

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Fixing Our Eyes - Part 8 The Heart of the Father

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Introduction

Our Heavenly Father wants to have a deep and meaningful relationship with every single one of us. However, the level of intimacy we have depends on how we relate and engage with Him. For many of us, our relationship with our own earthly father can significantly impact how we see our Heavenly Father. Our closeness or distance from Him can be significantly influenced by our relationship with our earthly father or a father figure. Every earthly father has shortcomings, but our Heavenly father wants to have an intimate and meaningful relationship with us. He wants us to know deep in our hearts, that we can depend upon Him in every situation that we face, and that everyone can do so when we accept Jesus as our Lord and savior.

Read Hebrew 12:4-11, Prov 12:1, Prov 22:6. John 1:12-13, 1 John 3:1, Romans 8:15, Mark 14:34-36.

Discuss

1. Take a moment to consider your relationship with your own earthly father or a father figure in your life in your formative years (if you had one). If you are comfortable doing so, share some of the strengths that you saw in this person. What did you admire? Why?
2. Read Hebrew 12:4-11. What is your perspective on the necessity for the discipline of an unruly child? How can this help to shape their character in positive (or negative) ways? How does our earthly discipline compare to when we are disciplined as children of God by our Heavenly father? What might be some of the differences in this?

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3. Read Hebrew 12:11. Discipline is often painful at the time but can produce a harvest of righteousness. What might this look like? Why might discipline be needed to bring that about?
4. Hedonism is described as the ultimate pursuit of pleasure and happiness in the absence of pain. While this might seem like a good pursuit, what can be some of the unintended negative outcome of this objective? Why is some pain and suffering necessary for our growth? How can pain shape our character positively?
5. Read Mark 14:34-36. The word "Abba" Father refers in the original language to a love steeped from intimacy and obedience. Jesus in his most difficult moments before going to the cross, called out in anguish to his Heavenly Father. What does it mean for you to lean into and call on God in a deep and meaningful way? Can we do this even when not faced with a painful situation?
6. How can we have a level of intimacy and connection like what we see Jesus had with God the father in the Garden of Gethsemane in our everyday relationship with Him? What might it take to develop in this area for you personally?

Respond

Every one of us is invited to have a close and intimate relationship with God the Father. This is often dependent upon our own discipline and willingness to engage at a heart level.

This week seek out one way that you can engage at a deeper level to increase your intimacy with God. Share what you can put into practice this week.