

What does knowing GOD as a father mean to you?

- ◆ Knowing GOD as a father experientially is having a deeper intimacy and connection with Him as a father.
- ◆ In Mark 14:36, Jesus is in some intense darkest moment and cries out to his father but uses Abba, Father – I believe Abba is an intimate way of calling our father GOD.
- ◆ But you see when we begin to address God the father as daddy or even father it becomes really uncomfortable for some of us. There's so much identity crisis in our world today even in the church too because many have not embraced the fatherhood of GOD.
- ◆ Because many of us had some not so good experiences with our earthly dads. And one thing we must understand fathers, is that as imperfect as our earthly fathers are, our earthly fathers were given us to give us a healthy reference to GOD our heavenly Father. This is not to bash our earthly fathers because we cannot begin our healing journey in dishonor, we

still honor our fathers. In fact, our healing will begin with us forgiving our earthly fathers.

- ◆ But the devil is at war to distort our earthly father experiences so that we are kept in bondages and not experience the fullness of Abba Father.

How the devil distorted our image of fatherhood is through some of these different kinds or traits of fatherhood:

- a) **Performance-based father & a harsh father**- the father who related to us based on performance, the strict father who gave strict rules, may have treated you like a business transaction, gave you a performance review

And if you are the one who experienced all these, your image of fatherhood then you need to be humble and ask Abba Father to teach you to receive HIS gentleness and kindness

- b) **Addict fathers**, fathers who were alcoholics, pornographic addicts, sex addicts etc. These kinds of dads were self-consumed, they did not know how to give love in stable ways.

And if you were the boy or girl who experienced all these then you need to allow Abba Father to heal you so

you can know HIM to be consistent, faithful and honorable. To know He's a GOD who knows how to love you.

c) **Passive and the hard worker**, the father who worked long hours to provide for the home. And while many of us may think but this is good, and I agree with you that it's a good but even unbelievers provide for their homes so there's got to be more, it goes beyond this.

Know that God is a father who fights for you, He's got your back and He hears you.

d) **The Absentee father**- Maybe he was never around and you never met him, maybe he died too young, maybe he didn't get along with your mother and got divorced.

If you are that young boy or girl, it makes you feel abandoned, it creates a rejection mindset makes you feel you're not wanted, that you're a mistake guarded because you're trying to prevent another heartbreak.

You will have to know that God is a father who's going to be there for you whether rain or shine, He will never leave nor forsake you

e) **The Abusive father**: whether physical, emotional, sexual, some of you felt there was pain around your

home and Dad did nothing about it. This has affected your trust for Father GOD but He's willing and able to reestablish your sense of safety with GOD

I must remind you that all these different traits of fathers I've talked about are not reflective of our Abba Father. He's a perfect Daddy and He's been waiting for us to engage him as a father.

Matthew 5:48 (Living Bible)

But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Psalms 18:30 (Living Bible)

What a God he is! How perfect in every way! All his promises prove true. He is a shield for everyone who hides behind him.

Growth Group Discussion

For the Week of March 24, 2024

LOOKING BACK

1. *Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?*

LOOKING AHEAD

2. *Looking back, would you say that you had a distorted view of God as a Father. If so, why? If not so, why? Give references from your life to support your answer.*

DIGGING DEEPER

3. *In Mark 14:36, Jesus is in some intense darkest moment and cries out to his father but uses the words "Abba Father". What does it mean?*
4. *For some of us when we address God as father it becomes really uncomfortable for us. Why is that? Has that being the case for you?*
5. *Discuss how the devil distorts our image of fatherhood using the five distortions of fatherhood discussed in the message:*
 - a. *Addict father*
 - b. *Absentee father*
 - c. *Abusive father*
 - d. *Passive and the hard worker father*
 - e. *Performance-based father & a harsh father*

APPLYING THE LESSON TO MY LIFE

6. *Knowing what you know now, how can you be intentional about your relationship with God as a father?*

PRAYER TIME

7. *Ask God to help discipline yourself to cultivate your sonship with Him.*