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**A Disciple's Heart...Cherishes God As Father
Mathew 6:9**

In Mathew 6:9-13 "The Lord's Prayer " teaches us a framework for communicating with God. The prayer is made up of six petitions. The first three requests are for God's glory; the last three are for our needs. Today we're going to unpack the first four words. "Our Father in heaven..." Addressing God as Father. A disciple's heart cherishes God as father.

This mirrors or parallels the Ten Commandments - the first four commandments deal with God's glory, the final six with man's well-being.

In both cases, it puts God's Name, rule and purposes up front and before us

This comes as the anecdote to what Jesus had just said, in verses 7 and 8 **Matthew 6:7-8** *And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

We can easily be guilty of just saying the words, without those memorized words meaning anything to us. We can settle for saying beautiful, flowery words, without not actually praying those words.

Sometimes, "familiarity can breed contempt." People who live in Juneau can become complacent with the beauty here. Other people spend a lot of money to travel a lot of miles to come here, just so they can take in that same beauty. We Christians can allow complacency to take root with us when we look to God in prayer.

OT folks were somewhat afraid of God

They saw the "Fatherhood" of God as referring to God as sovereign
Creator-Father, not relational father

God is referred to as "father" only 14 times in the OT

When God is referred to as "father," it is as to the nation, not to
individuals (No one individual in the OT refers to God as "father")

In Jesus' day people were so focused on the sovereignty and
transcendence of God that they were so afraid to never vocalize
His covenant Name, YAHWEH. So they invented the word
"Jehovah," a combination of two other names for God.

Their distance from God was well guarded, well protected

But when Jesus came on the scene, He only referred to God as "Father"

In just the four Gospels, he used the term "Father" more than 60 times

What are qualities of an awesome Dad?

Matthew 6:9-13 *Pray then like this, '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, and we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

No one in the entire history of Israel had ever prayed like Jesus prayed
Like we just said, they had never dared to pray like Jesus prayed
The word Jesus primarily used was "Abba" - like "Dearest Father," or "Daddy"
This was completely revolutionary to first century Jewish ears

Here Jesus is saying: begin your prayers by reminding yourself that you belong to a family (***Our***), God's big eternal family; the family that God has rescued; the family that God is gathering together from all of the ages.

In telling us to refer to God as "father" He is sharing His sonship with us, thus He empowers us, gives us permission to speak with God as a trusting child would with his Dad

God is your real Dad, your heavenly Dad. He designed you before time began. Your heavenly father (***Father in heaven***) loves you and treasures you in his heart.

God Almighty, is a better Dad than your bio Dad, He is perfect. God never abandons, hurts, insults, ignores, breaks promises or argues with you.

A problem with some of us in modern evangelical Christianity is that we have so sentimentalized God's fatherhood that we have little concept of His holiness, like He's no more than a benevolent teddy bear in the sky. We can be guilty of wanting intimacy with God, while at the same time holding a defective knowledge of Him.

And that's why Jesus starts off his instruction to us on how to pray with the words "Our Father in heaven..."

This is not so much about where God lives as much as acknowledging His power and authority

Your heavenly Father is the biggest and the best because he is sovereign and good. As a son or daughter of the King, you always have special access to King-Dad. But, He is our Father does not negate His also being our King. So, when you pray, you remember Who it is that welcomes you into His presence.

And Jesus didn't tell us to say, "My Father..."

It's "our" Father - which leaves no room for Alaskan individuality and autonomy.

We cannot claim God as Father while ignoring His children, our "siblings"

The fatherhood of God is the relationship that now defines our lives, both vertically and horizontally. We have a Father. We have brothers and sisters.

The Bible is consistent in this picture of plurality in God's redeemed family: **Revelation 5:9-10** gives an image of God's glorious family through eternity. *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.*

Galatians 4:4-7 tells us that God is a sovereign and good father who rescues, adopts and lavishes his love upon his children.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

How are you comforted by knowing that your heavenly Father is a far better Dad, than your bio Dad?

Do you believe that God enjoyed designing you and that you are His treasured child?

How would your life be different if you lived out your identity as a child of the King of Kings?

God as "Father" means we are loved as children

God as "Father" drives home the reality of our forgiveness

Luke 15:21 "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you" is followed up with the father's words of complete and lasting forgiveness

God as "Father" also brings confidence, security and a sense of place to Every aspect of our lives

The theologian, J.I. Packer, said this about that:

"If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and a whole new outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new and better than the Old, everything that is

distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God."

If you don't cherish God as your Father, or have a hard time believing that God cherishes you as His child, ask the Spirit to show you what it is about God that you don't understand, don't like or believe.

Thank Jesus for making reunification with your true Father possible. Thank God for his great love for you and sending Jesus to rescue you.

This is the whole point of the gospel - God rescuing His children

Praise God because he never leaves or forsakes or abandons his own kids

Tell God you look forward to the day when his entire family will gather around his throne and worship him.

Our communion table is a weekly illustration of just that

If you are growing in understanding of God as Father, thank the Holy Spirit for his presence and for the heart change he has worked in you.

Ask the Spirit to give you an even deeper love for and understanding of your Heavenly Father.

Praise Jesus for his example and how he showed us what it means to love and trust the Father.

Thank God for being a faithful and good Father, who will never lie to us, refuse to forgive us, or betray us.

Tell God you look forward to the day when you will live on the new earth, when He rules as Father King.

We can approach God with confidence

We can pray with simplicity, just simple, direct, heartfelt conversation

And we can pray with love

"Our Father in heaven, we love you"