

God the Father

A Biblical Study on His Incredible Love



Heart of Mary
Women's Fellowship

About This Study

We hope that you'll dive in, grow in the Lord, and share with others what beauty God reveals to you through it. If you are doing this study independently, know that we at HOM are here for you & that you also have a LARGE community of women through our website and social media that are participating too! You are truly never alone!

If you are completing this study in a group setting - we are excited that you have found a local community to grow with, on top of our online sisterhood. Please use this study journal for your reference, resource, and more during your meetings and the personal time leading up to it.

Looking for a group? Please visit www.heartofmarywf.com/groups to find a meet up near you.

Are you already in one but not listed on our website? Looking to start one? Please contact us for more information about our "HOM Ambassador" program. We have team members available specifically to help you grow a local group and lead other women through community, prayer, and devotion. Their support is available at all times. We also want to help you grow! We will advertise your group on our website & social media! And we have free resources for you as well. Please email us at heartofmarywf@aol.com

Note: All written content has been reviewed by a Catholic spiritual director to cross check that all statements align with the teachings and tenants of the Roman Catholic Church.

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God The Father Team



Writer

Ashley Likes



Writing Director

Christine Cooney



Art Director +
Graphic Design

Rachel Peñate



Journal Curator

Kristina Markford

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Scripture: John 14:6, Galatians 4:6

How do you view God? Do you see him as an ever powerful, almighty, and overwhelming being in the sky somewhere? Do you see him as a distant and omnipotent God, separated by an eternity of time and space from you in the right here and now?

While it is true, God is powerful and almighty and omnipotent. He should also be viewed as our Father. Over the next two weeks, we will focus on and reflect upon God as our true Father.

Many times in life, we see God's love reflected back to us in the ones we hold close. My dad is definitely someone that is a testament to our Father's love for us. Images of his now salt and pepper hair, ornery smile, and his big strong hands fill my mind and my heart with joy.

Memories of my dad pushing me on my bicycle yelling, "Pedal, Ash!" Him standing in the kitchen flipping the French toast over in the air, and him holding my babies are just a few happy memories I will always carry with me.

Jesus, the son of God, invites us to join Him in calling God, Abba, or Father. John 14:6 proclaims, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me." Jesus, the Son of the Most High, wants us to come along with Him. You know how you feel when the "cool kids" talk to you? A little giddy? A little nervous perhaps? Jesus is the cool kid saying, "Come with me and I will show you how to become a true child of God." It's thrilling - and a little scary - to be invited by Jesus Himself.

What would happen if I quit identifying the man who is my father as "Dad" or "Father?" That close, loving connection we share would be lost. Friendship and love may remain, but the title of "Dad" really

creates a distinct bond that cannot be shaken. He would just be some guy who mows his lawn religiously and has worked for 30+ years in aircraft. Just like being a mother has defined me, being my dad has defined him. The same can happen when you remove the term Father from your view of God. You can love Him and serve Him. But, when you remove the term Father, He can become abstract and faceless. Looking at God as a Father creates intimacy and a bond that cannot be rivaled.

My dad taught me how to ride a bike. Learning to ride a bike was hard and I fell multiple times, but my dad encouraged me, picked me back up again, and plopped me back down on the bike. Doesn't the Father encourage us in life and plop us back down when we fall? Do you know He is always cheering for you? My dad makes awesome French Toast for me. Doesn't God serve us food for our souls through his many gifts? Does He not fill that ever yearning void? And lastly, my daddy holding my own sweet babies; doesn't the Father promise to hold onto all things we find dear?

God, our heavenly Father, has perfect love waiting for us. The Lord proclaims we are His children. If we continually see God as our Father, we will continue to find hope, love, and fulfillment.

- Ashley

Reflection: Think of a person in your life (male or female) who reminds you daily of our God's unconditional love.

Reflection: How do you view God in your current journey? Do you view Him as a father, or do you view Him as more distant?

Act: Seek the Lord tonight in prayer solely as His daughter.



Scripture: 1 John 3:1, Malachi 2:10

As a mother, I have seen firsthand how my child loves me with his unparalleled enthusiasm. Even when I have failed miserably as a mother, my son still runs to me with open arms. As a disciple of Christ, I often find myself searching for God in that same childlike manner. However, that childlike love and desire is sometimes difficult to muster. It is difficult to not let the happenings of the day and the world itself get in the way of loving the Father. I often let my worry, my responsibilities as a parent, wife, daughter, employee etc. cloud my view of the Father. Shouldn't He take all of these worries away? Shouldn't He make each day wonderful and special? Shouldn't He... No. No, He shouldn't. We need to view God as a Father, not as a servant. And we need to see ourselves as His Children-Malachi 2:10

As a parent, my goal is to raise a loving, compassionate, God fearing child. In order to do that, I have to be a parent, not a servant. If I gave into his every desire, he would be greedy and spoiled. If I always picked up after him, his future wife would go nuts! If he never faced failure, he would never experience the feeling of achieving something great. If I feel like that as an earthly parent, how much does God our Father love us unconditionally? How much more should we, as children, love him?

