

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtmwebsite.org

Having God As Your Father

by Dan Trygg

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action, being-sober, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, ¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶ because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ ¹⁷ If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

I Peter 1:13-19

“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.”

Hebrews 12:9,10

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

Romans 8:15-17

Have you ever really thought much about what it means to be God's child? That is what the Bible clearly says that God has done for us. Not only did He save us from our sin, but He actually has made us His own children. He caused us to be born from above, by His Spirit, so that the apostle John says that we are “begotten” or “born” of God (I Jn. 3:9; Jn. 1:12; 3:1-8). **We are now, in actuality, the spiritual offspring of God** (I Jn. 3:1,2), **full members of His household, and heirs according to His promise** (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 3:29; Eph. 3:6). In fact, we are His children *twice over*, because not only are we His spiritual offspring, but He Himself has chosen *to adopt us* as His own (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:3-7). The Romans had a custom where a man might have a number of offspring, but in time he would *choose* and *legally adopt* those whom he *wanted* to be recognized as his sons and heirs. God used the backdrop of this familiar word picture to help us to understand that **we are more than God's offspring, ...we are His chosen ones, hand-picked** out of all those who might claim Him as their biological parent (Creator), **...chosen to be loved, valued, trained and prepared to be owners and rulers of His estate.** *There are no unwanted children among those who are Christians.* God has *called you by name*, chosen you, and *adopted you* to be His, and to bring glory to His name (Isa. 43:1-7; Jn. 15:16; I Pet. 1:1,2; 2:9,10; Eph. 2:10). Many of us never experienced such love, affirmation and sense of importance. It is hard for us to believe that God Himself, the Creator, the King of the Universe would have more interest in us, and see more in us, than our own family members did, but that is what the Scriptures declare. “What are people that you are mindful of *them*, or the son or daughters of men that you care for *them*?” (cf. Ps. 8:4)

If we can begin to wrap our minds around that notion, ...that we are truly God's children, co-heirs with Christ, ones being called to reign and rule with Him..., then we can begin to appreciate that we have some growing to do. Having God as our Father means that **we are children in training to become mature in character and equipped for the work we are destined to do.** If you look at all three of the passages at the beginning of this study, you will see that each one describes some *end point* or *goal for growth* which God intends for us to attain. The first two passages call us to holiness, while the third passage speaks of sharing God's glory. Note, too, that **this does not come easily. It will require preparation, vigilance and persevering-obedience to God** against the patterns of the old life.

Holiness does not come easily. It comes at a price. You can't be holy, and still live the way you formerly lived, ... according to your own inclinations, preferences or fleshly desires. Neither can you walk in holiness if you are seeking to fit in with worldly companions. It won't work (I Cor. 15:33). By definition, **holiness means “separation”.** It means **“to set apart from what is common and every day, in order to dedicate for a special purpose”.** Holiness to God means you are *to be devoted and consecrated to serve His will* and purposes, not *your own*. **You cannot be separated for God, unless you are separated from your former manner of life.** You cannot honestly be dedicated to serve God, unless you dismiss those things that interfere with that service. You cannot be consecrated to follow God and still indiscriminately pursue the activities, relationships and entertainments of the world system. **Holiness requires the exclusion of certain unclean or unprofitable things, in order to secure the level of commitment and conformity to God's will that He requires.** In order to walk in the power of our new life in Christ, we must put off the old identity and pattern of living (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-17). If we want to walk in the power of the Spirit, we must not give power to the

lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16,17). We must discipline our bodies and bring the appetites of the flesh under our control, or they will ruin us and keep us from fulfilling God's will (I Cor. 6:12-20; 9:24-27).

It is important to see that **God has *already* set us apart for Himself** (I Cor. 1:2; 6:11). Through the offering of the body of Jesus, applied to us by faith, *we have been sanctified or set apart for God* once and for all (Heb. 10:10). When we were born from the *Holy Spirit*, we became part of God's family. We were *set apart from* our past identity and became purchased *for* God. We were sealed by the Holy Spirit as a *mark of God's ownership*, and a *promise that He will come* to fulfill His promise of salvation to us (II Cor 1:22; Eph. 1:13). **In God's eyes, we *are* "saints", ones set apart unto Him. Consequently, He expects us to bring our lives into agreement with our new identity and purpose.** The new birth, new identity and new empowerment He has worked in us *makes holiness possible*.

