

# Knowing the Father

A 30 day Bible study  
in the *Gospel of John*

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# Knowing the Father

## 30 day Bible study in the Gospel of John

### Day 1 Introductory Study: Intimacy with God

**John 17:25-26 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. <sup>26</sup>And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."**

Jesus is inviting you to come into a closer and deeper relationship with God than you have ever known! It's the kind of relationship He had with His Father before creation began.

**John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**

**John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.**

The purest love ever known existed before there were trees or oceans, animals or people or even planets and stars. That love relationship between the Father and the Son was demonstrated by warmth, intimacy, obedience and commitment. Now Jesus has opened up to fallen-but-forgiven people like you and me the love that was once found only among the Trinity! For us to understand how to relate to God as our Father, we can look at the example of how Jesus relates to Him.

**John 3:35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.**

**John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.**

**John 10:15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.**

This kind of relationship is what God the Father desires to have with us, but there are conditions to it. Whenever God extends a promise to us, it takes a response of faith and obedience on our part.

**John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.**

**John 15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.**

**John 16:27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.**

Next, our opportunity to know God is based entirely on knowing Jesus. No one can bypass the Son and still get to the Father. It is by putting our trust completely in Him for salvation, loving Him for who He is and what He has done, that we are able to experience the Father's love. Many people today have a false god that they have invented or learned from a false religion- a god that can be approached and known apart from Jesus. God's Word makes it clear that there is only one way to know Him.

**John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

**John 15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.**

**1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**

**1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

Finally, entering into a relationship of intimacy with the Father is based on faith, not feelings. We must believe that He really does want to know us, that He loves us just as we are, and that He means what He has promised in the Bible.

**2 Cor. 6:16-7:1 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people. "Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

We so often settle for less than God's best in our Christian life.

*He wants us to have relationship, not religion.  
He's offering us friendship and fellowship, but we settle for formality.  
He calls us to His bosom, but we are businesslike.*

He uses words like dwell and abide when Scripture tells us how He wants to relate to us, but so often we only visit with Him occasionally while living most of our lives out of conscious fellowship with the Father. We box Him into certain parts of our lives and leave Him out of other parts. Frequently we go through an average day with little contact with the Lord. One way we can see if this is true is to think of how often we pray catch up prayers. By this we mean the prayers we pray before going to sleep at night that look back on our day and talk to God about it. "Dear Lord, thank you for today...This morning I...and then this afternoon...and oh yeah, tonight I...well, good night, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen."

When we find ourselves trying to catch up in prayer it shows we've missed out on involving the Lord in parts of our lives throughout the day. He has watched from a distance because we haven't learned to welcome His presence and include Him in our daily activities. We have missed a blessing and He has missed seeing His purpose for creating us fulfilled.

Here's what God wants to bring us into - waking up each morning with a conscious choice to live in the Spirit and have fellowship with God all day. You can be in fellowship with God before your feet ever touch the floor in the morning! This bosom relationship proceeds through a devotional time but doesn't end there. Though we go through the usual routines of life, our fellowship with Him is unbroken. Mentally and physically we may be fully involved in an earthly task, but spiritually we are alert and in tune with God. We'll find a new realization of His Presence lifts our thoughts to Him all throughout the day, and our response will be praise, worship and thanksgiving.

**Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**

*You'll find that Jesus and the Father can be nearer and more involved in your life than ever before!*

### **How to use this Devotional Bible Study**

Commit a half hour each day, preferably at the same time, to seek the Lord. Each day, starting tomorrow, we will read one chapter from the Gospel of John and see what we can find out about Jesus' relationship with the Father. Some chapters have so much content that we'll stay on that chapter until the next day, so the number of the chapter and the date won't match. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you insights you have never

had before, even if you've read the Gospel of John many times. Then see if you're experiencing what He shows you and spend time in prayer about that part of your relationship with God.

**Day 2 Read John chapter 1**

**Jn. 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**Jn. 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.**

Twice in this chapter and in other places in the New Testament, Jesus is called the only begotten of the Father. His relationship with God the Father is unique and distinct. No one else since the creation of man had ever had it, and no one ever will. That's because Jesus' place as the Son of God existed from eternity, and our place as children of God had a beginning, which is when we first trusted in Him and were adopted into His family (Rom. 8:15-16, Eph. 1:5). It's common to hear people say that we are all children of God, but that's not accurate. In fact, those who are outside of a relationship with God through Jesus are called children of wrath (Eph. 2:3) and Jesus called the hypocritical Pharisees sons of hell and the devil (Mt. 23:15, Jn. 8:44)! We are all His creation, but being an adopted child of God comes from faith and receiving Jesus (Jn. 1:12). It starts with being born again by incorruptible seed (Jn. 3:3, 1 Pet. 1:3, 23). But once we are welcomed into His family by the grace of God, we can learn what it is like to be a son or daughter of God from the Son of God.

Jesus described His relationship with God as being in His bosom. It can't get any closer than that! He was right next to the Father's heart, even though the Father was in heaven and Jesus was on earth. There was never any separation between them. His relationship with the Father was based on mutual love and knowledge. It is one thing for us to know facts about God, and a very different thing for us to have a bosom relationship with Him, like Jesus did and still does.

Having a bosom relationship with God is based in part on the attitude of our hearts toward Him. Could you picture Jesus being in the bosom of the Father and at the same time rejecting the Father's will or rebelling against Him? Unthinkable! It's the same way for us. Is there a sin in your life that keeps you from being near to the heart of God? If so, is it really worth it to miss out on experiencing the greatest love in the universe, and sadden the heart of the One Who loves you so much?

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 3 Read John chapter 2**

**Jn. 2:16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"**

The Father's honor mattered to Jesus, enough to make His eyes blaze with fire when He saw the disrespect the corrupt religious leaders had for the temple, which He called His Father's house. Although God is too

big and awesome to live in any house humans could build (Is. 66:1, Acts 17:24), Scripture shows us that the assembling together of God’s people is the place where He dwells (Mt. 18:20, 1 Tim. 3:15, 1 Pet. 4:17). Jesus saw the greedy charlatans who had no reverence for the presence of their Creator. Throughout history, God has endured dishonor and contempt (Is. 52:5), scorn and neglect (Deut. 32:15). Our modern day comedians continue this indignity, and it’s common to hear people use His Name flippantly or as a curse word. Movies and websites make blasphemous charges against God, and atheists craft arguments to profane their Maker and discourage others from following Him. Do we take these things in stride, or do they bring about in our hearts a response like Jesus had?

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 4 Read John chapter 3**

#### **Jn. 3:35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.**

A relationship based on love is very different from one based on tasks. The Father didn’t love the Son as a result of the works Jesus did for Him. The timing of John 3 was very early in Jesus’ ministry. He hadn’t preached most of His sermons, done many miracles or taken our sins to the cross yet. Do you think that the Father loved Him any less in John 3 than after accomplishing all those things in John 21? Definitely not. We are accustomed through life in this world to love on the basis of what someone else does that benefits us, and to give love to the ones who we think deserve it. We even work to become worthy of love from others who use this kind of human standard. But this is so unlike the love of the Father! When “God so loved the world,” it wasn’t because we had earned it, or that someday we would do anything to deserve it (Rom. 5:8). He loves because it’s His essence: God is love (1 Jn.. 4:7-8), and His love encompasses the spectrum from the most worthy and lovable One, Jesus, all the way to the most horrible sinner, (insert your name or my name here).

That last sentence may have been a little bit of a shock. We generally don’t like to think of ourselves as horrible sinners. We would reserve that title for Hitler or serial killers or terrorists. When we compare ourselves to others, we look pretty good, but the right standard is to compare ourselves to a holy, utterly perfect God. In that way, we realize the depths of our sinfulness, and that’s the only way we can truly appreciate His love and forgiveness. Otherwise, we will take grace for granted, thinking that we’ve earned at least part of it. We will fail to recognize the value of the mission that the Father sent Jesus to accomplish, which was to take the punishment we deserve so that He could supply us with eternal life that we could never deserve.

