

# “Prayer to God, Your Sovereign Father”

## // Matthew 6:5–10 // START #3

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I was **1 of over 2000** Summit members who served our community the last two days as part of our ServeRDU projects. I want to thank those of you who participated in that.

Last weekend 168 decided to publicly declare their faith through baptism. That **never gets old** to me, and hopefully doesn't to you, either. Of course, we **don't only baptize** once a year; you can go to our STARTING POINT any time—it cycles monthly—and get baptized.

We're on week 3 of START, a **6-six week** series on the six most essential things you need to master to thrive in the Christian life.

- **Week 1: Assurance of salvation.**
- **Week 2: Knowing how to read the Bible.**
- **Week 3 is on prayer:** *What is prayer supposed to look like and why do you have such a hard time doing it?* (to cut right to the chase).

A lot of you liked **BAD COP/good cop** pastor from last week. I'm going to bring him back this week. (Trying to get program guys to shine a light on you for this section...)

- **Bad Cop: For most of you, your prayer lives are pathetic.** I shared with you earlier this year that (DA Carson said) if you really want to embarrass the average Christian, just ask her to tell you about her private prayer life. You can answer pretty well...**awkward shuffling.**<sup>1</sup>
  - And that's a burden to me because I'm going to show you today that according to Jesus you can measure a person's relationship to God **by how much they love to pray** (not

by **how much** they do it; or *how eloquently* they do it, but by how much they love to do it when no one is around.

- **GOOD cop:** Many of you struggle to pray because you just have a hard time **making your** prayer times meaningful.
  - You imagine prayer to be some sweet, **mystical communion** with God where you get swept up in his arms and **visions of rapture now burst** on your sight...
  - But you close your eyes and start to pray and then there's this **time warp...** 20 minutes later you come to and realize that you're thinking about the new **Blacklist episode** you watched last night... and you're not even sure the **stream of consciousness** that led you there...
  - You were **praying for your kids** which reminded you that you needed to **work out a ride** home from soccer practice for them which reminded you of how **you know your kid has been hiding** from you the fact he's not doing well in school which reminds you of what a good detective you think you would have been which **reminded you of Blacklist...** and so for the last 15 minutes you've been thinking about what happened last week on the show. SUFFICE it... not the **sweet hour of prayer you expected**
  - Others of you, if you were honest, would admit that you're just **not totally sure whether prayer actually works.** Because sometimes you pray, and things happen; but sometimes you pray, and they don't; and sometimes you forget to pray and the thing you should have prayed for ends up happening anyway.

I have a real burden about this for two reasons: 1. Like I said, **according to Jesus**, how much you love to pray is an indication of how much you actually *know* God and 2. **According to the Bible, all the blessings** that God bestows he does so through prayer.

- Prayer is **the conduit (not 'a,' but 'the')** by which God's power comes into your life; your family; the wire that connects you to the electricity of God's power. To cut yourself off from prayer is to cut yourself off from power.

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, *Call for Spiritual Reformation*, 16–17

- There are **667 recorded prayers** in the Bible and 454 direct mentions of answers to those prayers.
- Every good thing God pours into you does so through prayer.
- I love this quote: **“The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from prayer. Our enemy fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. Prayer turns ordinary mortals into men of power. Prayer brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God. There is no power like that of prevailing prayer.”** Samuel Chadwick, *The Path of Prayer*

We’re going to look at the model prayer Jesus gave, **MATTHEW 6**

- **There are so many things** in this prayer we could talk about; but we are going to **look only at the first two phrases, for in them Jesus introduced two qualities** of God that serve as the foundation of prayer. If you **ever got these**, prayer would become to you as natural to you as breathing.
- I wouldn’t have to compel you to pray; if you understood these, I couldn’t keep you from praying.

But first, Jesus sets this up explaining to us the *wrong* way to pray, which is going to be how most people pray when they do pray.<sup>2</sup>

**Bad cop Jesus:** <sup>6:5</sup> **“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”**

- Jesus is describing a person who prays a lot because he has figured out that is a way he can gain respect from others.
- He’s using God to gain respect.

