

allows for free-will decisions and direction based upon our relationship with Him. God's plan is to conform us to the image of His Son and work through us His wonderful message of salvation. So, Father God, being a responsible parent to us, has chosen to allow only those things in our life that are beneficial to us and to His purposes for us.

In His plan for us, God has allowed things to come into our life such as temptation, difficult circumstances, and even tragic events in order to bring us to spiritual maturity in our Christian life. The Bible says, "*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*" (James 1: 2-4) There are times when we don't understand "why", but we can trust in God's commitment to us as a responsible Parent. Besides, God has not exempted us from the experiences of life, both good and bad, just because we are Christians.

In His plan for us, God has pre-determined some limits for our lives so that our Christian life will be benefited and His purposes be fulfilled. That is why we don't get many of our prayers answered our way or on our time schedule. Father does know best! Like responsible parents who set limits and provide constructive boundaries for their children, so God has sovereignly done this for us. He has the ability to give us everything we want or need, but He chooses to limit Himself as a responsible Parent for our benefit.

God has generously given us many wonderful promises in His word for us to claim for our benefit, as well as for others. Yet, God knows the end from the beginning and He often over-rides our presumptions and requests in order to fulfill His greater purpose for us and for others.

### **Father God Desires Relationship With You**

There is a built-in danger for Christians to want to use God to get what they want or need for themselves or others. In doing so, we can fashion Father God into our own image. Sometimes, we see God as our heavenly "Santa Claus" who is waiting to give us our "wish-list" of wants and desires. Sometimes, we see God as our heavenly "Mr. Fix-it" who is available to fix our every need or problem. Sometimes, we see God as our heavenly "Crystal ball" or "Computer" who will give us all the important answers and directions for our life so we can be successful.

Instead, God desires that we come to Him for relationship and seek to know and embrace His purposes. He could give us what we wanted every time, but we would probably become occupied with the gift rather than the Giver. He could come and fix our every need, but we

would not learn and grow spiritually through the trials and circumstances of life. He could give us answers and directions for our future, way in advance, but we would probably run off with the information and fail to rely upon Him. No, God has chosen a plan for our lives in which we are dependent upon Him so that our relationship with Him will grow strong. To intimately know and trust Him was God's intended plan for us. "... but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercise lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things." (Jeremiah 9:24) Jesus prayed, "*And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*" (John 17:3)

### **How Do You See God?**

Do you know Him as your loving Heavenly Father? Do you see Him as a responsible Parent who works all things to your spiritual benefit and to His eternal purpose? Are you seeking to know Him more intimately, rather than wanting Him to do things for you?

*"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it."* (Psalm 37:4,5)

# Seeing God As A Loving Father And Spiritual Parent

## **KNOW THE TRUTH**



**"...AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."**

**Pastor Lynn Kern**

"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your FATHER who is in heaven, for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your FATHER who sees in secret will repay you. For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly FATHER will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your FATHER will not forgive your transgressions. Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly FATHER feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? But if GOD so throws the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your FATHER who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him?" (Matthew 5:44-45; 6:3,4,8,14,15,26,30; 7:11)

### How Do You See God?

Your spiritual picture or image of God affects your relationship with Him and your ability to trust Him in your Christian life. That's why it is so important that your view of God is a healthy one, based upon the truth about God in the Bible. God wants His children to know Him for who He really is - as a loving Father and a "responsible" spiritual Parent. Do you have a healthy picture of God as the basis for your Christian life???

### A Distorted Picture of God

Though you are a Christian, it is very possible that your background has provided you with a distorted view of God. Satan, the father of lies, has attempted to fill our lives with destructive experiences, worldly philosophy, and religious deception in order to distort our view of God.

Many people come from backgrounds in which there was an abusive father or no father at all. Because people often relate the Fatherhood of God to the father-figure they grew up with, they can develop a very negative view of "Father" God.