In this way, we overcome faulty ideas about God’s love. It never comes because of something we do, but despite everything we did. Remembering John 17:25-26, do we find a new level of gratitude in our hearts?

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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**Day 5 Read John chapter 4**

**Jn. 4:21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.**

**Jn. 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.**

Why does the Father want people to worship Him? Let's look at this from God's side and from our human side. From God's side, He knows that He deserves all the honor, respect, love, adoration and worship that humans could ever give to Him. There's no ego or pride involved, as there would be with an earthly ruler who calls his subjects to bow in his presence. Those of us who know the nature and character of God understand that He is entirely good and not tainted by the flaws we have in our sinful nature. Far above all created beings, God is worthy of admiration, and it is from the word worthy that we get our English word worship. The incomparable God, set apart from all man-made idols and imperfect humans, uniquely deserves worship.

This leads directly to our understanding of why it is important for us to worship the Lord. The actions and words that make up worship remind us of the distinction between ourselves and our Maker. We are not like Him (Ps. 50:21). We don't approach Him on an equal footing, and we don't deserve anything from Him. It's through His goodness that He provided the way that sinful mortals can approach Him, through Jesus. As we recognize the infinite gap separating our sin filled souls from a perfect God, and realize that gap was bridged by the cross, the natural result will be worship. Gratitude and relief and awe and thanksgiving mingle to create a response that even at its greatest cannot do justice to the kindness the Father has shown us through the Son.

Worship keep us humble. Worship brings us joy. Worship reminds us Who is on control. Worship recounts what He has done. Worship proclaims Who He is. Worship calms our troubled minds. Worship is the only fitting response to the God Who has done so much for us.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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**Day 6 Read John chapter 5 (part 1)**

**Jn. 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."**

**Jn. 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**

**Jn. 5:19** Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

**Jn. 5:20** For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

Jesus worked alongside the Father, never independently. He worked with the Father, not for the Father! He didn't try to come up with good ideas and ask His Father to bless them. Sadly, that is often the case in ministry, and the results have no eternal value (Jn.. 3:6, 6:63). Our brightest ideas for the Kingdom are the products of limited human wisdom, tainted by false motives that we usually don't even realize exist, and they won't stand in the day when God judges our works (1 Cor. 3:11-15). Our task is not to come up with new ideas and programs to accomplish the work of the Kingdom. It's to be spiritually attuned to the voice and wisdom of the Father, watching to see what He is doing and joining Him in it.

You'll notice that everything Jesus did actually worked. There were never any failures, false starts or ineffective actions. People weren't partly healed, and there were enough loaves and fishes for everyone, not just the people in the front rows. Lazarus wasn't raised from the dead but still sick. Jesus was successful in every endeavor, because He was in tune with the Father. Let's contrast that with the way we as humans attempt to serve God. We often rush into trying to build ministries without spending the necessary time waiting on God for His instructions (Heb. 8:5). We have marginal success and we're exhausted because we've worked for the Father rather than with the Father. Jesus' key to success was joining the Father in what He was already doing, and we can follow His example.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 7 Read John chapter 5 (part 2)**

**Jn. 5:21** For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

**Jn. 5:22** For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

**Jn. 5:23** that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

**Jn. 5:26** For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

**Jn. 5:30** I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

**Jn. 5:36** But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.



**Jn. 5:37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.**

**Jn. 5:43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.**

**Jn. 5:45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust.**

We can see how much the Father trusts the Son in these verses. But have you thought about why there was this level of trust, that the Father would commit all judgment to the Son, give Him the ability to give life, represent the Trinity to mankind and even work the miracles that Jesus did? It's because there was no separation in motive or desire. The Father and Son were entirely on the same page in all things (Jn.. 5:30). They never disagreed about what needed to be done or how to do it. They were united in heart and purpose, with neither One desiring to split off from the plan due to selfish pursuits that so easily destroy unity among human beings.

In the days of the early church, false teachers like Marcion taught that the Old and New Testaments had different gods, with the Old Testament showing a harsh and judgmental one and the New Testament showing the kindness of Jesus. That's not true! The unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit has never changed, and they share the same nature and character. We don't have to fear that the Father and Son will have differing views of us when we stand before the throne and give an account for our lives. There won't be any argument between them. The Father loved us so much that He sent the Son. The Son came to represent the Father. They agree that we need a Savior and have provided the way into God's presence for eternity to us.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 8 Read John chapter 6 part 1**

**Jn. 6:27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."**

**Jn. 6:32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.**

**Jn. 6:57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.**

It wasn't hard at that moment for the disciples to believe that Jesus is God in the flesh and not just a mere man. They had just finished watching Him multiply the loaves and fishes, followed by walking on the water! He used the feeding of the 5000 to illustrate His teaching. The manna from Moses' time only satisfied the need of the people for a day, and the loaves and the fishes were no longer lasting than the manna. But Jesus brought them a gift from the Father: His own life, which would satisfy them eternally.

**Jn. 6:42** And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

**Jn. 6:46** Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.

This chapter refers to the virgin birth of Christ, which is an essential teaching of our faith because it defines Jesus' nature. Although the people of that day thought Joseph was Jesus' father because he was Mary's husband, Jesus was the Son of God. He stated that He is, "from God." If Joseph was actually Jesus' father instead of the godly man that the Father assigned to raise Him, then Jesus couldn't have died for our sins. As a normal human being, he would have inherited the fallen, sinful nature from his ancestors, all the way back to Adam. He would have had to pay the penalty for his own sins, rather than being the spotless Lamb who could take away the sins of the world (Jn.. 1:29, 1 Pt. 1:18-19).

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 9 Read John chapter 6 part 2**

**Jn. 6:37** All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

**Jn. 6:39** This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

**Jn. 6:44** No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

**Jn. 6:45** It is written in the prophets, '*And they shall all be taught by God.*' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

**Jn. 6:65** And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

There are different schools of thought among Christians, and we can look at the same verses while drawing contrasting conclusions. Without getting into the complexities of Calvinist versus Arminian theology, let's just take a simple look at these passages today. The Father initiates salvation and draws lost people like us to Jesus. We would have never had the thought that we should make any moves in the direction of the Lord unless He first reached out to draw us. We really were "dead in trespasses and sins," and dead people don't figure out that they are in need of God or take steps to find Him (Eph. 2:1). It isn't until the Father calls us and draws us that we even consider seeking Him. Remember the time that a spiritual awakening took place in your own life, and thank the Father for it, because it was His idea!

We also see in today's chapter the cooperation and agreement between the Father and the Son. The Father looks down at the vast ocean of mankind, works out circumstances to prepare us for His touch on our hearts, sends a messenger to tell us the Gospel story, awakens our understanding of spiritual truth (Rom. 3:10-18) and then points us toward the Son. Jesus never argues with the Father that some of us shouldn't be

welcomed into God’s presence because we are unworthy, since every single one of us is unworthy! Yet in the incredible love that the Father and the Son share for mankind, we are invited by Their promise, “whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). That promise extends to you, because God is not willing that any should perish (Jn.. 3:15-16, Ez. 18:23, 33:11). If you’ve ever wondered if God really wants you in His family, or if you’ve done too many bad things to be forgiven, He says it in Scripture again and again so we can be sure of this: the Father and the Son have a place for you (2 Pt. 3:9). Look up that last verse and you’ll see!

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 10 Read John chapter 7**

Even though this chapter doesn’t use the word Father, Jesus referred to Him in two important ways.

