vulnerable and ensures justice for those who are without earthly protection. (Deuteronomy 10:18, Psalm 146:9)

### God as a Loving and Personal Father

- Jesus refers to His relationship to the Father on multiple occasions and that he and the Father would come and make their home in the lives of those who believe in Him. (John 14:23)
- By the Holy Spirit we can call God "Abba," an intimate Aramaic word for "Daddy". (Romans 8:15-17)
- He is also described as a Father who lovingly disciplines those He loves to keep them on the right path. (Hebrews 12:7-11)

## **2. The battle to know God as Father**

A major challenge for many Christians is to truly believe and experience that God, the source of all power, who is in control of



all things, loves us unconditionally and has always done so. The battle is often because of the experience of our own birth father. The two strongholds in our minds which can rob us of being able to live in a daily experience of that love are:

### 1. **Self-Rejection:**

Believing the lie that we are not planned, created, designed, precious, unique, valuable and perfectly loved by God and that His love for us depends on our achievements, looks, performance or how “good” we are.

It comes from believing the things that have been said or done to us by others or the lies that Satan has whispered to us.

This can result in **feeling**:

- Ashamed of who we are.
- Dissatisfied with the way we are made.
- Undervaluing our gifts, contributions to others and worth
- Fear of failure, others' reactions to us or thoughts about us.
- Fear of God's judgment.

### 2. **Rejection:**

The flip-side of self-rejection is **rejection of others** - where we push others away or keep them at a distance believing that others cannot be trusted or will hurt or exploit us.

It is seen through symptoms such as:

- Criticism of others
- Anger
- Unrealistic expectations of others
- Social withdrawal/isolation
- 'Making light of' or laughing especially when something could become 'personal' or require self-disclosure

**The solution to both 'self rejection' and 'rejection' is set out in 1 John 4:18**

**“Perfect love drives out fear”**

This perfect love comes from the Father.

This is a crucial foundation for our ongoing relationship with God.



### 3. Knowing the Father's love:

**John 15:9**

**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love”.**

There are two foundational truths.

**JESUS' LOVE FOR US.**

**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.”**

Many Christians struggle to truly believe this.

Jesus was eternally past, present and future loved totally completely, unconditionally by the Father. It is one of the mysteries of the Trinity. Three persons yet one, in an utterly complete and perfect love relationship. The Father's whole nature is involved in loving the Son. Passionate, unyielding, total. *“This is my Son in whom I am well pleased”*, as was spoken by the Father at Jesus' baptism.

Jesus says that is how He loves us. We are His sons and daughters in whom He is 'well pleased'. There is often a massive struggle to accept this truth!

He knew us and loved us before we were even born. He has loved us from birth until now. (Psalm 139)

He will continue to love us whatever our performance, successes or failures. He is passionate about us and His love endures forever and He wants us to know the height, depth, and breadth of that love.

This was Paul's prayer for the church:

**Ephesians 3:17-18**     **“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge –that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”**



The truth of God's love is grasped by revelation from the Holy Spirit so we need to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal this love and for this to be experienced.

The **“Parable of the Prodigal Son”** - (Luke 15:11-32)

The story that Jesus told of a son who came to his father demanding his half of the inheritance and who then squandered it, ending up in destitution before coming to his senses and returning to his father intending to ask to be employed as a servant and feeling unworthy of anything else.

As he returns, the father runs to him, embraces him, puts a cloak and shoes on him and throws a party. This results in the brother, who has remained working for the father, complaining bitterly at the way the wayward son has been treated.

This parable perhaps should be called, **“The Parable of the Father’s love”**. It is a parable of two **‘deceived’** sons neither of whom understood or appreciated the father’s love, resulting in one going off in independence and rebellion and the other becoming bitter and critical and seeing his relationship with the father as one of having to work for him.

What can we learn from this parable?

**The battle for intimacy with the Father.**

There is an enemy who fights against intimacy between God the Father and His children in different ways. Either he tries to get the children to rebel and leave or stay but relate to God the Father as a worker, rather than a son. If there is repentance and the rebellious leaver returns to him, Satan wants to trick us into forfeiting our status as sons and instead relate to the Father as *“one of your hired hands”*.

This was the mindset the elder brother was already working from when his brother returned. He saw himself as a worker earning the love of the father instead of a true son.

Like the elder brother, on his return the younger brother had declared: *“I’m no longer worthy to be called your son, just make me one of your hired men”*.

This mentality is still expressed by many Christians who often do not know the love and grace of the Father, nor their position in Christ.



We are often more aware of our sin rather than the Father's love and lock ourselves away from the intimate place with the Father. In contrast the Father wants us to grasp this:

**“MY SON, MY DAUGHTER, ALL I HAVE IS YOURS”.**

**The second truth from John 15:9 is about.....  
WHERE WE LIVE:**

**John 15:9**

**“.....now remain in my love.”**

Can we ever **not** be in the Father's love? Can anything separate us from His love? So why does Jesus say, “**remain in my love**”, and what does He mean?

The implication is that although His love for us never changes, is eternal, unconditional and strong, we can **step away** from the daily experience of living in and experiencing that love. His heart for us never changes but our heart for Him may cool or we may doubt or stop receiving from that love by His Spirit by whom the Bible says in Romans 8:15 that we cry “**Abba, Father**”.

We can resist that work of the Spirit. His love is not a theological concept or positional truth. It is to be a living reality. God has designed us for **relationship**.

**‘Remain in my love’**, is Jesus' way of saying, “*Take up residence in my love. Let it be the place where you live. Don't go walkabout on your own*”.

What does our life demonstrate?

The signs of **not** remaining in His love are anxiety, bitterness, fear, criticism of others, selfishness, joylessness, independence and not wanting to step out of the ordinary

The signs of **remaining** in His love are security, forgiveness of others, courage, peace, respect of others, joy and adventurous decisions for God.

His love deals with all fear (fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of what others may do to us or say about us, fear of judgment).

God's perfect love is utterly liberating.



#### 4. Building a Relationship with the Father

- I. **Renewing of the mind.**
- II. **Faith response.**
- III. **Praise and thanks.**
- IV. **Ask the Holy Spirit to fill us.**

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#### **Romans 5:5**

**God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

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#### **Romans 8:15**

**<sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.**

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#### **V. Sow into acts of loving kindness.**

This is what brings us into a place of freedom to love others as Jesus speaks about in **John 15: 12**  
**"...love each other as I have loved you."**

We may want to know the experience of being free to love others but we can't until we know and are living in the love that the Father has for us.

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**"Take a few minutes to write down some of the things that you think about God and yourself that do not line up with what the Bible says about God's love for you."**


