

Theology Through the Eyes of Jesus – Lesson 1

“The Foundation of Relationship: God’s Identity as Father”

Summary

God as Father doesn't just change how we pray — it changes why, when, and with what confidence we pray. Seeing God as Father turns prayer into a confident, honest, relational, dependent, and transformational conversation with the One who loves you most and rules over all.

Scripture

Matthew 6:9a

1. Introduction

Opening Thought

Before Jesus gives His disciples a single request to pray, He gives them a relationship to stand on. This is revolutionary. Every religion has prayers. Every culture has rituals. But only Jesus begins prayer with a family identity.

“Imagine walking into a throne room. The King is on the throne. The room is filled with angels. Power radiates everywhere. What gives you the right to speak?”

Jesus answers: “You’re family.”

Jesus refers to God as: “Our Father” which means

- You don’t pray to impress God.
- You don’t pray to convince God.
- You don’t pray to negotiate with God.
- You pray because you belong.

Before you ever ask for daily bread, forgiveness, or deliverance, Jesus anchors you in the relationship that makes prayer possible.

A Panoramic View of the Father

Here’s a list of attributes summarizing how the Father is portrayed in Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32).

- **Generously Giving** — He grants the younger son’s request for inheritance, showing freedom, patience, and non-coercive love.
- **Watchfully Waiting** — He sees the son “while he was still a long way off,” revealing ongoing hope and attentive compassion.
- **Compassionately Moved** — His heart is stirred with deep mercy, not anger or resentment.

- **Running Toward the Broken** — He runs to the son, breaking cultural norms to show urgency, affection, and initiative in reconciliation.
- **Restoring Without Hesitation** — He embraces, kisses, clothes, and celebrates the son, restoring honor, identity, and belonging instantly.
- **Forgiving Fully** — He interrupts the son’s confession and replaces shame with acceptance and joy.
- **Celebrating Redemption** — He throws a feast, showing that repentance is not met with probation but celebration.
- **Consistent in Love** — Whether dealing with rebellion or resentment, the Father remains patient, gracious, and relational.

2. Jesus’ Description of God

“Our” — Prayer Is a Family Activity

Jesus teaches us to pray as a community, not isolated individuals. When you say “Our,” you step into a family meeting with God at the head of the table.

- Communal Identity — We belong to a family formed by grace.
- Shared Access — No believer has a “better seat” at the table.
- Unity in Prayer — Prayer shapes us into a people who carry one another’s burdens.

“Father” — Intimacy, Love, and Approachability

Abba — A deeply intimate yet reverent term meaning Father, expressing closeness, trust, dependence, and familial relationship with God. Jesus uses Abba to reveal God as a loving, approachable Father who invites His children into the same relationship through the Spirit.

Key Scriptures:

- Mark 14:36 — Jesus prays, “Abba, Father,” revealing intimate trust in suffering.
- Romans 8:15 — Believers cry “Abba, Father” through the Spirit of adoption.
- Galatians 4:6 — God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, enabling us to say “Abba.”
- John 1:12 — We are given the right to become children of God.
- 1 John 3:1 — The Father’s love makes us His children.

“In Heaven” — Intimacy Held with Majesty

God is both near and exalted. The Father who loves you also reigns over galaxies. Prayer is both intimate conversation and approach to the throne of the universe.

- Transcendent Sovereignty — He rules over all creation.
- Holy Otherness — He is perfect in wisdom, justice, and power.
- Confidence in His Ability — A Father who loves you and has the authority to act.

3. Practicing Prayer Principles

| Principle | Application |
|--|--|
| Pray with Family Awareness | Remember you are part of a global, eternal family. Pray for others as naturally as you pray for yourself. |
| Pray with Childlike Confidence | Approach God as a child who knows they are loved, not as a servant trying to earn approval. |
| Pray with Reverent Expectation | Your Father is in heaven — meaning He is able, powerful, wise, and sovereign. |
| Pray from Identity, Not Anxiety | You don't pray to get God's attention; you pray because you already have it. |

4. Discussion Questions

- How does seeing God as Father reshape your confidence when you pray?
- What changes when you pray with the awareness that God is our Father, not just my Father?
- How do you balance God's closeness with His holiness in your prayer life?
- What past experiences or beliefs make it hard for you to approach God as Father?
- How might your prayer life change if you began every prayer by remembering who God is and who you are to Him?

5. Closing Thoughts

Jesus begins the Lord's Prayer not with a request but with a relationship. Everything else in prayer flows from this foundation.

- When you know who you're talking to, you pray differently.
- When you know He is our Father, you pray together.
- When you know He is your Father, you pray boldly.
- When you know He is in heaven, you pray expectantly.

Challenge for the Week: "Pray From Identity, Not Anxiety"

Every day this week:

- Start with "Our Father"
- Pray for one family member in Christ
- Pray with childlike confidence
- End with gratitude