**John 7:16-18 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.**

<sup>17</sup> **If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*.**

<sup>18</sup> **He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.**

**John 7:28-29 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.**

<sup>29</sup> **But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."**

**John 7:33 Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me.**

First, Jesus’ teaching came with the stamp of Divine authority which He received from His Father. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, who continually quoted other scholars and rabbis to lend credibility to their teachings (Mt. 7:28-29), Jesus spoke fresh truth with conviction, because it came from God. Even the Jewish temple soldiers who were sent to arrest Jesus said that no one ever spoke like Him (Jn.. 7:43). There’s a level of confidence that comes from the certainty of knowing your words are backed up by heaven, and Jesus carried that clout every time He spoke. It’s the same way with us as we bring His message to a culture that makes up “truth” as it goes, changing reality according to its whims and desires. They may not like it, they may want to silence us, but they cannot shake the power of words that come from God Himself (Acts 7: 57, Mt. 10:19-20, Job 6:25).

Jesus knew where He came from and Who sent Him. He lived in great confidence. It’s impossible to imagine the Son of God being mousy or hesitant. He only spoke truth and always did so in the right spirit and at the right time. Let’s draw close enough to God that we can speak like Jesus did.

Second, Jesus spoke of His return to the Father. Nearly every time in the Gospels when Jesus told the disciples about His crucifixion, He also told of His resurrection. The disciples were shocked and horrified when Jesus would tell them that He would die and be taken from them temporarily, so He reassured them that death could not hold Him, and He would rise again (Mt. 12:39-40, 16:21-23). But the next step after the

resurrection would be the ascension, and here we will try to imagine what went on in the heart and mind of Jesus as He thought about His return to heaven.

As much as Jesus loved to show the Father's love to mankind, heal their sick, defeat Satan's works (1 Jn. 3:8) and proclaim the truth, did He yearn to be back in the place He had known from all eternity as His home? As beautiful as some aspects of creation are on our planet, they fail to compare with splendors of heaven. In its present fallen condition, earth has lost the purity and magnificence it had before Adam and Eve sinned, handing it over to the powers of darkness (1 Jn. 5:19). Compared to the glories of Jesus' home, the best this world has to offer is filthy and squalid and broken. But did Jesus miss the environment of heaven? The golden streets and mansions and singing angels?

More likely, Jesus missed being present with His Father and the way they had related to each other for all of eternity until He was born in the manger. They were still together in spirit and purpose, in unbroken fellowship until the day Jesus took on mankind's sin, but during the 33 years of Jesus' life on earth, in some ways He was away from home on a business trip (Lk. 2:49). Think about the last time you were away from home for an extended time. I can look back over 40 years of short term missions in 34 nations and numerous other ministry trips in our country and worldwide. While I'm grateful that we have the technology that our ancestors lacked, and don't have to send handwritten letters on sailing ships that take months to deliver them, there's something that phone calls and emails and Skype and Zoom cannot deliver. We all yearn to be in the immediate presence of our loved ones.

Do you hear wistfulness in His voice as He talks about going back to heaven and seeing His Father again?

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 11 Read John chapter 8 (part 1)**

**Jn. 8:16 And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me.**

**Jn. 8:18 I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."**

**Jn. 8:19 Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."**

**John 8:26-27 I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."**

**<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.**

**Jn. 8:28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.**

**Jn. 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."**

At the beginning of this chapter, the religious leaders brought a woman to Jesus and told Him they had caught her in the very act of adultery. Yet they didn't bring the man to Jesus, although the law of Moses required both to be punished (Lev. 20:10). Bible scholars believe they let the man go because he was one of their own, another religious leader. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy and sins as He wrote in the dust, and the Pharisees were furious. Who was this young, traveling preacher, who dared challenge their status and humiliate them in public?

As they confront Him and try to find reasons to condemn Him, Jesus once again appealed to His relationship with the Father as His source of authority. There's a difference between authority and power, and Jesus had both. Let's look at the illustration of a police officer, who carries both a gun and a badge. The gun is the power, and the badge is the authority. He can use force to stop a criminal, but the police officer on the scene is more than just one person trying to enforce the law. He is backed up by the rest of the police department, who will come if he calls, and if they can't handle it, the full force of the government can be called in, all the way up to the military and the leadership of the country. Picture a tiny policewoman arresting a big, hulking man. She may not have the physical force herself to stop him, but she can call for backup, and that's her authority: she has been sanctioned by a higher level of leadership to do her job, and she knows they will support her in handling the situation.

In the same way, Jesus knew that the Pharisees had no respect for Him. Despite their in depth knowledge of the prophecies in the Old Testament that show He is their Messiah, the Jewish leadership had willingly blinded themselves to the truth and hardened their hearts. Jesus is warning them that refusing to hear His message is the same thing as refusing to hear the Father speak. Rejecting Jesus is the same thing as rejecting the Father, and we will see this confrontation come to a head in the next chapter.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 12 Read John chapter 8 (part 2)**

**Jn. 8:38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."**

**Jn. 8:41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God."**

**Jn. 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.**

**Jn. 8:44 You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.**

**Jn. 8:49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.**

**Jn. 8:54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.**

These are strong words from the Lord to the Pharisees! In the Gospel of John, references to the Jews specifically refer to their religious leaders, not the common folks, who are called the people. Although the Jewish leadership could trace their genealogies back to Adam and prove that they were ethnically a part of the chosen people, it takes more than that to make one a member of the family of God. When Jesus said their father was not God but the devil, what did He mean?

His goal was not to be insulting but to give them revelation of their spiritual condition, and to show us the principles behind it. Fathers are crucial in the development of a child, and can use their immeasurable influence for good or for evil. In addition to creating the child with their own genes, they form the child into a smaller version of themselves by instilling their personalities, values, ideals and goals. The child grows up to reflect the way his or her father gave his example to the family and often carries the same character traits as the father. This can take place in either a positive or a negative way.

So while the Pharisees claimed God as their Father, their actions showed otherwise. Their hatred for the Son was so intense that at the end of this chapter, they made their first attempt to kill Him. They emulated the hardness of heart, rebellion and fraud of their spiritual father, the devil. If God was really their Father and they were truly familiar with Him, they would have immediately recognized that Jesus was just like the Father, and they would have honored Him instead of rejecting Him. They would have seen in Jesus the nature of the Father, His values and priorities, and His unity of purpose with the Father. Instead, because they were so separated from God that they did not know or follow Him, they failed to recognize that Jesus shows us Who the Father really is and what He is like.

Later in his life, the same Apostle John makes this clear for everyone to understand.

**1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**

No one can go around the Son, rejecting Him, and still have the Father. No one can come to the Father but by the Son, or use any other religious means to establish a relationship with God apart from Jesus. When the Pharisees rejected Jesus, they cut off their only access to the Father.

**To illustrate this, let me borrow a True Story from my third book, *Reaching a Lost World*, p. 38. This event took place when I was a youth pastor in a large church.**

“The youth group kids were all excited about the missionaries who had been hanging around their high school campus all week before heading into Mexico. They were inspired by these missionaries’ zeal and asked if they could bring them to youth group on Wednesday night. I agreed, and several French-Canadian college-age young people showed up at church. I asked them what the name of their group was, and they replied with a name I’d never heard of. That wasn’t a problem, since there are many small mission organizations, and I invited them to give a testimony about what they were doing.

The girl who was their spokesperson was very enthusiastic. English was her second language, and her intriguing accent added to the group’s interest as she spoke. “We are sairving ze Lord and taking ze gospital to evairy nation. Ze Lord sends us out to tell all ze people zat He is comeeng soon and we must, how do you say, follow Heem.”

The girl continued, to the delight of our group, but my spirit became more and more uncomfortable. Something was wrong, but I couldn’t put my finger on it. Everything she said was true, but still... Then I realized that I hadn’t heard the Name of Jesus the entire time, only mention of God and the Lord. When the girl finished and the kids applauded, I led the rest of the meeting and went to the missionary group afterward, asking for more information. They told me the name of their founder and gave me a short book he had written. I went home and read the entire book that night. My suspicions were confirmed when I read that they didn’t believe Jesus was God. The book was riddled with false teachings about the end of the world and exalted the leader. They were a cult.

