

Praying to God Our Father

by Samuel Chadwick

Prayer is based on a personal relationship with God as our Heavenly Father, and it is a means of expressing our dependence on Him and experiencing His love and care.

Scripture: Matthew 6:6-7, John 17:1, Ephesians 3:20, James 4:3

Topics: "Prayer Life", "God The Father"

Description

Samuel Chadwick emphasizes the importance of prayer based on a personal relationship with God as our Father. He highlights the significance of addressing God as our Father, which changes the dynamics of prayer, making it a child's right to ask and a father's responsibility to hear with love and understanding. Chadwick explores the wonder of God being our Father, establishing the foundation for prayer and emphasizing the accessibility, intimacy, and fearless love that comes with this relationship. He delves into the concept of praying to the Father in secret, highlighting the reverence, openness, and deep communion that prayer entails. Chadwick also discusses the glory of God as our Father, encouraging a prayer life rooted in adoration, reverence, and delight in the greatness of God. Finally, he reflects on the nature of prayer to our Heavenly Father, drawing inspiration from Jesus' example of glorifying the Father, submitting to His will, and praying with childlike trust and unreserved openness.

Transcript

Our Lord bases prayer on personal relationship. He taught us to call God our Father, and the implication of sonship changes the whole aspect of prayer. Whatever difficulties may remain, intercourse must be possible between father and child, and to suggest that a child may not ask of a father would be to empty the terms of all meaning. It is a child's right to ask, and it is a father's responsibility to hear in affectionate sympathy and discerning love. The wonder is not that God hears prayer, but that He is our Father. The greater wonder includes the less. The revelation that God is Father establishes the possibility and reasonableness of prayer. The one establishes the other. God would not be Father if His children could not pray. All the teaching of Jesus about the supremacy of the child-heart in the kingdom of God is rank blasphemy if God is not our Father. The relationship carries with it accessibility, intimacy, and fearless love. Sons of great men have sometimes remembered their father as an institution rather than as a father, and God is to some of His children little more than an institution. It was not thus that Jesus revealed Him.

Our Father In Heaven

There is no lowering of His majesty in the intimacy of the family relationship. He is still the Holy and Most High God; the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity. The Sermon on the Mount, with its relation of God to sparrows and lilies, detracts nothing from the majesty of Isaiah's vision of Him: "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth." He is still "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. . . . the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (I Timothy 1:17; 6:15, 16).

There are many such revelations of the divine glory and majesty, and it is well to ponder them in adoring worship; but Jesus Christ turned them into terms of filial value. He is our Father! That is the crowning fact. To the child he is just Father. Others may cringe in fear, but the child heart is a stranger to terror. I have never forgotten the dread that gripped me when, as a youth, I was invited to go for an interview at the parsonage. I walked past the door several times before I had courage to ring the bell, and as I stood at the door my heart throbbed in my ears. Imagine my surprise when shown into the room to find the great man on all-fours, giving a ride to riotously happy children, who turned his long beard into driving reins! He was their father! They knew nothing of the awe in which others stood of him, and as they grew older and knew something of his greatness their reverence deepened, but their fearlessness was not diminished. The children of the House are free and fearless.

Pray To The Father Which Is In Secret

The heavens cannot contain God our Father, but He dwells in the inner chamber of the soul. He is in secret, and seeth in secret. He waits and watches for the opening of the sanctuary door. It is holy ground, and must be approached with reverence. The soul must summon all its powers for this its holiest exercise. Here the mind must be at its best, that it may think of God and life. Thought of God is more than thinking of our thoughts about Him. Communion is deeper than theology. Prayer in secret is life finding expression in the realized presence of God our Father. All things are voluntarily laid bare before Him. All pretense is stripped from motive, all hypocrisy from desire, all dissimulation from speech. A season of silence is the best preparation for speech with God. Infinite glory finds new value when interpreted in terms of Fatherhood, and prayer finds new horizons in the majesty of our Father in heaven.

If God be Father, we may pray; but if He is such a Father, why need we pray?

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:7, 8). Then what need is there to ask? We do not pray to inform God. Neither do we pray to persuade Him, for His love needs neither to be induced nor coaxed. No father answers his son's prayer for bread with a stone, or the request for a fish with a scorpion. Wisdom and love combine to answer need, and not to make sport of infirmity. Our earthly fathers, notwithstanding their evil natures, know better than to mock the needs and trust of their children. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7: 11). "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7).

If Ye Call On Him As Father

It is no part of our purpose to discuss the problems of prayer. We are seeking to learn how to pray, and barren speculations have nothing to teach us. No part of the man must be shut out when the man is shut in. Reason is as truly of God as emotion, and neither divorced from the other leaves the soul maimed and incapacitated. Vision comes to love apart from reason, but reason conserves the vision and translates it into life. Our spiritual life stands in knowledge of God, but it is not a knowledge that is acquired or achieved by the energy of flesh and blood. Love is the bond of fellowship in prayer. Attempts to rationalize love dampen its fires, but where reason is dethroned, emotion becomes a conflagration. The study and the oratory are allies, but the inner chamber is better to be a place apart; then prayer enlightens thinking, and thinking kindles the altar fires of the heart. God as Father is the key to the problem of prayer. God is more than a Creator. He is our Father: Heavenly Father, holy Father, righteous Father; the God of love and still the God of law. "The Sabbath was made for man," and the universe of God was made for the family of God.

In The Glory His Father

The fact that we pray to God our Father in heaven tells us much as to how we should pray. The Son of God gloried in the glory of His Father. It was His habit to rise early that He might behold His glory and delight in His presence. He rejoiced in the Father's greatness and in the majesty of His power. It is good to go over His affirmations of the Father. "MY FATHER!" The accents of adorning love vibrate in every tone. "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," "for the Father seeketh such to worship him." "My Father. . . . is greater than all. . . I and the Father are one."

He loved to dwell upon the care and bounty of the Father's love. Nothing is insignificant. Each is to the Infinite as if there were no other. Even the odd sparrow is not forgotten, and man is so much the more the child of His care that even the hairs of his head are numbered. He lived in the sovereign will of the holy and righteous Father. He did not pray to subdue the Father's will to his desire; but that the will of the Father might be done. The sweat and agony of prayer were in the strong praying of the Father's Son, and it was always in obedience to the Father's will.

Because we pray to our Heavenly Father in the secret place of prayer, we may pray with the artless unreserve of little children. There is nothing about which we may not pray. We pray as His children, and we trust Him as our Heavenly Father. His answer will transcend our asking. Prayer is in itself a discipline and an education. The Spirit instructs and trains in the school of prayer. A true father waits to bless in discretion, as well as in readiness. Sometimes He waits for us. Sometimes the answer is given long before the one who prayed is told, but "every one that asketh, receiveth." Dr. Adoniram Judson as he lay dying heard of the remarkable answer to his prayer for the Jews when he was a missionary in Burma, and he uttered this testimony: "I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything but it came; at some time -- no matter how distant the day -- somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, it came."

"When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" - "Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

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