

Want a life described as being intimate with God and spiritually mature?
That is this week's dual study goal.

God our Father - Growing as His Beloved Child

Jesus and the Father's Relationship & the Purpose of the Gospel

What was the relationship between Jesus and the Father like?

What is the purpose of the gospel?

Jesus came to bring us into direct relationship with our heavenly Father, to enter into a love relationship with His Father!

Jesus Came to Reveal God as Father

John 14 :6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

If Jesus is the way, what is the destination? A loving relationship with the Father.

Rarely was Father used as a title for God in the OT. The Jews had known God as Yahweh for fourteen centuries, but the only Person who could introduce Him as Father was His Son. Jesus made God known to us as FATHER. Six times in this prayer for His disciples, Jesus addressed God as Father (see verses 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25).

John 14:9-11

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves."

In the entire book, you see Jesus say the Father's words, do the Father's works and operate in the authority of the Father. He came to reveal God as FATHER.

When Jesus prayed, "And [I] will continue to make you known" (verse 26), He was saying that He would continue to reveal God as Father.

God the Father Loves us Just as He Loves Jesus!!!

Now we come to Jesus' purpose in revealing the Father to us.

John 17:26

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

This passage is mind boggling. God has exactly the same love for us as He has for Jesus. We are as dear to God as Jesus Himself is. Let's pause and praise God in prayer, thanking Him that He has the exact same love for me as He has for Jesus. And b/c Jesus is in us, we can love God in the same way that Jesus loves Him!

Even if you don't always experience care and love from your family, bear in mind that God wants you. You are accepted; you are highly favored; you are the object of His special care and affection.

In the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul expands his focus on the Father. By the way, Ephesians 1 is a wonderful place to camp out any time you are facing lonely times.

Here is what Paul says we receive as God's beloved sons and daughters.

Our heavenly Father—bestows upon us every spiritual blessing (v. 3); chooses us in love (v. 4); adopts us as sons and daughters (v. 5); accepts us as part of His family (v. 6); gives us redemption and forgiveness (v. 7); reveals the mystery of His will to us (v. 9); provides an inheritance for us (v. 11); causes us to reflect His praise and glory (v. 12); seals us with His promised Holy Spirit (v. 13); offers us wisdom and revelation (v. 17); allows us to know Him better (v. 17); bolsters us with hope regarding our calling in Him (v. 18); bestows hope by enlightening our hearts to the riches of His glorious inheritance (v.19), has His great power and might through the Holy Spirit who raised Christ, available to us (v.19-20)!

Do you remember how Jesus said in John 14 that "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

It never made sense to me why that was very significant until I heard this: God is a Father and He has a house. The word house, in Scripture, is never used primarily to indicate a physical, material building, but always used of a family and the building they occupy. So when Jesus said, "In My Father's house," He was talking about God's heavenly family. His Father's family has many rooms. Jesus went to prepare a place for us and all believers. Could it be that His reference to "preparing a place for you" was His making a way for us by dealing with sin, making a way for us to be forgiven and made clean?

Relationship with the Father Solves Identity Crisis

The reason that Jesus Christ came to earth was - and is - to bring us to God. If we stop short of this revelation of God, we have stopped short of the full and final outworking of redemption's purpose. Many people in our culture today lack a deep emotional, life giving relationship with their fathers that ground them. When we come into the fullness of this revelation, into that direct relationship with God as our loving Father, it supplies what we lack as people. The three things that come out of this revelation and relationship are identity, self-worth, and security.

Identity is a real problem for people today. Constantly, symptoms of people not knowing who they are become apparent. The media in its many forms reflect this. Parents and children increasingly have become broken and fragmented, and the result has been a widespread identity crisis. God's answer to that identity crisis is to bring men and women into a direct, personal relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son. People who truly know God as Father no longer have an identity problem. They know who they are; they are children of God. Their Father created the universe, their

Father loves them, and their Father cares for them. Their deep human need to be loved is met in the Father.

STS - story Luke 10

Holy Spirit as Guide

Life for the Old Self can be described as living as orphans:

- dirty with sin
- terrible masters / idols
- spirit of slavery — —> life of fear

Romans 8:12-17

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Rom 8 shows we were adopted as the Father’s children! HE has FREED us from slavery!

How are we to live? Notice the key role of the Holy Spirit to lead us to live as His children.