The French-speaking group was long gone by the next youth meeting, and the kids were shocked when I told them what I had found. This was a lesson to all of us to be careful and wise when we come in contact with an unknown group or person purporting to tell us spiritual truth. It was encouraging to me to

see that even before I had a clear reason for the mistrust I felt in my heart, the Holy Spirit was doing His job of leading me to all truth by showing me that the group's message was false.

We can trust the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to show us what is true and what isn't, and we can also study and use wisdom to be careful of spiritual input we receive. This event took place before the Internet made it easy to search for the name of a group or leader, and we should all take advantage of our easy access to information so we won't be led astray."

So to summarize, any religious system or person who claims a relationship with God while rejecting Christ is deceived. Unfortunately, the "Father of Lies," the devil, has convinced them that they can make their own path to the Father without the Son, and Jesus shows us plainly in the Gospel of John that this is impossible.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 13 Read John chapter 9**

Even though this chapter doesn't use the word Father, Jesus referred to Him.

**John 9:4-5 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the night is coming when no one can work.***

**<sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."**

Our chapter today tells one story, which is Jesus healing the blind man. The Pharisees are still stinging from the strong words Jesus spoke to them, showing that they are followers of the devil, not God. A public miracle like this proved even more so that Jesus was not just a would-be rabbi trying to make a name for Himself and gather followers, but that He had the stamp of Divine authority on His life and ministry.

But Jesus knew His time on earth was limited, and now that He was in open conflict with the Jewish religious leadership, the cross was approaching quickly. The clock was ticking. In the short time He had left on earth, He set His priority clearly and it was to complete the work the Father had sent Him to do.

Jesus made an interesting statement here. In several places, He is called the Light of the world (Jn.. 1:4, 9, 3:19-21, 8:12, 12:46), but He also calls His followers the light of the world (Mt. 5: 14-16, Acts 13:47). So is Jesus still the Light of the world? Yes, but in a different sense, since He is no longer physically on our planet. His light shines through the people who follow Him, accomplishing His works and His will, just as Jesus accomplished the Father's works and will. His light shines when we are obedient, faithful, serve others, lay down our lives, make sacrifices of our own priorities and time...in short, when we live on earth as He did (1 Jn.. 4:17).

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 14 Read John chapter 10 (part 1)**

**Jn. 10:15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.**

**Jn. 10:17 Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.**

**Jn. 10:18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."**

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and this chapter has the theme of His care for His sheep. After explaining that a faithful shepherd would fight off wolves and die to protect his sheep, Jesus emphasizes three times that He was willingly giving up His life to save His flock. Jesus didn't die because the hateful Pharisees captured Him in the garden, or because the Roman government pronounced the death sentence, or because their strong soldiers wrestled Him onto the cross and nailed Him there. He willingly gave up His life, in obedience to the Father's will. He always had a choice in each step of the passion story, and He always chose the Father's plan. He was never overpowered, and He could have called 72,000 angels to rescue Him at any point (Mt. 26:53).

**Isaiah 50:6 I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.**

One of the most profound passages in the Scripture that shows Jesus' absolute acceptance of the Father's will is found here. Rather than turning away from the whip, Jesus turned His back toward it! Instead of trying to hide His face from the vicious Roman guards who were pulling out His beard, Jesus turned His face toward them! We all know how painful it is to have our hair pulled. Can you imagine Jesus welcoming this suffering, knowing it is part of the Father's plan? And to add insult to injury, the unspeakable dishonor of having His enemies spit in His face, and He did not duck away from this abuse. Jesus accepted all of it, knowing in advance how horrific it would be (Jn. 18:4), out of trust that the Father's plan was good, and necessary, and right.

**Jn. 10:29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.**

**Jn. 10:30 I and My Father are one."**

**Jn. 10:36 do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?**

He did all this because He was in complete agreement with the Father's great love for sinful mankind. He understood that without His sacrifice and death, there would be no forgiveness (Lev. 17:11) for the people that both He and the Father wanted so badly to be part of His family, together in heaven in eternity. Father and Son were one in purpose as Jesus looked ahead toward the cross, and once He redeemed us, we would be safe in the Father's hands forever.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 15 Read John chapter 10 (part 2)**

**Jn. 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.**

**Jn. 10:32 Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"**

**Jn. 10:37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;**

**Jn. 10:38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him."**

The evidence of Jesus' works should be all the proof that the Pharisees would need to know that Jesus really is the Messiah. These are not just ideas to do good deeds that Jesus had independently, but they are the works of the Father. Let's go back again to the very important thought that there is no difference between the Father and the Son in how they see us and what they think of us. Jesus said that the works proved who He is, and they came from the heart of the Father. In other words, the Father shows His perspective and feelings toward us by the works Jesus did. Those works showed compassion, tender care, provision, mercy, love...and this is how the Father feels toward us. Think of all the miracles Jesus did, and realize those were the Father's works. The Father had compassion on the blind beggar, the hideous leper and the grieving mother who lost her only son. The Father saw the hungry multitudes and told Jesus to give them loaves and fishes.

Sometimes preachers have given the wrong impression of the Father's heart, telling of the scene on the day of judgment, when the Father is angry with us for our countless sins, but Jesus rushes in as our lawyer and stands between us and His wrathful face. The good news is that He did that for us already, on the cross (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9)! Although no one can fully describe the scene on the day we stand before the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9-11), Scripture shows we can come before Him with confidence and not fear, if we know we're forgiven and living in a manner that pleases Him (1 Jn.. 2:28, 3:21).

The forgiven have no need to be terrified of facing the Father. The unforgiven have reason for terror, and should come to Jesus in humility and faith so He can forgive them now, while there's still hope and mercy available to them! And all of us who know the Lord can think back to our times of spiritual blindness, when we were so close to facing God's anger, and thank Him for the mercy He showed through Jesus. That's part of our motivation to spread the Gospel message to those who don't know Him (once again, 2 Cor. 5:9-11).

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 16 Read John chapter 11**

**Jn. 11:41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**

**John 11:42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me."**

The Father heard Jesus! Not occasionally or when He wasn't too busy. Not after Jesus took a number and stood in line. Jesus had immediate access to His Father day and night. We have all been frustrated while waiting in doctors' offices, government offices and businesses . We have been irritated while trying to talk to someone who is only half listening, and we see that their real attention is still on the sports match on TV or the magazine they are reading. This was never Jesus' experience while talking with His Father. Likewise, we have access to God by faith (Eph. 2:18). He doesn't have office hours, sleep (Ps. 121:4) or put his phone on airplane mode. The Father doesn't screen our calls or put us on hold. We can reach Him when we need Him (Heb. 4:14-16).

The Father always hears Jesus! Notice this verb is in the present tense, because Jesus is still praying (Heb. 7:25). One of His roles in heaven right now is bringing our needs before the Father, asking His help on our behalf. That's because He is our only Mediator, the only One able to stand between God and man to help us (1 Tim. 2:5). When Job faced his terrible season of struggles, he longed for someone who could stand between himself and God, and, "lay his hand on us both" (Job 9:32-33). Now, because Jesus bridged the gap between man and God through the cross, He is the One that Job hoped to find.

The Father hears us! There are only a few exceptions shown in the Bible for God to refuse our prayers, such as disobedience (1 Jn.. 3:22, Ps. 66:18), praying outside His will (1 Jn.. 5:14-15) or men failing to honor our wives (1 Pet. 3:7). This does not mean that if we check off all those boxes, that we can have anything we want. Just like a good earthly father, the Lord knows that some things we think we really need would actually be harmful to us, or not fit in His plans for the greater good (Rom. 8:28). He reserves the right to say no to our requests, but He only does that in love and faithfulness. The more we get to know Him, the more we will trust His judgment when things don't go our way and prayers are seemingly unanswered.