<sup>6</sup> **But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will**

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<sup>2</sup> I owe some of the thinking in this section to Tim Keller from his sermon on this passage.

**reward you.** Reward you with what? What is there in secret? The father is! He is his own reward.

- **The main reward of prayer, Jesus says,** is to know God. **God is his own reward,** and the person **who understands** that prays a lot in secret because he loves to know God.
- **Specifically, here, Jesus talks about those who use God to get respect from others, but** I think you can expand Jesus’ reasoning to include anyone who looks at God primarily as a means to anything else: a good life; a husband; a stable career; to avoid hell.
- **All good things,** but you don’t really love God, you love only those things, and *God is a just a means to those things*.
- **Question: Do you find God PRIMARILY useful or beautiful? Useful means** he is a way to get blessing; to have a good family; to avoid hell.
- **Or is he beautiful? Beautiful means** that you spend time with him just for the pleasure of knowing him.
  - **You get the difference, right? Say you have a business partner who you don’t really like...** but you make a lot of money together... so when you talk to him, conversations are all business.
  - **Compare that to when you have a lover** you’re just infatuated with—you get together w/ no agenda, you just love being together.
    - **I dated a girl in high school...** I used to have come up with a list of things to talk about... handwriting was on the wall for that relationship.
    - **I contrast that w/ Veronica,** and we’d get together and talk about nothing until 3 a.m. “What do you want to talk about next?” (Snort) I don’t care, I just like to hear the sound of your voice; I love the way your nostrils flair when you talk...” **When you love someone, you love being in their presence...**
- **Jesus says the way to know how beautiful you find God is by how much you pray in secret.**

- *In secret*: A lot of people love to pray when others are around for all kinds of reasons. How much you like to do it when no one is around that shows you how much of a reward God himself is to you... **Whether he is a means to something else or he's beautiful in and of himself to you**
- Want an **illustration of this** in my life? (Have I ever told you that I start to get really sensitive about confessing my sin around Saturday night... start confessing my sin, getting stuff right with my wife—not to know God, but because I want him to bless the sermon). My wife says calls it my PMS stage (pre-message syndrome)
- **What is your prayer life like in secret?**

<sup>7</sup> “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their *many words*.<sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

He's talking about people who think God is going to hear them because they **pray long enough**, or **shout loud enough**, or because they say **some phrase** God really likes to hear enough...

- The word Jesus uses literally means “babbling...” (**battalogo**). You're **intense**; you're **sweating and screaming, stomping** your feet, you keep **repeating** yourself; and you think because of that, God hears you.
- Most religions seem to teach some version of this... if you'll repeat enough **Hail Mary's**; verses from the **Koran**; chants from the **Bhagavad Gita**; if you'll **yell loud enough** at God saying, “Yes Lord; Yes, Lord” enough... God will hear you.
- When you think about it, it's actually kind of **dumb**... Of all the things that **might win God's approval**, just repeating ourselves over and over is what he wants? 4 kids, they all go through this stage where they think the key to getting what they want is to ask over and over. My 4 year old son: “Dad, I want some chicken nuggets... **chicken nuggets**, chicken nuggets (x5)” Stop it! You sound like a train.” That doesn't make me more disposed to you;

it annoys me. **Does repeating phrases somehow loosen God up to make him like us?**

- But the **real problem**, Jesus says, is that the **assumption (among the Gentiles) seems to be** that God is naturally hostile toward you, and that these techniques in prayer make him feel more disposed to you.
  - But Jesus' =**gospel is not** that you finally become a good enough person that God approves of you... **gospel is that Christ gives you righteousness as a gift** and you are accepted on his behalf; on his merits.

