



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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## Pictures Of Your Father

Recently I got on a “cleaning spell”. I have these spells occasionally. I feel the need to get everything organized in my life – to deal with the clutter that has “accumulated.” I go through my office and home and throw away what’s not needed (or at least, I don’t think I will need it). During this most recent spell, I came across a box of pictures. I sat down, started going through this box, and went on a journey back through time.

Many of the pictures were of my father. There was a picture of him when he was in the military in Korea. There was also a picture of him when he played basketball at Stratton High School. Then, I saw one of my mother and him shortly after they were married. I also found pictures of my dad with me—when I was in Little League baseball, after our win in a bowl game when I was a senior, when I graduated from seminary, when I was ordained to preach. I could go on and on. It brought a flood of memories back to my mind and heart.

Those pictures were glimpses into the kind of father that he had been and is in my life. They reminded me of the sweetness and value of my relationship to him. These pictures renewed my appreciation of him and my love for him.

In the Bible, we have pictures of our Father. Just like the pictures in that old box, they remind us of what our heavenly Father is like. They teach us how our Father relates to us and how we are to respond to Him. They can renew our appreciation of our Father and our love and commitment to Him.

I realize that for some people the word “father” does not mean much. For some, it can even have a negative connotation. I taught at a Bible conference on the fatherhood of God. I dealt with how God is our Father through Jesus Christ. I was startled at how many people struggled with the concept of God as Father because of their relationship to their earthly father.

However, the Word of God is clear – God is a Father unlike any other father. He is holy and righteous. He is the loving and merciful Father. This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on the pictures of your heavenly Father. We will look at what these pictures reveal about our Father. We will examine how this affects our relationship to Him. And, I pray that it will help move you toward healing and hope in your relationship toward God as your heavenly Father.

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The following are some of the pictures of God contained in the Word of God. This list is by no means exhaustive. Nevertheless, it will give you some idea of how great and multifaceted your Father is.

I would encourage you to ask God to teach you about the truth about Himself as your Father. As you work through this issue, read the Scripture and meditate on them. You might ask yourself, "What does this reveal to me about my Father? How does this aspect of my Father's character affect my life?" Along with the Scripture, I've included a short description of each picture and suggestions on how to implement the truth about your Father into your prayer life.

## Abba, Father

(Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6)

The word "Abba" is a term of intimacy. The modern English equivalent corresponds to something like "daddy" or "dad." Your Father loves you and wants to have an intimate relationship with Him. He wants more than for you just to know about Him. He wants you to have a genuine, personal relationship with Him. He sent His Son to die for you so that you could have a right relationship with Him (**2 Corinthians 5:18**). He has sent the Holy Spirit to live in you and to enable you to cry out to Him as your Father (**Galatians 4:6**). He has given you His Word to teach you about Him and how to know and seek Him. Your Father wants you; He wants a loving, authentic relationship with you. The God of the universe is your Father; He desires for you to seek Him and know Him.

**Prayer Pointers:** Call on God to help you grow in your understanding of Him and your relationship to Him. Pray that He will remove anything that might hinder you from knowing and seeking Him as your Father.

## Architect

(Hebrews 11:10)

Your Father not only wants a relationship with you now; He desires to have one for all eternity

with you. He has designed heaven for you. Your Father is the Architect of your heavenly home. Your Father has prepared an earthly and a heavenly home and existence for you. You have a heavenly home waiting for you when you leave this world. You have an eternal hope and home; your Father designed this for you.

**Prayer Pointers:** Rejoice in your eternal hope and home in heaven. Thank God for having mercy on you, saving you, and designing a heavenly home for you. Ask God to prepare you for that heavenly home. Plead with Him to deliver you from the worldliness that blinds you from contemplating and longing for your heavenly hope and home.

## Creator

(Deuteronomy 32:6, Matthew 19:4; Romans 1:25)

Your Father is the Creator of all things. He is the Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. Creation testifies to the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. Only a wise God could have created such a beautiful and diverse creation. Only a powerful God could have brought all things into being. Only a good God could have made such an amazing world. Creation reveals that Your Father is wise, powerful, and good.

**Prayer Pointers:** Adore God for His creation. Exalt Him for His wisdom, power, and goodness that brought such a glorious creation into being. What do you need God to create in your life – a new attitude, a new opportunity, a new way of escape from temptation? Your Father is wise, powerful, and good. He will exercise these characteristics on your behalf!