This is one of the greatest struggles of the Christian life: trusting that God is good and wise when we are sure our plans are right. But do we really think we're in a place to offer counsel to the Most High? Do we have wisdom or information that He lacks? Do we expect that after giving a convincing argument, that the Lord who made all things will respond, "I never thought of that! You're right! Angels, get on it immediately." Of course not. So when we pray and feel our request has been ignored, it's time to hold on to what we know to be true of God's character, walk in faith, and leave things in His capable hands.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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## Day 17 Read John chapter 12

**Jn. 12:26** If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

**Jn. 12:27** "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

**Jn. 12:28** Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again."

**John 12:44-45** Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

<sup>45</sup> And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

**Jn. 12:49** For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

**Jn. 12:50** And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

As Jesus came closer to the crucifixion, He spoke even more frequently of His Father. The next chapter tells of the Last Supper, so we know the cross is near, and very much on Jesus' mind. In John 12, Jesus explains several things about His relationship with the Father, and ours. First, there are multiple rewards of serving Jesus, including being with Him and honor from the Father. God doesn't ask us to make personal sacrifices, face rejection and persecution, forgo the temporary pleasures of sin (Heb. 11:25) or give up our personal goals if they are opposed to His plan, without giving us compensation.

But how does He reward us? With the intangible things of the Kingdom of God. We're not paid in earthly currency, but in heavenly currency. God meets our earthly needs and blesses us, but He also gives us what the system of the world cannot offer, and that includes His own presence and the satisfaction of knowing that we have brought joy to the Father's heart. When we do things for others that go unnoticed and unappreciated, let's remember that they actually were noticed and appreciated by the Father and the Son. When we give our all in God's service, we need to remind ourselves that He is watching, even if humans show no gratitude (1 Cor. 15:58).

Next, submission to the Father's will took Jesus all the way to the cross. He understood His purpose for coming to this world. Jesus' goal was the Father's glory, and He knew that achieving that goal required loss of comfort, friends turning against Him, being misunderstood even by His own family, great opposition from the religious leadership and ultimately horrific suffering and death. Yet He was never deterred from His purpose, but kept moving forward (Jn.. 18:4), steadfastly (Lk. 9:51), set in His determination to do all the Father asked of Him (Is. 50:7).

And finally, once again Jesus reminds us that He is the representative of the Father in words and Person. He doesn't have His own agenda, as we can see by His submission to the Father. Every word from His mouth reflected the Father's thoughts, and every action showed what His Father would also do. People could see and understand the invisible God by watching and listening to the visible Son.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 18 Read John chapter 13**

**Jn. 13:1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**

**Jn. 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,**

Picture, as much as is possible for us as humans, what Jesus had been feeling and thinking in those last weeks before the cross. He knew every detail of what was coming and the exact second that each aspect would take place. In His mind, there must have been mingled thoughts: the excitement to return to the glories of heaven and leave behind this sin saturated world, but also the knowledge of the sufferings He was about to experience. In writing this, it's hard to find a word in our language that adequately conveys the emotions of the Savior. All our words include the aspect of fear, which would be impossible for Jesus to feel (1 Jn.. 4:18). So we can't call it foreboding or apprehension or trepidation. It was more the dark certainty of the point to come in which He was to be separated for the first and last time from His fellowship with the Father. He had never known separation before, because that is a product of sin, but He is about to become the personification of sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus knew His separation from the Father would be temporary. In fact, every time He spoke to the disciples to tell them about His crucifixion, He also told them about the resurrection, although they never understood it. He could see through the horrors of becoming the sin bearing Lamb of God, but that didn't lessen the impact of those hours on the cross in which Jesus in a sense became a magnet, drawing all the guilt of mankind through every century from creation until the end of time to one place. From Adam's sin to yours and mine, including the sins your great great grandchildren will commit, it all came to His body, and would be paid for by His blood.

You may have heard teaching on the terrible physical pain of the 39 lashes and the nails through His hands and feet and the crown of thorns, but these were nothing in comparison to the greater suffering of the spotless Son of God taking on the guilt of every child molester, every abortion doctor, every serial killer, every psychopathic dictator, every rapist and thief and liar and adulterer and homosexual (1 Jn.. 2:2). Add to that every sin you and I have committed in our wicked thoughts, harsh words and evil deeds. Yet He loved us enough that He would willingly take the judgment that we deserved, at the expense of His own fellowship with the Father, to bring us into the place where we could know the Father, too, and eventually live with them both in heaven.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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## **Day 19 Read John chapter 14 (part 1)**

**Jn. 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**Jn. 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

Think about the phrase, "My Father's house." This is heaven, where God lives, and Jesus welcomes us to spend forever with Him in Their own house. Your house has certain rules of conduct. You may tell everyone they must take off their shoes at the door to keep it clean, or that there will be no smoking or profanity in your home. What would you think if a neighbor opened the door, barged right in with muddy boots, lit up a cigar and started cursing in front of your kids? You'd throw him right out, and call the police if he refused to go. Your house, your rules.

It's the same with the Father's house. He makes the rules about who can come in and how they must act inside. He's not obligated to let anyone just barge in and live there on their own terms. This is His home, where He and Jesus and the Holy Spirit live with the angels and the saints (1 Cor. 1:2). And that explains why there must also be a hell: not everyone respects the Father's rules and wants to obey Him. God can't let people into heaven who refuse to submit to His authority, or heaven would be as corrupt as earth. Can you imagine being in eternity in heaven, but having to bolt your door shut because there are robbers there who still want to steal? What about rapists and murderers? Could heaven really be heaven if you had to keep looking over your shoulder as you walked down the golden streets, or keep pepper spray in the pocket of your robe? That kind of heaven sounds more like a mixture with hell. It's His house, and God has the right to keep out those who won't follow the rules.

There will be former robbers and former rapists and former murderers in heaven. They will get there on the same basis as you and I will, which is responding to the Father's call, believing in the Son to the extent that we have a life transforming encounter with Him. That will result in repentance and forgiveness. By repentance we change our ways, God forgives us, and as a result, we become new people inside (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

**Jn. 14:7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."**

**Jn. 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."**

**Jn. 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**

**Jn. 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.**

**Jn. 14:11 Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.**

**Jn. 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.**

**Jn. 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**

This chapter is so rich in content regarding Jesus' relationship with the Father that today and tomorrow we will have a lot to cover! Again and again, we see Jesus telling us He is one with the Father. But here He opens up a new discussion, which is including us in the works His Father enabled Him to do, and even

telling us we will do greater works! How can that be? There are few people who can say their prayers have raised the dead or multiplied food. Bible scholars have come to the conclusion that this does not mean more dramatic signs and wonders than those Jesus did, but more widespread works as the church took the Gospel message to all the nations, where many miracles and preaching the message of Jesus have resulted in the conversion of millions. This started on Pentecost and will continue until the end of the age (Mt. 28:18-20). Jesus links this extensive spread of the works of the Father to faith, asking in His name and His intercession to the Father on our behalf.

### **Day 20 Read John chapter 14 (part 2)**

**Jn. 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--**

**Jn. 14:20 At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

**Jn. 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**

Jesus begins teaching the disciples about the work of the Holy Spirit here. As Jewish believers, they were familiar with the Old Testament stories about the Holy Spirit's work in creation and the miracles of their people's history (Gen. 1:2, Amos 3:7). But here Jesus expands their understanding. He tells them He is in the Father, we are in Him, and He is in us. The filling of the Holy Spirit is how Jesus performed His ministry (Mt. 3:16, Is. 61:1) and the key to seeing God's work on earth through the church. Scripture tells us we are made into one body through the work of the Holy Spirit bringing unity among very different groups of believers (Eph. 4:4). By the Holy Spirit filling and empowering the church, unifying believers and joining us to the Father and the Son, we see the kingdom of God come on earth (1 Cor. 6:17, 12:13).