Look at what Jesus says, vs 8: Your *father* knows what you need...<sup>9</sup> Pray **then** like this: “Our Father in heaven... (and that's #1, the **Fatherhood of God**)

- He's pointing to the closest relationship possible with God. Word he uses in Aramaic means “daddy.”
  - **I think about my own children**: They don't have to change my heart toward them; to earn my affection. They have it. Even when they've failed.
  - You say, “**What about our sin**—the places God is displeased with us?” **The gospel is** that God has adopted us into his family on the basis of the finished work of Christ. **I've been given Christ's status in the family**. When enter the throne room I hear, “You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” Because 2 Cor 5:20–21. In him, I could not be more accepted!
- **The most astounding and unique of all Christian revelation was the revelation of God as Father. Other religions** presented God as the Creator, the great ruler.
  - The **Babylonian god Marduk** was typical of pagan gods: pictures show him as the ultimate King; the creation account... says he created the world to have slaves.
  - **Aristotle** called God the great uncaused cause: primarily a Creator
  - **Islam** sees him as the Almighty.

- But **from the very beginning**, God revealed himself to Israel as a **Father**.
- To my kids: if you have to **choose one word** to describe God, what would it be? Awesome. Glorious. *What would it be for you?* ONE WORD (POLICEMAN; CREATOR; GLORIOUS; JUDGE). “No, according to Jesus, it’s *Father*.”
- You see, **let me take you deep for a minute**: God, for all of eternity, has been a Father.
  - He hasn’t always been a Creator; creation is not eternal; he become a Creator when he created. Same with judge.
  - But from all eternity he has been a Father, because from eternity he has existed as Father, Son, and HS.
    - There was **never a time when there was not** a Son of God; which means God is, in his very being, a father.
  - **From eternity he has always been life-giving, outgoing, sustaining, in his very being, for in his being he is Father, Son and HS.**<sup>3</sup>
- **That’s why the Apostle John** says, **“God is love” (1 John 4:8)**. Not, “God loves now that he has a creation” but in his very being **he is love**.
  - *He’s always existed in love*—because **in his very being he exists** as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the nature of God is always going out in love toward the other members of the Trinity.
- Well, **God created us to share** in that love. He created us as a father to love us as children. **But we sinned** and made ourselves his enemies. So **he bought us back**, so we could again relate to him as children do to a father.
- **Talk about something that will revolutionize** how you see God! He’s not a divine policeman, like some of you think of him. He’s a father.
  - **Policeman**: when you come to him, he has the tapes from the traffic cam. You negotiate with him; get him to reduce your sentence.
  - **If a cop lets me off** for a violation, I can appreciate it; but I can never love the policeman as a child loves their father.
  - The **way you parents feel** about your children is supposed to resemble, however faintly, the way God feels to, and relates to, us.
- **J. I. Packer**: “If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means he does not understand Christianity very well at all.”<sup>4</sup> (Again, *HOW DO YOU SEE GOD?*)

(Incidentally, but not surprisingly, bad father experiences are one of the primary things that keep people from faith in God.

- Freud famously said, “Nothing destroys someone’s faith in God like a bad relationship with their dad.” And he would know; he had a terrible relationship with his dad.
- I read a book that pointed out that most of the great atheists of the past century, Freud; Huxley; Voltaire; Hume; all had bad relationships with their fathers.<sup>5</sup> This book concluded that someone’s view of their father is often the weightiest factor in the development of their faith.
  - Give you one example: The postmodern philosopher, **Michel (mee-shell) Foucault**—the majority of his life’s work was on the evils of authority, and it all seems to go back to his first bad experience with authority—his father. **Foucault Sr. was a really tough** man: an accomplished, very successful man—one of France’s top surgeons. Michael was more a timid, you might even say, “soft,”

<sup>4</sup> J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 224. See also Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*, 75–76.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Vitz in *Life, God and Other Small Topics*, Ed. Eric Metaxas

<sup>3</sup> Reeves, 24.

artistic. So Foucault Sr. was constantly berating his son about the need to toughen up; (probably shouldn't have named his "Michell!"). Humiliating him. Even forcing him to watch, as an 8 year old, as he did amputations. He was **sadistic**; he frequently humiliated his son. For Foucault, "father" was not about love and protective care; it was associated with a whole host of dark images. Grew up disbelieving.

