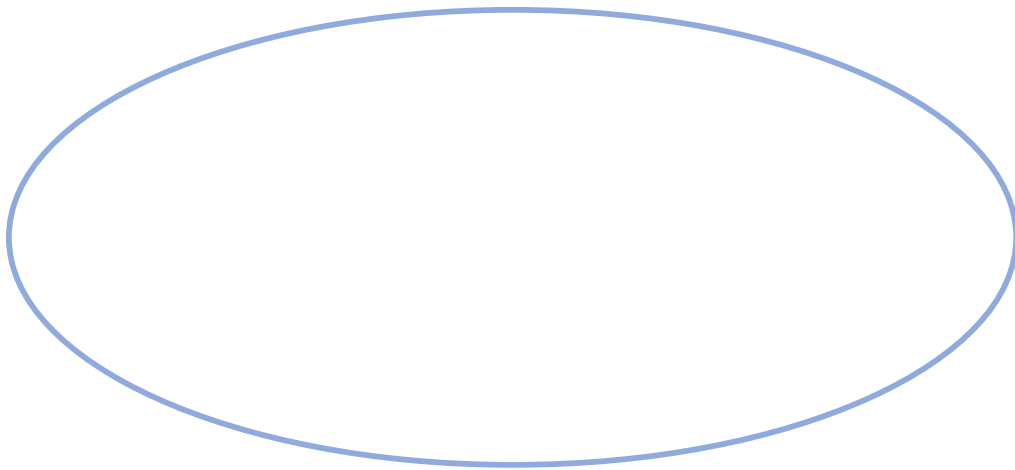


Called to Community : Lesson 5 Homework

Day 1: Scripture Study – God our Father

For many of us, the concept of God being our Father is not a new one. God being our Father is a traditional phrase that is laced throughout the Bible and fully embraced through the centuries by the church. Even the phrase, “children of God” is one that we are extremely familiar with. However, for some of us, this is not necessarily a comforting thought. For others, it is something we can easily embrace. Much of this has to do with how we related to our earthly fathers and what they were like. Take some time to fill the oval below with characteristics of your earthly father. Add any word that comes to mind that describes your relationship with him.



For some of you the oval above is filled with a happy description of a loving father. But some of you have described a painful personality or a painful relationship. Regardless of what your earthly father was like, our heavenly Father is far superior.

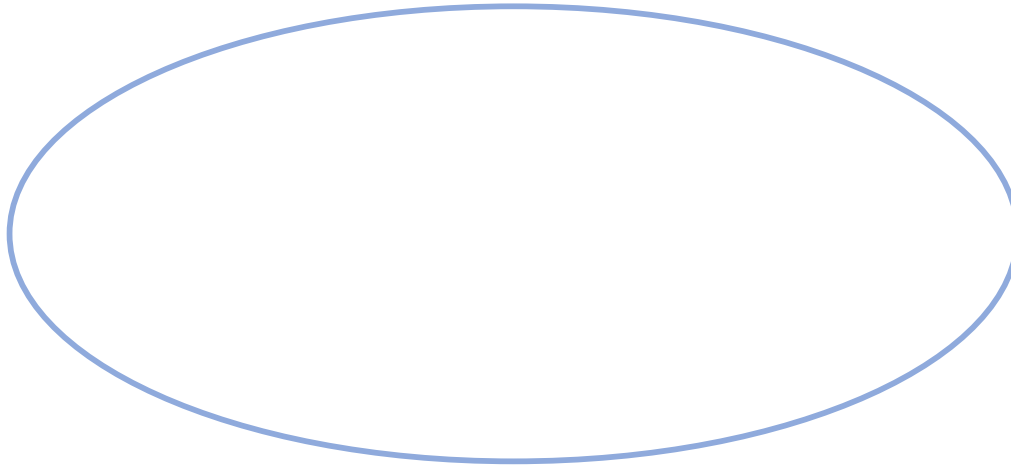
Putting aside our preconceived ideas of what God the Father is like, let's explore some Scripture. Remember, this is His book! Whatever is revealed in it is what He wants us to know about Him! The Bible is His chosen, intentional revelation to us. If we can mine it in order to discover who He is, we can begin metabolizing this into our very DNA.