**Jn. 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."**

**Jn. 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.**

**Jn. 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.**

God loves us so much! How can we love Him back? What does that look like, and how do we do it? The first and greatest commandment of the Lord is to love Him supremely, above all other people or things. This commandment is found in the Old Testament and repeated in the New Testament. (Deuteronomy 6:4-6, Matthew 22:35-37).

How do we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength? Many books about "Love Languages" explain the ways people give and receive love, including spending quality time together, giving gifts, affirming words and acts of servanthood. A wise young man discovers the love language of the girl he hopes to marry and learns to speak it. If this is true about us, and we are made in God's image, does He have a love language? Are there ways we try to show love to God that don't impress Him at all, and others that reach His heart? Yes! Here are some. God's love language is not met when we go through the motions of religious activities. He doesn't want empty worship (Matthew 15:7-9, Isaiah 1:11, 14-15) But He does welcome time spent with Him and misses us when we are too busy for Him. (Jeremiah 2:32).

Above all, following His commandments pleases the Lord. God's primary love language is obedience. See how often Jesus linked them (John 14:15, 1 John 5:3)?

Although the Old Testament lists 613 commandments, Jesus taught that they are really summed up in just two: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Our fallenness is really obvious when we think of these

commandments- we can't even keep these two! There's no need to memorize and work at the 613 because genuinely understanding our failure to keep even two commandments accomplishes the work of the law (Gal. 3:24-25, Rom. 7:7). It's designed to show us our sinfulness and point us to our need for a Savior. Then, as redeemed people who are so grateful for God's gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23), we make pleasing Him our chief aim in life (2 Cor. 5:9).

**Jn. 14:28 You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.**

**Jn. 14:31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.**

Step by step, Jesus is approaching the final fulfillment of the Father's plan. Although the disciples can't comprehend it, He sees the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension drawing closer by the minute.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 21 Read John chapter 15 (part 1)**

**Jn. 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

**Jn. 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

**Jn. 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.**

**Jn. 15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.**

**Jn. 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.**

In one place, Jesus gives us both the task and the means to accomplish it. The task is to bear much fruit, and the means is abiding in Jesus. The fruit is the works of the Father, which include demonstration of His character (Gal. 5:22-23), proclamation of truth, care for the weak, acts of compassion, healing the broken and miracles. The means is abiding in Jesus, which put simply means remaining connected to Him. Just as the trunk of a tree takes in water and nourishment from the soil and spreads it throughout its branches and leaves, so we will receive the life of Jesus Himself and find it flowing into all the aspects of our lives. It's not effort or concentration that produces fruit, but it's a natural result of the connection to the source. We can see Jesus' point is that if we are disconnected, we will be fruitless, but that by remaining attached to the Father in the relationship Jesus has provided for us, fruit will come automatically.

Jesus' metaphor of Himself as the vine and us as the branches sounds nice until we get to that pruning part (Jn. 15:2)! Why does the Lord seem to be coming toward us with a saw in one hand and pruning shears in the other? Just like in the natural realm, pruning makes the tree stronger and helps it do better at its job, which is to produce fruit. God's correction and discipline is His means for getting rid of the parts of our

lives that are disconnected from His life, and therefore dead. He even trims living and fruitful branches with a skilled hand, placing every cut properly and never cutting unnecessarily. Sometimes it hurts, but the outcome of a life submitted to God's dealing is great fruitfulness, which glorifies the Father (Heb. 12:5-11). We may surrender to the hand of the Gardener to a greater or lesser degree, and that can limit our fruit bearing. Let's welcome God's correction and have lives that show Jesus to the world in every possible way (Mt. 13:23).

## **Day 22 Read John chapter 15 (part 2)**

**Jn. 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.**

God wants to know you! At the beginning of time, He created the first man and woman because He desired to have relationships with those whom He would love, and they would love Him back (1 Jn. 4:19). He used to walk with Adam through the Garden of Eden, a perfect paradise where there was no sin or suffering, until Adam lost that privilege through sin, breaking the one commandment that God had given him (**Gen. 3:24**). The same God who put an angelic guard to keep disobedient Adam out of the Garden later tore the veil in the Jewish Temple that symbolically separated mankind from God, showing that through Jesus we could have fellowship with Him again (**Mt. 27:51**).

To understand the Lord's desire to be intimately involved in our lives, we need to understand clearly why He created us. He didn't just want mankind to be like pets and entertain Him, or He would have stopped on the fifth day of creation. He didn't want us to be just servants - He already has countless angels who could do a much better job than we do. He wanted friends; sons and daughters who would choose to know and love Him. The Father wants us to have the same kind of relationship with Him that Jesus has, and Jesus has called us into a special friendship with Himself.

God offers to dwell with us, but we usually only visit with Him. He offers us fellowship and friendship, but we settle for formality. He wants a relationship with us, but we are religious instead. He calls us to come close, but we are business-like with Him!

Have you ever thought about what God does all day? We know what we do: eating, sleeping, driving, school and work. God doesn't do any of those things. Keeping the planets spinning doesn't require much effort for the Lord. He isn't busy taking care of problems in the Middle East or natural disasters. He's not preoccupied with people whose problems are more serious than ours are. In the medical profession, there's a process called triage, which means that the injured with the most pressing needs receive care immediately and the others wait until later. God never does spiritual triage with us! We always have His full attention, and He's big enough to pay full attention to all seven billion people on earth at the same time.

As our Heavenly Father, He is interested in everything that goes on in our lives. He wants to be involved in all we do, not only during church services and Bible studies. He wants to show His protection, provision, wisdom and His actual Presence in our daily lives. However, so often we box Him into certain parts of our lives and leave Him out of other parts. Frequently we go through an average day with little contact with the Lord. One way we can see if this is true is to think of how often we pray catch up prayers.

Catch up prayers have nothing to do with the red stuff that goes on hamburgers. By this, we mean the prayers we pray before going to sleep at night that catch up on our day and talk to God about it. "Dear Lord, thank you for today...This morning I...and then this afternoon...and oh yeah, tonight I...well, good night, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen."

When we find ourselves trying to catch up in prayer, it shows we've missed involving the Lord in parts of our lives throughout the day. He has watched from a distance because we haven't learned to welcome His Presence and include Him in our daily activities. We have missed a blessing and He has missed seeing His purpose for creating us fulfilled. Do you forget the Lord throughout the day? Start to include Him in everything you do. Talk to Him informally, like you would to a friend, and see what happens!



**Jn. 15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.**

**Jn. 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.**

**Jn. 15:26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.**

We see that not everyone who God created has understood His plan or desired a friendship with Him. Some people truly hate God (Ps. 81:15, Rom. 1:30) and refuse to have Him rule over their lives (Ps. 12:4, Lk. 19:14). That's really the core of the problem- people who hate the Lord want to BE the Lord, ruling their own lives and not submitting to any higher authority. It's rebellion, and sometimes they take out their angry revolt against God by mistreating His servants (1 Jn.. 3:13). Here Jesus once again tells us that the Holy Spirit will remind us of Who Jesus is: God's Son, God Himself, worthy of honor and respect, deserving that all people should follow Him, and ruling the universe with love, authority, faithfulness, power and all the attributes that we love and His enemies hate.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 23 Read John chapter 16 (part 1)**

**Jn. 16:10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;**

**Jn. 16:15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.**

**Jn. 16:16 "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."**

**Jn. 16:17 Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?"**

**Jn. 16:28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."**

Can you hear the eagerness in Jesus' voice as He once again talks about returning to His Father in heaven? Since this world is the only place we have ever known, we can be fond of it and think it's beautiful and amazing. And it is, to the extent that nature shows the glory of its Creator (Ps. 19:1). But the world is also tainted by sin and corrupted since the fall of man (Rom. 8:19-22). It's a place of magnificent mountains and sunsets and flowers, but also of plagues and natural disasters and famines and the evil deeds of its inhabitants. Jesus loved the people on the planet, but He was eager to go back to the spotlessness of heaven. In comparison to the splendors of heaven, we can't even picture how this planet is filthy and degraded in the eyes of those who have seen the better place.