Do you notice a theme these 5 weeks? Bride/Bridegroom, Father/adopted child = intimacy! love!

The Holy Spirit initiated a work in our hearts. We received the loving sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. He gives us His righteousness in exchange. We enter into relationship with God, Jesus’ Father. We are forever freed from the grips of the spirit of slavery and fear. The full inheritance for His children is ours to live out every day!

The Holy Spirit is a Person, Not an Force

Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit with the pronoun HE.

He describes him as a HE and uses the word HIM.

In the laws of grammar, the word “spirit” is neuter, so the pronoun should be IT.

Jesus always uses HE. Why? b/c HE IS A PERSON.

The Holy Spirit is a PERSON, as real as God the Father and God the Son are Persons, as real as your father or your mother. “Until you learn to relate to him as a Person, you won’t succeed in being truly led by the Holy Spirit.” Derek Prince.

Have you ever wished that Jesus were here in the flesh? Jesus would disagree with you.

John 16:7

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus says that it is much more wonderful that He is in heaven; it is to your advantage, in your best interest, that I go away. Then the Father and I together will send the Helper.

John 14:16-17 Explains the role of the HS:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

The Father will give you a Helper. That word Helper is translated in various versions as: an Alongsider. Counselor. Comforter. The Spirit of Truth. He is the One Who will be with you forever. Jesus is saying, I've been with you a brief 3.5 yrs., now I'm going to leave you to return to the Father. But in my place, another person will come forever. The word "another" is important. You know I am a Person. I'm real. But as a Person, once I'm gone, another Person will come. Another Person is coming. And 10 days later this another Person descended from heaven, which we see in Acts. The Holy Spirit will be with us forever!

The Holy Spirit is NOT:

- an impersonal influence
- a theological abstraction
- system
- set of rules
- not an ecclesiastical hierarchy
- not half a sentence in the Apostle's Creed

The Holy Spirit is a Person and He is Lord

2 Cor 3:17

Now the Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Normally, in the NT, the word Lord corresponds to the sacred name of God, whom we call Jehovah/ Yahweh in the OT, the True God.

Paul is saying that the Spirit is Lord. The Spirit is God. He is just as much God as the Father and the Son. If you believe in the Lordship of the Father and the Son, then you must acknowledge the Lordship of the Spirit. Where the Spirit is, there is freedom. True spiritual freedom does not come from a set of rules, from singing, nor from any other activity. It only comes by doing what the Spirit directs us to do, at any given time. Let the Holy Spirit direct you from beginning to end!

Jesus is Lord OVER the Church. The Holy Spirit is Lord IN the Church.

In relation to the Holy Spirit, Derek Prince sums up church history: 19 centuries of trying to find a system so safe that we wouldn't have to rely on the Holy Spirit. There is no system, no theology, no hierarchy, no human ministry can take the place of the Holy Spirit. He is indispensable. We MUST rely on the Holy Spirit.

Listened to this as a group:

Transcript from: 1:28-7:16 <http://derekprince.org/Publisher/Search.aspx?searchString=father>
(25 minute sermon entitled The Holy Spirit — Our Servant Guide by Derek Prince)

The Servant of Abraham is a picture of the HS in his relationship to the Bride of Christ, the Church.

- 1) The servant had charge of all that Abraham owned. He had complete control of the entire inheritance.
- 2) He sought nothing for himself, but only for Abraham and Isaac.
- 3) His responsibility was to find a bride for Isaac.
- 4) He came with 10 camels, bearing gifts.
- 5) He confronted Rebekah with the choice that settled her destiny.
- 6) He was Rebekah's only source of information concerning Abraham and Isaac.
- 7) He guided Rebekah to her Bridegroom.

See how it is a Biblical parable of the Father, Jesus, The Church and the Holy Spirit.

- 1) The Holy Spirit is the administer of the total inheritance. He takes the things of Christ and discloses and imparts them to us.
- 2) He seeks nothing for Himself. His aim is to glorify the Father and the Son.
- 3) It is the responsibility of the HS to find the Church, the Bride for the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
- 4) When He comes into our lives, He comes with many beautiful and wonderful gifts.
- 5) He is the One who confronts us with the choice concerning Jesus that settles our destiny for time and eternity.
- 6) He is our only source of direct information concerning God the Father and God the Son. We do not see the other persons of the Godhead, but the Holy Spirit reveals them to us.
- 7) He is the one who is going to guide us in this world to our meeting with our heavenly Bridegroom.