- **Your view of your father is often the weightiest factor** in the development of your faith... because **we were created** for a heavenly Father, and our earthly fathers were supposed to be a model for us that taught us about him.
  - **When our relationship with your earthly father** goes bad, and your father rules you more like the devil does—abusively and selfishly; or abandons you—that makes it difficult for you even to believe in God. **You think you hate God**, but what you actually hate is the devil, which you've mistaken the devil for God because of your dad.

When Jesus taught us to pray, he taught us to pray, "Daddy." Wouldn't that change how you pray? We come not a tyrant to appease, or a policeman to negotiate with, but to a Father who cherishes us, who feels our every pain deeper than we even feel it ourselves.

Let me take you to a place where God talks about his fatherly relationship to his children. Isaiah 43. I love this passage:

[43:1] But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

[2] When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

- **When you go through the worst things** on earth, I go right beside you through those things; feeling with you everything that you go through.
- **Isn't that what a father does?** When **my kids are in pain** I hurt.
  - Jesus by tomb of Lazarus: He weeps. I ALWAYS THOUGHT: "What is he doing?" He knows that in a few minutes he's going to resurrect Lazarus. Why is he weeping? He is doing what any father would do. He weeps with his child because he hurts when they hurt.
  - **Would that change how you see life now...** if in your hour of pain and tears, if you knew God **stood beside you**, weeping with you, feeling that pain just like you feel it?

Isaiah goes on: [3] For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel your Savior... [4] Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

- Ransom. "**I give men in return for you...**" When a team wants a player, you're willing give up other players for that one. I've heard of **coaches willing to trade their whole starting lineup** for one player! How valuable must that player be?
- **What did God give up for you?** Torture; Beating. **For you**. How valuable must you be to him? He says, "Because you are **precious...**" You can tell how precious something is by what you'll give up to possess it. MY KIDS.
  - No wonder... 1 John 3:1, "*Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called...*"

Not to be sacrilegious (and I debated using this), but I think here of **Liam Neeson: Taken** (plot: people kidnap Liam's daughter; this is the plot for Taken 1, 2 and 3). On the phone he says (and I practiced my Liam Neeson accent all week... but nope. Not doing it in that accent.) "*I don't know who you are. I don't know what you want. If you are looking for ransom, I can tell you I don't have money. But what I do have is a very particular set of skills, skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you. If*



you let my daughter go now, that'll be the end of it. I will not look for you; I will not pursue you. But if you don't, I will look for you, I will find you, and I will kill you." **Liam Neeson**

- When I saw that scene in the movie theatre, I thought of God and started to worship! *That's my dad!* I then said to everyone, not really my dad, but my God. Not Liam my God, but it reminds me of God.
- God said, "I'll go to the ends of the earth to get you back!"

[5] Fear not, for I am with you... [6] I will... bring my sons from afar and (I'll go get my daughters from the ends of the earth!) my daughters from the end of the earth...

This is the God you pray to. "My father." I call him Creator, because he is. Ruler, Judge, Glorious, Holy, Savior. But nothing thrills my heart as when I call him, "Daddy."

And when you really understand that, you'll begin to pray, in secret—because you trust him and want to be near him. You couldn't imagine where else to take your pain, or carry your needs.