But it wasn't so much that Jesus missed the order and cleanliness up above, it's that He wanted to be near His Father again. Nothing that the earth and it's systems had to offer was a distraction worthy enough to lure His heart here. So often we are enthralled by the pleasures and fun that the world offers us that we don't see past it. Jesus had not only seen past it, He had lived for eternity before in that place, and longed to return there for eternity after.

How about you and I? While we enjoy all the good things this planet has to offer, how much do we yearn to be up there (2 Cor. 5:1-8)?

{For next month's devotional series, called A Christian's Guide to Life and Death, we'll look at this in detail. Let me know if this sounds interesting to you!}

### **Day 24 Read John chapter 16 (part 2)**

**Jn. 16:3 And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.**

**Jn. 16:23 And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.**

**Jn. 16:25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.**

**Jn. 16:26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;**

**Jn. 16:27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.**

**Jn. 16:32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.**

Jesus was eager to return to heaven with the Father, yet He understood that we still have to live here for the allotted number of years that the Father gives us. During that time in a fallen world, things won't always go smoothly for us, so Jesus taught us how to ask for the Father's help by using His Name. This means more than tacking on the phrase, "in Jesus' Name" to the end of every prayer. In Hebrew thought, the name represented the person, so the idea here is that we are welcomed to pray to the Father from the status that Jesus has with Him. We don't approach God on the basis of how good we have been lately or how many things we have done for Him. God is not easily impressed (Is. 66:1-2). Instead, we approach humbly, recognizing that all by ourselves, we would have no reason to think we deserve anything from God (Is. 64:6). At the same time, we approach boldly, recognizing that our status as people forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice and now adopted into God's family allows us access to Him (Heb. 4:14-16).

Understanding this place near to the heart of God gives us confidence in the midst of struggles. Here Jesus talks about the persecution His followers will face after He ascends to heaven, and in many places, Christians still face that today. I have friends who have been beaten and imprisoned for their faith, faced false charges for crimes they never committed by enemies eager to see them taken out of action, daily deal with the concern of secret police and the dangers of informants, had their lives threatened by family members and lead underground churches that could be shut down in a moment by the authorities if discovered. Other personal friends have to meet in hiding from the authorities, know their phones are tapped, keep secret stashes of illegal Christian literature, teach the faith to kids under age 18 despite laws forbidding it, preach the Gospel message despite anti-conversion laws, print and distribute illegal Bible teachings, and receive threats from terrorists.

We have been around believers in several countries who have been thrown out on the street by their parents for following Christ, cannot find work because of their faith in Christ, still follow the Lord after family members have been martyred, study the Bible literally underground in preparation for planting churches in closed nations and know they are being monitored by the KGB (now called FSB). These daily threats seem very foreign to many living in Western nations, but they are part of the tribulations Jesus spoke about at the end of this chapter.

Friends and colleagues in numerous countries are reading this devotional series each day, and have asked if they can translate it into about 8 languages. If this is your experience, know that the Lord is near to you and the promises in this chapter are meant for you! If this is not your experience, pray for those who pay a much higher price for their faith in Christ than you do!

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 25 Read John chapter 17**

**Jn. 17:1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,**

**Jn. 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**

**Jn. 17:11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.**

**Jn. 17:21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.**

**Jn. 17:24 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.**

**Jn. 17:25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.**

This chapter is known as Jesus' high priestly prayer. He points to the unity and love that the Trinity has together, then aims the church in the same direction. We have fallen woefully short of His desire as we split over unimportant disagreements and non-crucial doctrines. The problem is not that we should all interpret every Scripture in the same way, because there is room for varying viewpoints, but that we allow our sinful flesh into the discussions. We actually split over pride, judgment, haughtiness and other sins of our egos (Prov. 13:10).

The consequences of our disunity are written in these verses. We won't have the glory of God in our lives and relationships, and our witness to the world is hampered. Yet unity without wisdom wasn't Jesus' goal. We shouldn't throw true Biblical teaching away for the sake of unity with cults and false religions on one hand, but we shouldn't be harsh with genuine believers who have different viewpoints in less significant

areas on the other. Can you accept those who are genuine followers of Jesus, regardless of them being fundamentalist or Pentecostal, Baptist or Catholic, Mennonite or Anglican? Although we may not agree with all of their interpretations and traditions, Jesus has called us to the unity with them that Jesus has with the Father.

Churches divide from others over views on communion and baptism, understandings of the end times, the role of women, clothing and other standards of life and conduct. While there are some standards that clearly show whether a person holds the teachings of Scripture in high or low regard, others are matters of preference and opinion. We tend to be quick in deciding if others are in or out of the Kingdom, but that's wrongly assuming that we have the wisdom to do so (Mt. 13:24-30).

Some people seem to think heaven will have a very small population made up of just those with their exact doctrinal views, but Scripture tells us there will be a multitude of people in heaven so great that it would be impossible to number them (Rev. 7:9). This in itself tells us that the type of thinking which only includes our own small corner of Christianity as the true followers of Jesus is false, because it is possible to count all the people of any one denomination or group. If we think of the vine and branches teaching that Jesus gave us in John 15, we realize there are others who are connected to Him and thus have His life flowing in them, even though they don't look exactly like we do. And the Father didn't give us the job of deciding which branches to prune off of the vine (Jn. 15:1)! That is His business alone.

Our place is to watch those who claim to be His followers and look for the fruit in their lives (Mt. 7:15-20). Do they show the nature and character of Jesus (1 Jn. 4:17)? Recognizing that we all fall short of God's perfect standard, do they live a Biblical lifestyle (1 Jn. 1:7)? Is their focus and aim honoring the God we know from the Bible (2 Cor. 5:9)?

That perspective is how we can work with believers from many different backgrounds on the mission field, including Presbyterians in Taiwan, Baptists in the Philippines, Pentecostals and evangelical Roman Catholics together in Poland, Methodists in India, the Salvation Army in Panama, independent churches of various types and many others. As for me, if people hold to the core doctrines of the faith, such as the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the virgin birth, Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, His resurrection from the dead, ascension into heaven, the new birth (Jn. 3:7) and the inerrancy of the Bible, that's enough for me to count them as genuine believers. We can sort out all the other things once we get to heaven.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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## **Day 26 Read John chapter 18**

**Jn. 18:11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"**

It's very difficult for many of us to see sufferings as part of the will of God. We are trained in western thinking to expect comfort and ease in our daily lives. Yet Jesus acknowledged that the death sentence He was about to face came from the Father's hand. Scripture is clear that there is suffering that comes from the will of God (1 Pet. 4:19), although we can also bring needless suffering on ourselves through our own bad

decisions (1 Pet. 4:15). Although God's Word shows us that by many tribulations we enter the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22), we try to avoid hardship as much as possible.

But trouble, hardship, persecution and pain were part of regular life for the early church, including the apostles (2 Cor. 7:5, 2 Tim. 2:3). This should prove once and for all that suffering does not only come as the result of sin or unbelief! Would we dare to say the Apostle Paul suffered because he was sinning or lacked faith? He was rejected, stoned, beaten, imprisoned, abandoned and alone, yet he knew the secret to victory even in the hardest circumstances: he kept his eyes on the Lord. The greatest battle we face in tough times is not the trouble itself, it's keeping our faith and looking past the temporary trials into eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12).