In 1 John 3:1, we are "called children of God". Wouldn't it make sense to humble ourselves before Him like a child, and continually seek Him in a childlike manner? As a child, I trusted my parents implicitly. I knew that every decision they made was in my best interest. Just as we trusted our parents, we need to trust that the plans the Father have made for us are in our best interest.

Sometimes, little ones can be greedy; it's often all about them and what they want. When seeking the Father as a child, be aware of your own greediness and remember to mind your manners. Giving thanks for all the blessing He has bestowed upon us should take precedence.

Placing ourselves before the Lord as children makes us vulnerable. We have to trust and love with abandon. When we open ourselves up to God, when we are truly vulnerable, we have the opportunity to be loved in a way that we never have been loved before. On the other side of that, we have the opportunity to serve God by giving ourselves to Him completely. The love and pure joy I receive when my son runs up to hug me after a long day at work, I'm thinking the Lord feels something similar when we run to Him.

- Ashley

Reflection: Think back to a time in your life when you trusted the Lord completely. What was the result of that trial/experience?

Reflection: Who in your life do you trust the most? Do you confide in the Lord as you would this particular person?

Act: Write down your top three worries. Discuss these with God tonight.



Scripture: Luke 12:7, Jeremiah 29:11

“Every human being is loved by God the Father. No one need feel forgotten, for every name is written in the Lord’s loving heart.” Pope Benedict XVI

Have you ever gone through the day feeling unappreciated, unloved, or worse yet, unnoticed? Pope Benedict reminds us that we are written on “The Lord’s loving heart.” To actually be written on HIS heart-wow, it’s amazing to know that God has my name written down and He is always thinking of me.

Do you have children of your own? Think of a time when you made some sort of life decision and you didn’t think of your kids’ needs first. Never, is the answer that I’m thinking most mothers will come up with. Never will you make a decision, big or small, where you didn’t put your kids’ needs first. God does the EXACT same thing. He is constantly thinking of you. Just like you can’t turn off being a mommy, God doesn’t turn off being your father just because there are riots overseas or civil wars breaking out.

Everything is a big deal to him. You are a big deal to Him. Your problems and accomplishments are important.

There are times when I feel as though I am insignificant and I feel as though my problems aren’t worth His time. The baby didn’t sleep last night, AGAIN. I’m late for work, AGAIN. Is that my son coughing in the other room? You know why I feel as though these problems are insignificant? Because I’m not approaching God as a FATHER. We should never feel insignificant with God, our heavenly father. In fact, we should feel so very special that He placed us here on this earth.

When we see God as our Father, our lives instantly take on meaning and purpose. For those of you that have children-don't you want to know, and even take joy in knowing every detail of your child's life? I love hearing about my son's accomplishments. Some are big like learning to ride a bike. Some are small like going into a dark room alone. As an adult, some of our accomplishments are big, and some are small. However, God revels in all of the details of our life. He is our father and we are His children.

In addition to that, God also has a plan for us. He knows what we are capable of and is constantly pushing us to become the best we can be. At times, it can be difficult to become what God has envisioned for us. There were times in my life when hard lessons were learned. However, it made me a better person. Life may be difficult, but the Father is always, always by our side cheering us on. He takes great pride in seeing our accomplishments, especially if it was something that we may have failed at previously.

One last thought. I swam competitively in high school. My dad was at nearly every single one of my swim meets. There was one time in particular that I remember him cheering for me during a race. I came up for a breath and could discern his voice from all the others. God's voice is there, cheering for you. Even during the hard races. It might be difficult to hear Him between breaths. But I can assure you, He's most certainly there.

- Ashley

Reflection: Have you felt insignificant recently?

Reflection: When was a time that you could hear His voice between breaths?

Act: Take the time to write down all of your worries, big or small, and give them to the Lord in prayer.



Scripture: Matthew 11:27, Mark 14:36

Just as we seek Jesus through Mary, we can also seek God through Jesus. In Matthew 11:27, Jesus tells us that we can only find God through Him. Jesus has always led by example. So, if we wish to be more childlike with God, what better person to emulate than the Son, Jesus Christ?

