

Names of God  
Session 4  
Matthew 6:1-13  
05/15/2019

Teaching Notes

**Open your Bibles with me to Matthew 6.**

**I want to give you some questions to think about.**

**If you were engaged in a conversation with a non-Christian who asked, “Why do you pray?” How would you respond?**

**Here is another question that I want you to think about: What does it mean to you that God is your Father?**

When people hear the word *father*, many different images, memories, and feelings immediately occur. For some, thoughts of a father connote feelings of love, affirmation, guidance, and provision. For others, feelings of rejection, criticism, and abandonment come to the surface.

I want us to see tonight what the Bible means that God is our Father.

Look there at Matthew 6:9, Jesus said, “But when you pray, pray like this..”

Our Father...(Read the rest of the Lord’s prayer)

I want us to focus on those words...Our Father

**Usage.**

One of the distinctive New Testament revelations is that of God as Father of individuals. Whereas the word “Father” is used of God only fifteen times in the Old Testament, it occurs 245 times of God in the New.

As Father, He gives His children grace and peace (a regular salutation in the Epistles; e.g., Eph. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1), good gifts (James 1:17), and even commandments (2 John 4). We also address Him as Father in prayer (Eph. 2:18; 1 Thess. 3:11).

**The Meaning of the Name “Father”**

In Old Testament times God’s chosen people generally understood that He was *Father* to them. In Isaiah 63, however, is one of the few direct Old Testament references to God as a Father.

In the New Testament, Jesus addresses the almighty God as “Abba” or “Daddy” (Mark 14:36). The apostle Paul adds that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we believers are privileged to cry, “Abba, Father” as well (Romans 8:15). The term reflects a healthy tension between respect and intimacy, a tension you may or may not have known with your earthly father.

**The Significance of the Name.**

God is the ideal Father—all-loving, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and always present with us. At the same time, He is in heaven, which tells us He is greater than we can comprehend; so we approach Him as our Father with due reverence.

The first-person plural pronoun “Our” implies that Jesus intended this prayer to be a model for corporate prayer, i.e., a prayer for when disciples gather as a group. This confirms that Matt. 6:5 was not intended to prohibit disciples from praying together publicly in the synagogue or other gatherings but instead prohibited prayers that were motivated by religious showmanship.

The first request is that the Father’s name be honored as holy (v. 9). One’s name in biblical thought stood for the person. The Father’s covenant name is Yahweh (Exodus 3:14). This petition is that God will help all people everywhere to recognize the Lord God Almighty as He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and honor Him accordingly (see John 6:44).

### **What does Father mean to us today?**

Our view of God our Father must come from Scripture, not from our childhood experience.

The Bible clearly teaches that our heavenly Father:

Desires a relationship with His children

Guides His children

Disciplines them

Enjoys fellowship with them

is Glorified through them

To sum up: a name in Bible times was more than an identification; it was descriptive of its bearer, often revealing some characteristic of a person. “O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Thy name in all the earth” (Ps. 8:1, 9).

### Group Discussion

| Have volunteer read MATTHEW 6:9-13

We can’t judge someone’s words or even the length of his or her prayer and assume it is hypocritical. As the Bible clearly teaches, corporate prayer is appropriate at certain times. We also can’t know the motives of others when they pray. However, we can make sure our own motives are pure when we come before the Lord in prayer.

**What is your relationship with your earthly father? How has that impacted how you view God?**

**What are some activities that help us listen to God? What kinds of things keep us from listening to our Heavenly Father? When have you seen that you hear from God the clearest?**

For Jesus’ disciples, calling God “Father” would’ve seemed too personal and familiar. Also, praying directly to God without the intercession of a priest was a revolutionary concept.

Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, all believers gained direct access to God. Jesus died for this purpose—that we might relate to God in an ongoing way.

**When was the first time you heard the Lord's Prayer? If you don't remember, what does that say about its prominence in Christian life?**

**Do you think of the Lord's Prayer as more of a pattern for your prayers to follow or something to pray when you don't have the words for your own prayer?**

**What are the implications of calling God "Father" at the beginning of our prayers?**

**How can believers bring glory to God, according to this passage?**

| Have a volunteer read Romans 8:15

Paul describes how our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit means that we will cry out to Him as Abba Father.

**When has there been a time in your life that you cried out to God?**

**What does it look like to run to your Father with arms wide open? When have you tried to run away from God?**

**How is it to be assuring to know that God loves you as a child? How does that impact how you live for him every day?**

| Have a volunteer to read Hebrews 12:3-13

In these verses, God is recognized to be the one that loves and disciplines us. The command to abide in Christ is a life-changing one—the Son of God Himself not only allows us to draw near to Him, He commands it. Further, He promises that once we are walking connected closely to Him, our actions will have impact, and our joy will be full. Sometimes this comes through God's discipline in our lives.

**Why do we struggle to recognize God's discipline in our lives?**

**Why should God's discipline be welcomed?**

**What impact does it make in our lives to know that God loves us to discipline us? How does it truly "hurt Him more than it hurts us?"**

### **Application**

**How might knowing God's desire to be with you in prayer fuel your prayer life this week?**

**What single step can you take to make room for time with your Heavenly Father this week in your schedule?**

**How can we have a wrong perspective of God? How does that overflow to other areas of our lives? How has tonight's discussion impacted the way you relate to God?**