Many people have experienced terrible abuses or tragedies in their life. Because they assume that God was responsible for making it happen, they can get a picture of God as unloving and indifferent to their needs. The world's philosophy has taught us to trust in ourselves and our humanistic resources because a loving God does not seem to exist.

Many people are taught deceptive religious ideas about God which are contrary to the truth portrayed in the Bible. Unfortunately, within the realm of Christianity, many have been taught that God is responsible for

making everything happen(good and evil), that there is no Devil, and that we are to blindly accept God's apparent insensitivity as He "toys" with our lives. Some teach that God is revengeful and manipulative, while others give the impression that He is an impersonal being, just a force in the universe. Some teach that man is a god or suggest that we create our own god to believe in as a "support principle." Still others give us the impression that God is a senile old man in heaven who has a feeble love towards all and doesn't seem to care what people do. Also, bad experiences with Christians, churches, or other religious people could have given you a distorted view of God.

### Christian Discouragement

Not only did our backgrounds provide opportunities to get a distorted view of God, but discouragements in our Christian life can lead us to question God's commitment to us. As Christians we have been taught to expect God to do great things for us. However, it doesn't always work the way we have expected, so our expectations are dashed to pieces. In our confusion and discouragement, we get a distorted view of God and His plan for our lives.

### The Results of Having A Wrong Picture of God

Your prayer life may be limited because your distorted picture of Father God has caused a distrust in your relationship with Him. Your confidence and security in His commitment to you is undermined, and you question His love for you. The way you interpret things that happen to you and how you respond to them can bring destructive results into your life because a distorted view of God. This opens the door for Satan to promote confusion, doubt and fear.

### "The Truth Shall Set You Free"

The purpose of God's salvation through Christ was to bring us out of darkness and into His glorious light(truth). God is at work in our Christian lives to re-program our minds and hearts with the truth. The truth about who He is as a loving Father and spiritual Parent is one of those truths that He wants to strongly establish in your life. Knowing and living in the truth of who God is will set you free from your distorted view of God and give you a fulfilling relationship with Him.

### Jesus: The Image of the Father

Jesus is the "chip off the old block" as the saying goes. Jesus did not come to this world only to die on the cross. He came to show us His Father, for He was just like His Father. "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) For you to

understand and see who God is, you must take a long look at Jesus. He showed the love, tenderness, and mercy of His Father as He taught and ministered to people. Jesus said, "And he who sees Me sees Him(the Father) who sent Me." (John 12:45) If you are going to build a healthy view of Father God, you must study His Son, Jesus Christ.

### Believe the Word of God

The Bible is full of descriptions of Father God. As you read your Bible, look for scriptures that describe God's character and purposes. For example, "God is love." (1 John 4:8) That is who God is: LOVE. His character and purpose toward us is love. That love was expressed in the most powerful and compelling way, through Christ's sacrificial death for us. We need to believe God's word about His love and about the other truths pertaining to Him.

### Abba, Our Spiritual "Daddy"

"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Galatians 4:6,7) The Apostle Paul presents to us a picture of our relationship with our Father. We are a "son" and an heir of God's great eternal kingdom. What honor and value we have to our Father that He would call us a "son." We need to see Father God's love and commitment to us in making us a son.

Paul suggests that our relationship with Father God can be on the most intimate level - as "Daddy." Do you see Father God as your "Daddy?" Can you see yourself coming to Father God in prayer in the same way a little child would run into the arms of their daddy and be embraced by his love for his child? Can you see yourself sitting on Father God's lap and sharing your intimate thoughts and desires as that little child would? Can you see yourself safe and secure in Father God's care for you as His child? God has intended that His children see Him as their spiritual Daddy, as well as Father.

### God Is Our Responsible Parent

The word "parent" is used here in an attempt to help us understand God's parental role in our lives as His children. God is a responsible parent when it comes to His children. Often, Christians are puzzled or confused by the way things happen or why their prayers weren't answered. They know the promises of God in the Bible and have claimed them by faith in prayer. Yet, they see little or no results.

Father God has a plan for our lives. It is a plan which