Read the following verses. Look for one word or a phrase that describes how the Bible describes God, our father. Then fill the second oval with what you learned about your heavenly father.

Isaiah 40:28
Numbers 23:19
Psalm 68:19-20

Ephesians 3:14-19
Psalm 116:5
2 Samuel 22:32-35

Romans 5:6-8
Psalm 28:7-9



Day 2: Scripture Reading

Read Matthew 5-7 using our color coding system. This is a long passage but it will be worth slowing down and spending time to study it. This section of Scripture is referred to as The Sermon on the Mount. In it, Jesus lays out His message, ministry and mission while He is on the Earth. He also talks a lot about His Father and what He is like. Remember, this is the voice of Jesus, God's son (our brother) describing our Father! Keep this in mind as you read. Focus on how God the Father is described (blue) and what the Holy Spirit is asking you to pray through or pursue personally (pink). Before you begin, ask God to teach you and transform you through the reading of His word.

Blue: What is God (the Father) like? How does He work? What is His character?

Pink: What is worthy of prayer and pursuit in your own life?

Day 3: Silence

Recently, we were with friends playing a game and each of us had to come up with something in the category of "things that are harder than they look." For some of us, this next discipline would fit in that category. Silence is a practice that seems to be becoming more and more difficult for all of us as we are bombarded with the digital age. However, in light of this, perhaps it is becoming more and more important. The great Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard says the following about silence.

"If we were allowed to prescribe just one remedy for all the ills of the modern world, I would prescribe silence. For only in silence can one hear the voice of God. Therefore, create silence."

Read back through all of the things that you underlined in blue and pink. When you are finished, enter a time of silence. Ponder inwardly, who God has revealed Himself to be. Remember who you are in light of that. Listen for His voice.

Day 4: Journaling

What a gift it is for each and every one of us to be invited into God's Bet Av. If we could actually internalize how much He loves us, it would change our lives. A friend recently said to me, "I am just beginning to scratch the surface of understanding the love of God." What a profound statement that is. He has redeemed us. He has invited us into His bet av. All of that came at the cost of His most precious resource, His son. Spend some time engaging with this idea by journaling. Use the following prompts:

- For some of us, our experience in the family of God has been a hurtful one. Use your journal to live into that brokenness. Conclude by remembering all you learned about God in today's homework and ask Him to give you the courage to re-engage with His people based on who He is.
- Sometimes we approach God as a consumer. We come into our relationship with Him and the rest of His family asking (either consciously or sub-consciously), "how can I get my needs met here?" Is this you? If so, write a prayer asking God to meet those needs himself. Ask Him to switch your perspective to looking outwards; to looking for the marginalized. Ask Him to give you an opportunity to be city gates and living water to others in order to bring them into Bet Av.
- Is seeing God as your Father difficult for you? Maybe because of the shortcomings of your earthly father or other male figures in your life? Read this beautiful quote by St. Augustine, "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement." Spend some time in your journal talking to God. Ask Him to help you fall in love with Him. Ask Him to give you the stamina to seek His face. Ask Him to re-write your story with Him at the center, as your heavenly father.

Day 5: Prayer

Conclude this week by reading John 14:1-6 and using green from our color coding system (**Green**: What does God promise?).

The great thing about being a part of God's Bet Av is that it is eternal. Jesus, Himself said that He is going to prepare a room in that house so that He can be with us. So that where He is, we can be. That is how much He loves us!

Begin our prayer time by praying Scripture and focusing on God and who he is. Create space to ponder some of the things He might be asking of you. Here are some prompts that may help:

- Thank God for His character (maybe the things you underlined in blue). Thank Him for the ways in which He works in our lives.
- Pray over the things He has revealed to you (the things you underlined in pink). Ask for His help in all He has ordained for you.
- Thank Him for the green in John 14!

Conclude by praying for the requests of your small group or other people you love that God brings to mind.