You'll start to say with the hymn writer:

- "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; what a **privilege** to carry; everything to God in prayer!"
- *Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care, and bids me 'ere my father's throne, make all my wants and wishes known!*

### (The Sovereignty of God)

Jesus points us to a second attribute of God that teaches us to pray: his sovereignty: <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Heaven (God) has a will, and **prayer is asking God to accomplish his will on earth. In prayer, you are supposed to discern what God in heaven wants and ask for it.** (*Want a really short, tight definition on prayer? That's it!*)

Now, a lot of people struggle to pray because they figure, "If God has a will, and he knows everything, and already knows what he'll do... what good is prayer? Is **prayer actually changing anything?**"

And it's true: **God does know everything.** Isaiah:

- "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please." (Isaiah 46:10)
- Think about that: he knows the end from the beginning: nothing surprises him; **his eternal purposes will be accomplished; he will do everything** he has pleased.<sup>6</sup>
- **Numbers 23** "God is not a man that he should change his mind"<sup>7</sup>

### So what good is prayer, you ask? Asking God to do things?

Let me answer this question **with a STORY:** In Ex 32 Moses is pleading with God not to destroy the children of Israel.

- Moses had gone up to get the 10 commandments... he was gone a little longer than expected, so the **people get drunk**, make a gold statue, **danced** around it and all started **having sex** with each other... Moses is like the parent; they are teenagers. Frat party. **Franklin St. in Ex 32.**

[7] And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for *your* (whose?) people whom *you* brought up (who brought them up?) out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves... [10] Let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and I will make of you a great nation."

[11] But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against *your* (argument going on?) people,

<sup>6</sup> "O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago." (Isaiah 25:1); Psalm 139

<sup>7</sup> Num 23:19

whom *you* have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? [12] Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains...?' Turn from your burning anger and relent (many translations say 'repent') from this disaster against your people. [13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

[14] And the LORD relented (again: repented) from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. (Exodus 32:11-14)

**This is one of the hardest passages** to understand. Moses' prayer leads God to "repent?" Did Moses point out something God had forgotten? Had God been having a bad day? Didn't get a good night sleep? Forgotten to do his quiet time that morning? **What about all that** "*I know the end from the beginning*" stuff?

- Well, here is the **irony**: God is the one who told Moses to go down to see this.
  - **In other words, God put Moses in a place** so that he would see the problem, perceive God's anger, remember God's promises, and petition God to change.
- And **the very thing that Moses uses** to "change God's mind" is God's own promise. (*Moses says, "God, this is what you said... you can't go back on it!"*)

My friend David Platt says that it is true that the purposes of God are unchanging; but the plan of God, from our perspective, is unfolding. And we know that God puts us in places to claim his unchanging promises so we can change the destiny of situations. **Because God has hardwired the universe to run on prayer.** David says: "*When we pray we take our God-given place and use our God-ordained privilege to participate with him in the accomplishment of his purposes on the planet.*"

I want you to think long and hard about this: Like Moses, **you and I are sovereignly put into places to claim the promises of God on behalf of others.**

- Like Moses, **he "sends you down"** into a situation to ask. God placed you in that family; that group of friends; to see what is going on, and believe a promise of God for them.
- Isn't that EMPOWERING? **You are where you are by the design of God to call forth the promises of God. God sent you there.**

When we pray, we say, "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" We perceive what heaven wants, like Moses did, and we ask.

And **where do we learn** what heaven wants? God's Word. There are 3000 promises of God in Scripture. That's why I've told you, "**Don't just read your way through Scripture, pray your way through it.**" This is not a textbook to be learned, but a book of promises to be claimed. Read through it on your knees. I want to know all 3000 and not miss a 1!

**The prayers most effective before the throne of God are the ones that start in the Word of God.**

I am **sovereignly placed** by God in my family. And so now I say:

- **Pr. 20:7, The children of the righteous will be blessed after them**  
Be it so in my family
- **2 Peter 3:9:** Be it so in my city.
- **Ps 2:8.** Why a vision to plant 1000 churches: not that we're ambitious. We believe Ps 2:8.
- That's why he put us here. It's why you are where you are—in your family, your workplace, this city.
- Matthew 13:58... *He was there. He wanted to do something. But no one, like Moses, rose up to believe him. LET THAT NOT BE TRUE...*

Don't dwell too long on the sovereignty of God—blow your mind. Think on the promises of God. **How I think about it...** EATING: Does