How does this passage depict Christ and the Lord? It depicts them as a family, a single unit. How amazing it must feel to be one with the Lord! For me - and I'm sure many of you - it is difficult to feel close to God, especially when life doesn't go as planned. But, again, Jesus has us covered when he says "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you [...]." We might not know the plan, but God does, and He can, literally, do anything.

With that said, I think it is imperative to continually look to Jesus and examine His relationship with the Father. If there is ever a time when we are unsure of ourselves, or of His love for us, we only need to look to their relationship. The love and compassion between the two is unparalleled. While we as sinners are certainly unable to achieve that sort of perfect love, we can certainly strive to be perfect, humble servants of God the Father, just as Jesus was.

Throughout the course of Jesus' life, we see Christ constantly calling out to the Father, praying to the Father, and confiding in the Father. At all times, Jesus maintained His trust in God-never faltering. If we get anything out of the study of their relationship, I think it would most certainly be trust. I can't count the number of times when I have called out to the Lord "Don't you see me down here struggling?!" I wasn't trusting God, and because I'm a sinner, I will have several more of those moments in my life. But,

thankfully, God sent us Jesus. I think back to when Christ was making His way to be crucified. Even in the last, darkest hours of His life, He never lost faith.

In today's society, we unfortunately see fathers depicted as either nonexistent, or some bumbling idiot that doesn't know anything. I think these stereotypes can taint our perception of God. "God isn't near," or, "God doesn't know anything about the struggles I face." It's easy to fall into that trap of what society tells us fathers should look like. It's even easier to fall into this idea that if our own father wasn't there. This again, is where the example of Christ and God comes in handy. We can take that relationship, hold it up, and say, "I want that kind of love and trust in my life." By throwing out our own preconceived notions, or even our own experiences of what a father looks like, we can grow closer to Our Father.

God has always been, and will continue to be Our Father. While it is difficult to fathom that the Lord could love someone as imperfect as ourselves, He certainly does. He has shown His love for us many times over—we only need to trust and draw close to Him to see His perfect love.

- Ashley

Reflection: What kinds of attributes do you think a good father should possess?

Reflection: Name one part of your life where you don't fully trust the Lord.

Act: The next time you feel yourself crying out to the Lord, take a deep breath, listen, and put your total faith in Him.



Scripture: Luke 15: 11-32

On May 11, 2016, Pope Francis reflected on the Parable of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15: 11-32. Francis said, "Jesus wishes to teach us that we are children of God not because of any merits of our own but because of the infinite love of our heavenly Father." Think back to this beloved parable. As I imagine this story, my heart is filled with such joy.

God is, and always will be our Father. Just as the father in the parable, He will always love us, despite our numerous shortcomings. In this parable, the son, unfortunately, leaves his father's house to live a life of sin and luxury. When the money runs out, he returns home. Can you imagine the shame and guilt this man must have faced returning home? There have been times when I have had to face my parents like that. I knew what I had done was wrong and I had to go home and tell them about it. My stomach still flip flops with guilt when I think back on those times. I also think on the times when I told God, "I don't need you, I've got this."

Instead of making the son stay with the pigs and eat scraps, the father instantly welcomed his son home. He showed his son nothing but love and happiness upon his return. Each time I told God, "I don't need you" I eventually returned to Him. Sometimes returning meant making amends with those closest to me, and sometimes that meant taking better care of myself. However, each time I returned, I felt like I was truly coming home. A weight was lifted, and my heart was restored.

Our Father, much like the father in the parable, waits for us. He waits for us to get it together and come home. Sometimes we have to swallow our pride and admit the way we've been living our lives isn't the way

He would want us to live. I think that is one of the hardest things do. Just like the prodigal son, we have to examine our lives and our actions without bias.

Pope Francis continues his catechesis by telling us what we already know, but need to be reminded of, “How often do we need to be reminded of God’s unchanging love and ready for forgiveness, lest we lose heart when we ourselves or our dear ones go astray!” God doesn’t love us because of our actions, He loves us in spite of our actions. His love is infinite and covers a host of sins. We just need to turn around, swallow our pride, and return home. The journey home may be long and exhausting. There may be some habits that are hard to break or some lifestyles that need to reevaluated. However, knowing that your Father is waiting for you when you walk through that door is motivating and inspiring.

Remember, the Father has been in the same place-home. He has invited you to stay, to live, to rest. It is up to you to take Him up on that invitation and stay.

- Ashley

Reflection: Think of a time when your disappointing actions were met with love and compassion.

Reflection: Do you have a long journey ahead of you? Perhaps you can find a friend or loved one to take the journey back home with you.

Act: Take time evaluate your actions in the last week and think of how you can make better choices in the following week
