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Knowing the Father

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” - 1 John 4:18. Lately I have found a lot of joy in life as I watch Harrison and his friends play. Seeing them run from the swing to the slide, then back again, reminds me of what it was like to be young all over again. You can often hear people say, “Oh, to be a child again.” Without realizing it, these playful children are teaching me more about my relationship with God than most preachers have in my lifetime.

Jesus is clear about how our relationship with God is supposed to be. In Matthew 18:2-5 it reads, “Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “***Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.***” If we are to become as little children and if by humbling myself as a little child I become the greatest in the kingdom, then why on earth did things get so complicated? It seems to me that most Christians have lost the ability to receive the blessings of God because they have lost the ability to be childlike. I suspect that we have learned how to deal with life on our own, instead of learning how to allow our Heavenly Father be involved with us.

I have great concern about the way that we Christians approach God in America today. It seems to me that many of us feel that He is distant from our everyday life, and from the things that we care about the most, such as family, provision, and our health. When we need answers there seems to be an underlining fear that He really doesn’t care about what we are going through. There was a time when I seemed to separate His Word from Him. I knew that He gave me everything I needed to conquer sickness, disease, poverty and everything I faced; however, I felt as if I had to face them on my own because He was looking down on me from a million miles away. I was just a little spot on earth that God knew about but wasn’t really involved with. Even though I had His Word, what I really wanted was Him. I wasn’t afraid of going through rough times in my life as long as I knew that God was there with me. I didn’t want to be alone.

We have learned how to stand on the Word, and how to use our formulas of faith to confront the enemy, but if you have been like I was, you have felt that something is still missing. I wanted more than just a formula for answered prayer; I wanted peace in my heart and knowledge that God cared about what I was going through. This peace will only come when we understand how much our Father cares about us. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to have that kind of confidence and peace in our relationship with God? It wouldn’t matter what the devil threw at us; it would be impossible for him to use pressure against us because we knew that our Father was for us, “and if God be for us who can be against us?” There is a relationship in God where you can have such a faith in His love for you, that you will never have to fear failing again.

This relationship is one where most of us are lacking. We have become great servants of the Lord in our actions. We have become great students of the Word and have learned of His scripture. We have become faithful givers into His Kingdom so that we could be blessed. Yet, with all of these wonderful actions let’s not

forget that the most important relationship we can have with God is not as a servant or as a student or as a giver, but one that is between a child and their Father.

Yes, God is all powerful, He is all knowing, He is all present and yes, He has no beginning and has been around forever. If you traveled back in time one hundred billion eternities you would still find God there and He would still have been there for all eternity before. It may be difficult for us to comprehend someone with no beginning because each of us has a beginning, so God decided the best way for us to have a relationship with Him is not one as a servant but as a child who has a relationship with their Father. God does not want you to approach Him as Great and Almighty God; He wants you to approach Him as a Father who loves you unconditionally.

Let's get rid of religion and build our relationship with Him as our Father and discover the simplicity of knowing our Father. This means that no matter what our calling or giftings are He sees each of us as equal children in His family. He doesn't see us as mighty apostles and prophets and as lowly housewives or church attendees. He sees us only as a true Father could, as His sons and daughters. Your relationship with Him is as important as anyone else's. There is no person in the world that He loves and cares about more than you.

One of the challenges I had to face was feeling less important to God than other people. Maybe you look at those who seem to be used by God more than you as more important to God. You might even compare your past to others and feel less than qualified for God to care about what you are going through. You need to know that these feelings are false and they are a lie from the pit of hell. They come into your life to stop you from believing God for His blessings. These feelings of not being completely received by God are really a fear of not being accepted. You are basing your relationship with God on what you have done wrong or what you haven't done right and you are in fear that God will not receive you.

The devil would bring my past up to me all the time. I caught myself staying at a distance from God because of mistakes I had made years earlier. I had asked for forgiveness and moved on, yet the devil used my past failures as a way of tricking me into not accepting God's unconditional love. I found my heart unwilling to trust that God really could love me so much. Being His child and Him being my Father was the most important relationship I could have and I had forgotten it.

Jesus made a way for His Father to become your Father. The moment you were born again and asked Jesus into your heart you were born into God's family and now have a Father who loves you. I can't express to you how important it is for you to gain this revelation because knowing that He loves you is the key to being free from the fear that would stop you from receiving from Him. Listen closely to what 1 John 4:17-19 tells us, "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us."

The way that love is perfected in us is by learning to receive the very love that He has for us. This is the reason we can have boldness in the day of judgment, because we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is for us and not against us. As you allow this love of God to grow in you then all fear will disappear from your life like a vapor.

Fear is not real; it is simply an illusion the devil uses to stop us from believing in God's will for our lives. The majority of Christians will never realize this because they never challenge the fear that is holding them back from experiencing the love of God. Fear stands right in front of us to stop us from moving forward.

It stops us from giving, from trusting and from believing God for His best in our lives. When you become perfect in His love for you then fear will no longer have power to stop you. You will not only defeat the fear of not being accepted by God but also fear of loneliness, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of poverty, fear of the future; every ugly fear that has controlled you in the past will simply disappear. The enemy will lose his ability to control your life and you will become unmanageable to the devil. You will defeat the enemy with the Love that your Father has for you.

I used to think that I needed a special calling or a special gift from God to be able to be strong in the Lord. I felt that this mystical strength to do great things from God was unachievable and always just out of my reach. So, when I discovered that the key to having my prayers answered was as simple as receiving His love for me, my whole identity changed.

I quit looking at my past failures and started looking to my future successes. Romans 5:6-9 reads, *“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His **blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**”* Once again you can see that He expressed His love for you before you were even saved. While you were in the deepest, darkest, most sinful time of your life, God was right there with you expressing His gentleness, mercy, kindness and His love towards you. If His love was with you at that time of your life, then who is to tell you that He won't be there during every circumstance you face today?

I used to face my problems with formulas of faith but now I confront them with peace that says I have a Father who loves me and He cares about what I care about and He is well able to answer every problem. Somewhere along the line I lost touch with how much my Heavenly Father deeply cares about everything in my life. Fear left me when I realized how much love is in my life. I quit having faith in formulas and started to have faith in my Father's love for me. You don't have to be afraid anymore. You no longer need to feel that He doesn't notice what you are going through, or that He is not involved with you. Every time you pray He is right there listening. The things that you care about the most, He cares about the most. You have a Father who loves you, and as you learn about His love, you will never have to be in fear again.

Stop thinking that you do not qualify for God to answer your prayers. The only requirement for answered prayer is that you have faith that your Heavenly Father wants to meet your needs. You don't need to be a preacher to qualify for answered prayer. You don't need to be a theologian, you don't even need to be perfect; you simply must be His child and believe that He is who He says that He is. Let us never forget that our faith is based on His love towards us. He really cares about you and what you are going through. Let's also remember that He will never leave nor forsake us. He isn't a million miles away looking down on earth through some telescope. He is your Father and He is right there with you involved with everything you are going through.

Have faith, and be bold and follow your Father. You have a Father who loves you; the only response you will ever receive from Him is love. So, let's get back to enjoying life. If we have a Father who is for us, then who could be against us, what are we to worry about? I want to see you back in the playground running from the swing to the slide under the watchful eye of your DADDY.

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