Because He Himself *is holy*, and because He has made holiness a possibility for us, He will hold us accountable for our actions. This is the thought underlying Peter's warning, **"If you are going to call the impartial judge of all the earth your Father, ...if you are going to be on familiar terms with Him..., then you better take your walk seriously."** This is a sound warning. In I Corinthians 11, God struck some believers with sickness, and some had even died, because they were abusing the Lord's supper (vss. 28-30). The writer of the book of Hebrews put it very bluntly, **"For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,"²⁷ but a terrifying expectation of judgment** and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ How much severer punishment do you think a person will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he or she was sanctified, and *has insulted the Spirit of grace?*³⁰ For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay'. And again, **"The Lord will judge His people"** (Heb. 10:26-30). **God is opposed to those who are proud and who defiantly continue in sin, especially if they are leading others astray** (II Cor. 11:14,15; II Pet. 2:9-22). His grace was purchased for us at an incredible personal cost to Him. Those who honor Him and His grace will be honored, but *those who disregard, minimize or mock Him, or the salvation He has purchased* will lose their protection from the schemes of the devil. Their continued disobedience *will bring even the wrath of God upon them*. **Usually the judgment of God follows repeated warnings, although a defiant act may be swiftly dealt with.** We have only to read of the history of Israel to know that God is a righteous judge who will enforce justice upon His people (Lev. 26:14f.; Deut. 28:15f.; II Chron. 7:11-22; I Pet. 4:12-19).

Our Father in heaven does not want to judge us. If we judge ourselves rightly, He will not *have to* judge us (I Cor. 11:31,32). He would not be *righteous*, however, if He allowed us to continue in sin without a consequence. As I mentioned above, God has set us apart to be prepared and trained for significant responsibilities, both here in this world and also in eternity. **His desire is to instruct and train us, not to punish us or judge us.** Before we ever get to the wrath and judgment stage with God, He is actively at work attempting to instruct and train us through various means. **He will try to warn us, but if we persist we will experience the rod of discipline.** Sometimes it is a direct consequence for our actions. At other times, God will simply remove His blessings to get our attention. His motive, however, is to *restore us and help us grow in godliness*. Hebrews 12:1-13 is a classic passage dealing with God's discipline. From this passage, we learn that **God will discipline every one of His children**. In fact, it is a sign that we are His. **God will discipline those whom He loves. The word for discipline refers to "training that is intended to develop character and wisdom"**. It employs not only teaching, but also reproof, correction, and the use of consequences and life lessons. The motive is *love*, not wrath. **The end result of discipline, if we respond to it and learn from it, will be holiness of character and the "peaceful fruit of righteousness"**. Our capacity for godliness will be increased. *Godly character allows God to trust us with greater blessings and responsibilities*. If we remain immature, however, what He entrusts to us will also be limited. Note that when we *resist* God's discipline, He will *increase the pressure* (vs. 13). Our response is critical. If we cooperate with God, then the discipline will not have to increase.

Finally, what God really wants with us is a special relationship of intimacy, agreement and cooperation. He has given us His Spirit to remind us that He is "Daddy", not just the disciplinarian or the judge. He invites us to come to Him, to find our rest, comfort and protection in Him. If Jesus modeled anything, it was that God was *tender and compassionate, a friend to sinners and those who have been beaten up by life*, ...even those who have brought pain and trouble upon themselves. He wants to be the Daddy to whom we can pour out our tears and our troubles. **He is only the stern disciplinarian when we are resisting Him. When we are ready to cooperate, He is our greatest comforter, coach, cheerleader and friend.** Like the prodigal's father, He *runs* to embrace us when we return to Him. We are delightful to Him, and He wants to fill us with joy and blessing. **He wants us to shine, in all our God-given ability and strength** (Matt. 5:14-16). It is in the fullness of our maturity that it can be seen who we really are. **When we fulfill our destiny and calling, we reveal the wonder and artistry of His skill as Creator, Redeemer and Parent.**