## Dew

(Hosea 14:5)

In this text, God refers to Himself as "dew." Dew is especially precious in the summer. It renews and refreshes. It will give vitality and strength in hot and dry times. Your Father is like dew to you. He can renew your faith when you are hard pressed. He can refresh your

commitment to Him. When you go through dry, hard times in your walk with Him, He can grant you fresh strength and renewed vitality. Your Father will sustain your faith in all the difficulties of your life.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Do you feel like your faith is wilting? Do you feel as if your commitment to Him is weakening under the strain of your life? You Father can renew and refresh your faith. He can sustain you and encourage you. Call on Him now to act like dew – to renew your faith during this difficult and dry time in your life.*

### **Ever-present Help (Psalm 46:1)**

Your Father is your ever-present help. He's not just your "Help," but also your "ever-present Help." Your Father is always present. He's not just present, but involved. He's always watching and ready to help you. You never go for a second without His watchful eye on you; you are only one cry away from His help. Your Father longs to help you in all the circumstances of your life. You can call on Him to help you anywhere, at anytime, and for any reason. This should drive fear from our hearts. After referring to God as the ever-present Help, the psalmist writes, "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; Selah" (**Psalm 46:2-3**). This is the confidence that you can have when your Father is your ever-present Help.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Rejoice and rest in the fact that God is your ever-present Helper. Ask Him to teach you to turn to Him daily for help in all the circumstances of your life.*

### **The Father Of Mercies And God Of All Comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)**

Your Father is full of compassion and comfort for His children. He has compassion for the

sins and failures of His children. He has comfort for the wounds and afflictions of His children. Whether we sin or suffer, we have a Father who will receive us, minister to us, and change us. God is the Source of all compassion and comfort. No matter how many times you come to confess sin, He will be merciful. No matter how much you hurt and have called on Him, He always stands ready to comfort you. There is no end to His compassion and comfort for you. Your Father's compassion and comfort is like a river that doesn't have any banks or any bottom.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Adore your Father for His mercy and His comfort. Praise Him for His willingness to forgive and to heal and encourage you. Pray that He will make you make you like Him. After preaching one Sunday morning, a man walked up to me and said, "When you took your glasses off this morning, you looked just like your father at that age." I am my father's son; I bear his resemblance. As children of our Father, we need to bear His resemblance. Pray that you will have compassion for the sins and failures of others and comfort for their sufferings.*

### **The Father Of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:6; Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3)**

God is the Creator of all people. He relates to all people as their Creator. Yet, He is a Father only to those who believe in Jesus Christ. The only way that a person can come to know God as his/her Father is through faith in Jesus Christ, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (**Galatians 3:26**). Jesus Christ is the way to knowing and trusting in God as Father, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (**John 14:6**). Apart from faith in Jesus Christ, a person cannot know God as his/her personal Father. The path to the Father is through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father sent the Son to reveal Himself and to bring people to Himself.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Pray that the people in your area will come to Christ in faith and will know God as their heavenly Father. Plead that people will not be deceived about the way of salvation. Ask Him to demolish any ideas that one can know God personally apart from genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Call on God to draw people to Jesus and to a relationship with Himself.*

## **Father Of The Heavenly Lights** (James 1:17)

In **James 1:17**, God refers to Himself as the "Father of lights." In this text, God contrasts Himself with the heavenly lights – the stars and the moon. These heavenly lights change. We see shooting stars. We see the different phases of the moon. These lights don't stay the same. Yet, God does stay the same. God, the Creator of these lights, is not like them. They change and vary. He does not. He eternally stays the same. There is no change or variation in God. As He has been, He is now, and He always will be. In a world where everything changes, you can count on your Father to stay the same. His character, His Word, and His promises won't change; they stay the same.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Thank God for His unchanging faithfulness. Ask Him to create within you a deeper trust. Pray that You will depend on and rest in your unchanging Father. Plead that you will be like your Father – that unchanging faithfulness will characterize your life.*

## **Gardner** (John 15:1)

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that our Father is a Gardner. God saved you for the purpose of bearing fruit. He has planted you in Christ and given you the Holy Spirit that you might bear fruit for His glory, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples" (**John 15:8**). A necessary part of gardening is pruning. Those things that hinder growth have to be cut away.

The same is true in your relationship to your Father, the Gardner. He will have to prune you; He will have to cut away those things from your life that will hinder fruitfulness. It may be painful but it is worth it. The benefit of bearing much fruit is worth the cost of your Father's pruning.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Thank God for the opportunity to glorify God by bearing fruit for Him. Call on God to prune anything in your life that might hinder your fruitfulness. Pray that He will bring forth "much" fruit from your life.*

## **Great King Above All Gods** (Psalm 95:3)

This refers to the absolute uniqueness of our Father. He is God alone. No one is like Him. Nothing is like Him. No one and nothing can compare to Him. He alone is the true God. All other "gods" are the work of man's mind and hands. God reigns as King over all peoples and things, including the false gods devised by man.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Recommit yourself to the worship of the true and only God. Confess His uniqueness in prayer. Pray that all the idols of your heart will be torn down and that you will love and pursue the only true God above all else.*

## **Great King Over All The Earth** (Psalm 47:2)

This text reminds us that our Father reigns over the earth. The rulers of the earth have a King greater than them – the true and living God. God controls the affairs of nations – their rise and their fall. He directs this world according to His own purpose. He will not fail in accomplishing His purpose for this world, even working in and through those who do not believe in Him.

**Prayer Pointers:** *Rejoice that your Father is the great King over all the earth. Praise Him with all your being as the true Ruler of this world. Confess your conviction concerning this truth. Plead today that God will send His*