God know the day you'll die? Has he appointed it? Then why do you wear a seat belt and not text when you drive? Why do you eat...? What happens if you don't? You'll die. If you don't eat and die... would that be the preordained day God has set for you to die? Quit asking stupid questions and just eat. Eating is the preordained way God has set for living; prayer is the preordained way God has determined to get his will done on earth.<sup>8</sup>

## Campus Teams: Prayer time

### (Conclusion: Practical Steps/Prayer Time)

I've tried to say learning two things about God will make prayer natural and instinctive you... **his fatherhood**—when you get that, it makes him the place that you want to go when you have hurts or needs; *prayer becomes less a duty you have to do, but a privilege you get to do!*; and **his sovereignty** whereby we perceive he has placed us in particular places to call out his promises and believe him on behalf of someone else.

So now, here, at the very end, let me give you some **practical steps** for building prayer into your life.

- If you were here last week I talked about how essential a personal time with God is every day. I gave you 15-15-15.
- This is the plan for your 15 minutes of prayer:

A: Why not start by adoring God in his **fatherhood** and **sovereignty**?

C: Think back over the previous day: What does the Holy Spirit bring to mind?

T: 3 things a day

S: Use a list. My mind wanders. The Blacklist scenario may or may not be about one of my prayer times this past week.

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<sup>8</sup> Moses doesn't dwell on the unchangeable plans of God as much he does the unchanging promises of God.



## Bullpen:

We need to become a people who pray. We need to get desperate. **David Platt:** *The greatest barrier to the spread of the gospel may not be the self-indulgent immorality of our culture, but the self-sufficient mentality in the church...evident in our prayerlessness.*

And, Andrew Murray: *'The man who mobilizes the Christian church to pray will make the greatest contribution to world evangelization in history.'*

Prayer is how God moves in our families; it's how God moves in our community; it's how God moves in our world!

- Revelation 8 says that our prayers are being stored as in great bowls at the throne of God and that one day soon will usher in the climax of all history in the consummation of God's kingdom.
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- Do you know the difference? **Say you have a business partner who you don't really like...** but you make a lot of money together... so when you talk to them, conversations are all business. Compare that to when you have a lover you're just infatuated with—no agenda, you just love being together. **I dated a girl in high school...** I used to have come up with a list of things to talk about... handwriting was on the wall for that relationship. Compare that to Veronica, and we'd get together and talk about nothing until 3 a.m. "What do you want to talk about next?... (snort) I don't care, I just like to hear the sound of your voice and I like the way your nose flairs when you talk..." When you love someone, you love being in their presence...
- And only when you see that he is rules his creation as a kind and loving Father will you begin to delight in his providence. (23)

God's revelation of himself was different: not primarily a Creator, or ruler, but a Father

- "It's not that he has a nice blob of fatherly icing on top. He is a Father, all the way down. He creates as a Father, rules as a Father."
- "It is only when we see that God rules his creation as a kind and loving Father that we will be moved to delight in his providence." (23)
- "A father is a person who gives life, who begets children. Now, that insight is like a stick of dynamite in all our thoughts about God. For, if before all things, God was eternally a Father, then this God is an inherently outgoing, life-giving God. He did not give life the first time he decided to create; from eternity he has been life-giving." (24) (1 John 4:8)
- (23) Center of Trinity is a Father.
- Vs. Marduk, who had slaves (39)

Many people have bad view of God coming from bad father

- Foucault, 25: Earthly father is supposed to reflect God; some end up reflecting the devil
- Screwtape Letters: Demon: we want cattle that becomes food; he wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in; he wants to give out. We are empty and would be filled; he is full and flows over." (45)

John 17

- The love God has for the son he has given to me (John 17:23). He is well pleased with me! (75)
- We get welcomed back not as creatures, but children. It's more than forgiveness. Certainly more secure. Children do not get disowned for being naughty. We are not in some "he loves me; he loves me not" relationship with God (76).
- 1 John 3:1: that we should be called children!

“If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means he does not understand Christianity very well at all.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 224. See also Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*, 75–76.