The Servant of Abraham is a picture of the Holy Spirit in His relationship to the Bride of Christ, the Church.

Cultivate Your Relationship with God, the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit makes us God's children, infants, through rebirth. In order to grow into a mature believer, there is a critical piece that many neglect or are unaware of. We **MUST** cultivate a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, just as we do in other relationships. The key word to grow your relationship with the Holy Spirit is **SENSITIVITY**. This is the most essential feature in cultivating a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Regrets? All the times I've not been sensitive to the Holy Spirit. (Derek Prince)

Look at how the disciples lives changed after the Holy Spirit came upon them in Acts. They had a totally new concept of the work of Jesus, His authority, their own standing in God, the OT prophets, the message they were to preach. Peter immediately quoted the prophet Joel. Light, understanding and boldness came upon them, immediately, the moment the HS came. Almost definitely, Peter would not have been quoting the prophet Joel without the Holy Spirit's arrival.

Growing in sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is how we are to spiritually mature. This is how we increase in living in awareness of His Presence and inside the Circle (Illustration) all the time.

The Shepherd speaks and His sheep hear His voice

John 10:3-5

To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Jesus describes God’s people as His sheep who hear His voice. Be listening for His voice!

The Spirit regularly leads the sons of God

Romans 8:14

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

The tense used here for “led” is in the continual, present tense. The idea is that: As many as are regularly, continuously led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The word son here speaks of maturity. It is not the word for an infant, like you see in 1 Peter 2 where He speaks of being infants. God wants His children to be mature and complete. How? We need to be regularly led by the Holy Spirit.

So you see here in Romans that God wants His children to be continuously led, in the here and now, by His Spirit. We do not become mature into our full privileges of a child of God until we are regularly led by the Spirit. The sad truth is that many Christians who have been born again never really go on to be led by the Holy Spirit. Consequently, they never achieve maturity. They never become the kind of complete Christians that God intends.

There are innumerable voices that crowd our attention, inside us, from others and the world. So we need to learn how to cultivate hearing God’s voice. He has endless wisdom and authority and values our well-being.

The Israelites fell into lots of disobedience because they failed to hear and obey the voice of the Lord.

Remember when he told a story once about passing a homeless person and God told him to open up his wallet and give him a \$20? That was God speaking to Him and leading him as a son of God.

Spiritual grow by the living by the proceeding words of God’s mouth

So if we are to be led of the Spirit, how does God want us to do this? Let’s see how Jesus does this. Think of a time when you were tempted. Watch how Jesus responds to Satan’s temptation to turn stones into bread when he was hungry.

Matthew 4:4

But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Imagine living by every word that comes from the mouth of God every day. How would that make your life different than how you respond to temptation now?

Notice how Jesus bring attention to words coming from the *mouth* of God. When a mouth speaks, it is a voice that you hear. A voice is not past; it is not future, but is now in time. He is talking about daily receiving God's spoken words that you hear in your heart. Notice the word *every*.

If you hold a Bible in front of you, all you have are white sheets of paper with black marks on it. You cannot hear black marks/letters. No one can hear that. So how can these black marks on white paper become a spoken voice, a voice one can hear? The only power that can transform the words into a voice is the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

He is referring here to the word of God that the Holy Spirit portions out to you, quickens, makes it a living voice to your heart, where it becomes alive to you in time, in your given situation, what you need.

The verb "comes" is also translated, "proceeds." It is in the continuous, present tense, meaning, every proceeding word, as it proceeds out of the mouth of God in present time.

Do you see how this indicates having a direct, personal relationship with God?

As He speaks to us, His Words are life to us. He gives daily, spiritual manna on which our spirits are to feed and grow. It is our daily food. Are you listening?

Jesus compares this spoken word with natural bread. As natural bread feeds the natural body of man, this proceeding, personal word of God feeds man's inner being, nourishes his spirit. We need the one just as much as we need the other: to keep bodies alive, we need natural bread; to keep our spirits alive and healthy, we need the voice of the Lord coming to us daily, acc to Jesus. Are you listening for God's personal word for how He wants you to live? Since the Holy Spirit is our Guide and Counselor, are you seeking to hear His direction so you can follow His every word?