We attempt to comfort ourselves and others in hard times by saying that God won't give us any more than we can handle, misquoting 1 Cor. 10:13. In fact, that verse only applies to temptation, and in thlipsis (the Greek word for trouble) God's entire point is to intentionally give us more than we can handle! This is how He teaches us to cling to Him and not rely on our own human strength and resources. It's not until we are overwhelmed, undone and have run out of confidence in our own ability to cope with the stresses of our lives that we can truly learn to rely on Him. The "faith" we have prior to the intense dealings of God is limited to a combination of trust and a cocky, "I got this" mentality that is the enemy of genuine faith. How far will God push you? Beyond what you can bear on your own (2 Cor. 1:8)! But in that place of holding on to the Lord in difficult times, when we feel that we have run dry, God shows His faithfulness and power (2 Cor. 12:9).

Why would God use the tool of suffering in our lives? Scripture only lists one means of growth in character (Rom. 5:3-4). We need to reexamine our belief that we have God all figured out. Human reasoning falls far short of Divine wisdom. His ways are still past finding out. Can we say that we have deciphered the Almighty (Rom. 11:33, 1 Pet. 4:12-13, Is. 40:13,28)?

Selah. That's the Hebrew word found throughout the Book of Psalms which means, in modern speech, "stop and think about this." The implications of the verses above are staggering, and this subject is not one you'll often hear preached. It's not something we want to put in evangelistic tracts or tell a lost friend. Could God's intentions for us include the troubles, raw emotions and even despair that Paul experienced? Burdens that Paul said he couldn't even measure on the scale? Wondering if he could even live through it? Thinking he couldn't go another step or last another minute? The Scriptures prove this. Selah.

This should not cause us to fear that we will be hit with cancer, bankruptcy, divorce or quadriplegia, reeling from the blows of a God Who carelessly doles out suffering. He knows we are just made out of dust and He does not willingly afflict or grieve us (Lam. 3:33). Yet in wisdom far greater than we can understand (Jas. 3:14-18), He both permits and purposes that trouble will come our way. We can't measure the rightness or wrongness of His actions by our miniscule understanding and puny level of insight. It can be in the form of external and obvious suffering, or struggles deep inside. These factors might not even be visible to others. Which do you think is worse?

Satan would always want to take advantage of the apprehension this subject can stir up, and tell us lies about God's character. It isn't as though the Lord becomes bored in heaven and decides to send an earthquake or outbreak of COVID-19 to liven things up. He cares deeply for us. He has considered every factor before acting. He sees ramifications and consequences from an eternal perspective. Everything we face is measured, timed, organized and meted out with mercy, gentleness and compassion (Ps. 103:14). God is good. Jesus trusted Him, all the way to the cross. Will we follow in His footsteps?

{A note to the reader- this is a small part of a chapter from my soon to be completed 5<sup>th</sup> book.}

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 27 Read John chapter 19**

Even though this chapter doesn't use the word Father, Jesus referred to Him.

**Jn 19:11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."**

Jesus was speaking to Pontius Pilate, a powerful Roman governor who usually lived in another city, but came to Jerusalem to make sure the crowds at the Jewish feast of Passover remained calm and controlled. Now Pilate is about to step into the most important trial he has ever led. His wife warned him not to judge Jesus (Mt. 27:19) and it is likely that he feared that Jesus was one of the many Roman gods, disguised in human form to trick him. Pilate tried several ways to get out of pronouncing the death sentence on Jesus (Mk. 15:6-12, Lk. 23:4-7, 22), but finally gave in to the pressure from the Jewish leaders. His regret over this decision may be one of the reasons he later took his own life.

Jesus took this occasion to correct Pilate's belief that the Roman emperor was the source of his authority. He shows that instead of Caesar giving Pilate the right to rule, backed by the government, it was actually God who placed him in this role. God gives governments authority, which they can use for better or worse ends (Rom. 13:1-7).

In the Father's plan, human governments having authority on earth is only a temporary delegation. Jesus now has all authority (Mt. 28:18) and will hold it while this season of human history continues, until the day of His return (1 Cor. 15:23-26). But after every enemy of the kingdom is once and for all defeated, He will return the authority He received from the Father back to Him (1 Cor. 15:27-28).

Let's remember that there is no distinction or difference in the will, purpose or view of mankind between the Father and the Son. It's interesting to see that Scripture refers several times to whose kingdom it really is, and instead of rivalry or competition as there would be with humans, even from the same dynasty and family, the Father and the Son are completely in agreement and accord. That's why sometimes Scripture refers to it as Jesus' kingdom (Lk. 22:30, Jn. 18:36, Col. 1:13, 2 Pt. 1:11) or the Father's kingdom (Mt. 6:10, 13, 26:29) and sometimes both (Eph. 5:5, Rev. 11:15). All of us who know the Lord are happy to be in the kingdom! We are not like those in Jesus' parable, who said, "we will not have this man to rule over us (Lk. 19:14)."

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 28 Read John chapter 20**

**Jn. 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' "**

Look at the incredible way Jesus links us to His Father! The Cross is now behind Him and salvation has been won. He has crushed the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15), defeating the power of the devil and the curse of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Sin's power has been broken and salvation is now available to everyone who will put their trust in Jesus for forgiveness of sins, rather than relying on their supposed human goodness to get them into heaven, or thinking falsely that God will weigh our good deeds against our bad deeds and let us into heaven. That's a concept that came from Islam, and it shows we have an excessively high view of the value of our works as well as an horrifically low concept of the wickedness of even small sins in the sight of a holy God.

The resurrection has taken place, and Jesus has fulfilled His mission on earth. As a result, He tells us His Father is our Father, and His God is our God. We're included. We're welcomed. We're accepted (Eph. 1:6).

**Jn. 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."**

Now let's look at the commission we have from Jesus to do His works, on the basis of this relationship with the Father. Look again at what Jesus said: "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." That tiny word "as" says a lot. He doesn't send us in our own strength. We're not limited to our human resources of wisdom or power or wealth. Our work for the Lord is not based on effort or education or personality. The Father sent Jesus in the Holy Spirit's power to accomplish His works on earth, and we have received the same Spirit. We are able by His grace to do more than we could ever accomplish on our own.

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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### **Day 29 Read John chapter 21**

Even though this chapter doesn't directly refer to the Father, it's the final chapter in John and it shows the last steps Jesus took on earth to fulfill the Father's will before ascending into heaven. He showed His authority over nature, sending fish to fill Peter's net after a futile night of fishing (21:6). He pointed Peter's attention to reaching children, knowing it was Peter's inclination to overlook them (21:15, Mt. 19:13-15). He prophesied about the future, showing Peter how he would be martyred (21:18-19).

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth to the very last day before He left this planet for His eternal home in heaven, Jesus was about His Father's business (Lk. 2:49). He never lost focus or wavered in His commitment to see the Father glorified and His will accomplished. Jesus couldn't be distracted by earthly riches, fame or power (Mt. 4:1-11). He didn't take human advice (Jn.. 7:1-5) and He wasn't intimidated by His enemies (Mt. 23:1-36). He didn't second guess the Father's plan, doubt His goodness or shy away from sacrifice (Mt. 26:36-46). Jesus, help us to have a relationship with the Father like You have!

What does Jesus show us about His relationship with the Father?

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What does He tell us about our relationship with the Father?

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**Day 30 Summary**

If you've completed this 30 day study and enjoyed it, please let me know! It has been a blessing to see that God has used it with friends in various countries translating it and teaching from it. Please send me a copy of your translations!

We've looked at over 100 references Jesus made in John to His relationship with the Father. Now it's time to process and apply the study to your own life. Here are some questions to help you do that.

What aspect of Jesus' relationship with His Father stands out to you the most?

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Why?

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Which would you like to see in your own relationship with the Father?

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Why?

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Do you think He wants that for you?

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How will you grow to know Him in this way?

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