

THE *Three Faces* OF GOD

Part 1: The Face of the Father

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Our culture is fascinated by spirituality, yet we are more confused about who God is than ever before. Some believe that God is simply an idea; others believe that God is everything. Still others believe that there are many Gods and that we, as human beings, have the opportunity to become gods someday. In the midst of the confusion, it should be comforting to know that God tells us – through the Bible and through the life of His Son, Jesus – exactly who He is. God doesn't hide from us, but instead wants us to know and recognize Him so that we can relate to Him more fully and experience the blessing of His involvement in our lives.

Jesus' followers, those who were called His disciples, exhibited the same **discomfort** that many of us have with who God is and how we should relate to Him...

Central Point...

The disciples' discomfort led them to make a simple request of Jesus:

Luke 11:1

¹ One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to talk to God, and the very first thing that Jesus taught them was what to call Him:

He did **NOT** tell them to call Him Holy God Almighty...

Jesus told his disciples to address the creator and sustainer of the universe as **Father**.

Luke 11:2

² He said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

The problem with the term "father" is that each of us relates to it on the basis of our own personal experience. Some of our fathers were not **present**, while others were present and we wish they had been **absent**.

Jesus knew this to be true, so He spent much of his earthly ministry defining what He meant by the word "Father". He told a story that we know as "The Prodigal Son", though a better title for our purposes might be "The Perfect Father"...

Luke 15:11-24 Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. [12] The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'" So the father divided the property between them. [13] It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. [14] After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. [15] He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. [16] He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any. [17] "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. [18] I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, "Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; [19] I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand." ' [20] He got right up and went home to his father. "When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. [21] The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.' [22] "But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. [23] Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! [24] My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.

Focal Point...

Seven Characteristics of God the Father...

1. God the Father is **big**:

- **materially.**

Psalm 50:10-12 Every creature in the forest is mine, the wild animals on all the mountains. I know every mountain bird by name; the scampering field mice are my friends. If I get hungry, do you think I'd tell you? All creation and its bounty are mine.

- **emotionally.**

Luke 12:6-7 "What's the price of two or three pet canaries? Some loose change, right? But God never overlooks a single one. And he pays even greater attention to you, down to the last detail—even numbering the hairs on your head! So don't be intimidated by all this bully talk. You're worth more than a million canaries.

- **spiritually.**

Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world.

He has more than **enough** of everything we need.

2. God the Father is **gracious.**

He gives generously even when there's a strong **probability** that we'll squander the gift that he gives.

He offers each of us the gifts of His truth and His Son, and we have all **misused** those gifts at one time or another.

3. God the Father is **patient.**

God waits because He wants us to have...

- **Freedom** of choice.
- **Dignity** of choice.

4. God the Father is **compassionate.**

God's heart **breaks** when our hearts are broken.

5. God the Father is **sacrificial.**

God sacrificed Himself by becoming a man in the person of Jesus Christ so that he could **relate** to us without barriers.

Philippians 2:5-8 *Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.*

God sacrifices his personal pride and **runs** to us without embarrassment.

6. God the Father is **affectionate.**

He conveys His affection through **both** words and actions.

Romans 5:8 *We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.*

7. God the Father is **affirming.**

God affirms our **potential** in Him, rather than in ourselves...

In His sight, we are....

- **Holy.**

Ephesians 1:4 *Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.*

- **Blameless.**

Ephesians 5:27 *He died so that he could give the church to himself like a bride in all her beauty. He died so that the church could be pure and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other wrong thing in it.*

Turning Point...

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Son, we can be children of God the Father now and for eternity. He wants us to understand and accept this truth so that we can fully realize our **identity** in Him.

Our challenge...

Seekers – If you are one checking out the claims of Christianity, know that the future God desires for you to experience is one that includes a growing personal relationship with Him. The good news is that to receive it, you simply have to ask Him.

To invite Christ into your heart, you can simply pray,

*“Heavenly Father I **admit** that I have left you out of my life, but this morning, I **believe** that Christ is your Son and that He died for my sin of rejecting you and that you raised Him from the dead. I **confess** Him to be my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' Name, Amen*

Believers – simply ask God,

Heavenly Father, help me view life from Your Perspective so that others can see that I have an identity with You? In Jesus' Name Amen.