A few weeks ago, in Pastor Paul's message, he said, "Lord, speak to me." This is what the prophet Samuel also said, once he was instructed by Eli that it was God talking to him. He said, "Speak Lord, for Your servant is listening."

He wants to take you from knowing *about* God, which you are really strong on from your home and church background, to *directly relating* with Him every day. But this might take a paradigm shift for you.

The Old Self, or the Natural Man, doesn't hear God's voice. He's deaf to it. But we have been born of the Spirit of God and He lives in us. God has always wanted His people to live by the proceeding word that comes out of His mouth, to hear His voice and obey. This is to happen on a daily basis. This is our daily spiritual manna, just as God provided manna for the Israelites to live in the wilderness, God wants us to spiritually grow by living on the proceeding word that comes from the mouth of God.

Hear God's Voice, Receive it in faith, Obey Quickly

- 1) Know that it is God's will to speak to you, for you to live by every word that continually proceeds from His mouth. He has the treasures of wisdom and wants you to walk in His will with His personal guidance each day! Remember His desire for the Israelites to hear and obey His voice! His Spirit is your Guide and you must rely on His guidance to live and have a life pleasing to Him.
- 2) Ask God specific questions, humble yourself before Him, seeking to do His will. Yield Yourself to the direction and leading of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Wait expectantly, remembering that His sheep hear His voice. Remember that God wants you to do His will more than you do!
- 4) If you feel stuck, humble yourself and seek Your parents' counsel. Remember that God's objective will is for you to obey your parents. Hearing God has a subjective element and we must always submit it to the objective Word of God.
- 5) God's voice will always align with Scripture, so what you hear must match with Scripture, especially from someone younger, like a believing peer. The kind of counsel you will get will depend on where they are at spiritually. You still have to ask God for discernment of His thoughts...still seeking to hear HIS voice. And remember that it is God's objective will to obey your parents.
- 6) Quickly obey whatever He tells you, even if it seems foolish in the world's eyes. Don't revert to rules for living. Depend on the Holy Spirit as your Guide, Who promises to bring you into God's will. Obey out of your Union with Christ.
- 7) Do this daily, receiving your spiritual manna.

Story from my life:

Hanging laundry outside is standard in Japan. I had hung out winter slippers to thoroughly air out before packing them up for the next winter season. It was a sunny day. Then I went about my chores and the thought came, "Go bring in the slippers." I thought, "No, I don't want to." It was inconvenient to do so and I had other things I was in the midst of. I didn't think there was a reason since it was sunny. Then when I went out later to get them, even though it was a sunny day, there were a few rain clouds that had crept up above us and the slippers had gotten a brief shower of rain on them. I remember thinking in alarm, "Does God speak like that? Does He speak on even menial, little things that are important to me? Does God care about little things that matter to me? "

Another time I heard in my head, "Go feed your meter." I didn't leave my shopping to fill the meter. When I walked out of the store, I found a parking ticket on my dashboard b/c I was over my time limit. The ticket was much more costly than the quarter with which I could have fed the meter!

Our son asked for me and my husband to discuss something he wanted permission to have. God put His answer on my heart when I was getting ready this morning. The idea of his request suddenly and randomly came to mind and then a real confident sense that we should say "yes." I was a bit surprised because this was contrary to how my natural wisdom would have answered. But then, as I thought, I could see how he has shown himself faithful in some areas of responsibility and that I can trust him with greater areas of responsibility. Our study on hearing God's voice prepared me to be more sensitive to His voice!

Break out discussion groups:

Describe your relationship with God as your Father. Did you see a gap from what the Scriptures described? How do you intend to grow in this new way of relating with God as Father?

How have you experienced God speak to you in the past?

Do you sense the Spirit prompting you in some way, or is the Spirit quickening something from Scripture our study?

Song draft from Zac F, kah

John 14

C G
You are the Way
 Am Em
You, are the Truth
 F C
You, are the Life
 G
You are, the only Way
You...

Father, You have loved us well
You gave Your only Son
And forever we will dwell
In Your Family

Jesus, on the cross You laid
Down Your precious life
So that You could make the way
To our Father

Spirit, we remain with You
We're in Your Presence
Show us all that we should do
For Your glory

k a hayes
4.6.16