

The heart of



YOUR FATHER

REFLECTIONS ON KNOWING
& TRUSTING
YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

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Introduction

"I didn't have a good relationship with my father, so it's really hard for me to trust God."

"I can't believe God loves me, because my own father didn't love me."

"I tried so hard to please my father, and he never seemed to notice me. How can I expect God to be any different?"

There are countless variations of these statements and perhaps you have heard them, as I have, or perhaps you've been the one to speak them. Either way, they reflect the same experience: the struggle to relate to God as *Father* when one's relationship with their *earthly father* left invisible scars upon the heart.

Moving Beyond the Hurt in Order to See His Heart

More than in any single chapter, we read the phrase "heavenly Father" or "Father in heaven" in Matthew 6. This chapter is part of what we call the Sermon on the Mount, a teaching directed to the followers of Jesus. In Matthew 6, we learn that our Father sees all that we do and knows all that we need. In fact, Jesus makes this so clear that I had scribbled in my Bible years ago, *"It's all about who my Heavenly Father is!"* The cure for all of our strivings, all of our anxieties - everything - comes down to this: do you know *your* Heavenly Father? Do you believe He knows, sees, and cares *for you*?

What is a Father?

The Greek word for “father” comes from a root word that signifies “a nourisher, protector, upholder.” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words)

This is who your Heavenly Father is! *He is one who nourishes, protects, and upholds.*

A quick search of the Merriam-Webster dictionary reminds us how meaningful these common words really are. As you read their definitions, read them in light of your Heavenly Father: this is who He is to *you* and what He does for *you*.

Nourish:

To nurture (care for); to promote the growth of

Protector:

One that covers or shields from exposure, injury, damage or destruction; defend

Uphold:

To give support to; to support against an opponent

God: Our Father

We see each one of these definitions displayed in the character of God throughout the Word of God. He is **able** to nurture, protect, and uphold us because He thoroughly knows us. He **desires** to nurture, protect, and uphold us because He created us, is always with us, and is actively unfolding His plan in our lives for our good and His glory.

As we allow His Word to speak louder in our lives than all other voices, thoughts, or experiences, slowly but surely His truth will reign in both our hearts and minds.

To dig deeper into these specific attributes of our Heavenly *Father*, consider reading and reflecting upon the following verses:

God: Our Nourisher

Matthew 6 (with emphasis on verses 25-34)

Luke 12:6-7

1 Peter 5:7

Spotlight on the Israelites:

How did God reveal His fatherly care towards the Israelites while they wandered in the wilderness? See the following verses:

Exodus 16-17:1-7

Deuteronomy 8:1-18

What can you learn from these passages for your own life?

God: Our Protector

Psalm 18

Psalm 34

Psalm 125

Spotlight on the disciples:

How did God reveal His fatherly protection to the disciples when they found themselves in great distress? See the following verses:

Matthew 14:22-33

Luke 8:22-25

What can you learn from their experiences?

God: The One who Upholds

Psalm 5:3-12

Psalm 31:1-5

1 Peter 5:10-11

Spotlight on Joseph:

How did God reveal this fatherly characteristic toward Joseph? See the following:

Genesis 45

What can you learn from Joseph's example?

Conclusion

What has stood out or ministered to you through these Biblical truths and examples of the father-heart of God and how He nourishes, protects, and upholds His children? What do these insights mean to you personally?

The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-31

We often read the account of the prodigal son with a focus upon the son. As you read it this time, focus on the father. What characteristics do you see? How does this illustrate the heart of your heavenly Father?

Considering the answer above, do you have a proper view of the Father's heart toward you? Why or why not?

Pray and ask God to help you see, know, and relate to Him as **your Father in Heaven** - the One who *nourishes, protects, and upholds you*.

"Filled with love and compassion, he (the father) ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him."

Luke 15:20

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