

## **“ABBA, FATHER”: WHAT IS HE REALLY LIKE?**

All verses are from the New American Standard Bible (NAS) or the Amplified Bible (AMP).

Underlined portion of verses are my emphasis, to draw attention to the point that is being made.  
The following are synonymous with “Abba, Father”: “God”, “God the Father”, and “heavenly Father”  
The words of Jesus are in red.

### **Jesus, The Revealer**

Lesson 4 – April 18, 2012

#### **Review Of Previous Lesson And Purpose Of This Lesson**

In lesson 2, “**Abba**”, I stated that there are two methods by which we come into a more accurate knowledge and understanding of our heavenly Father. So far we’ve focused just on the first method of learning how Jesus saw his heavenly Father. This method will require much more time and effort on our part studying what Jesus said, taught, did, and then allowing those truths to get down into our hearts. In this lesson we will focus on the second method, revelation, which is entirely the work of Jesus, so there isn’t much for us to do except receive what Jesus wants to reveal. However, Jesus did indicate that there are two attitudes that will impact a person’s ability to receive this revelation so that it can transform his or her heart, mind, and life.

#### **Why Did Jesus Come To Earth?**

If you asked, “Why did Jesus come to earth?”, most Christians would probably answer, “To save us from our sins” or “So we can go to heaven”. Those are correct, but they are very incomplete. Let’s explore what Jesus and others had to say about why he left heaven and came to earth:

1. First and foremost Jesus came because his Father sent him – John 5:23-24, 30, & 36-38
2. Why was Jesus sent, or why did Jesus come?
  - a. To do his Father’s will - John 4:34, & 6:38
  - b. To do whatever his Father told or commanded him – John 12:49-50, 14:31,
  - c. To do his Father’s works, which consisted of healings, signs, wonders, miracles, and demonic deliverances – John 10:25, 32, 37-38
  - d. To speak his Father’s words or truth – John 8:26-28, & 38-40
  - e. To declare, make known, or explain his Father’s name or character - John 1:18, & 17:26
  - f. To be indwelt by his Father, who would do His works through Jesus – John 14:10, Acts 2:22
  - g. To finish his Father’s work, which refers to Jesus’ suffering and death as the sin substitute for all mankind – John 4:34, 17:4, & 19:30

The above items are only a partial list of reasons why Jesus came. If you’re interested in finding out more about what the New Testament says about this subject, write asking for the 36 page study that provides all the reasons along with the scripture verses.

By the age of 12 Jesus already understood that his responsibility was to be about his Father’s business (Luke 2:49). The next 18 years he fulfilled that responsibility by living with his parents and submitting to their leadership, while developing physically, relationally, and spiritually with God and people (Luke 2:40, & 50-51). Then at the age of 30 he entered full time ministry after publically committing himself through water baptism. From that point forward Jesus’ purpose was to accomplish all that his heavenly Father’s had sent him to do.

In the above list of reasons why Jesus was sent or came to earth, I purposely left out one item in order to draw special attention to it, since it speaks of Jesus as the revealer of the Father. Here are our key verses:

Matt 11:25-27 NAS (Also see Luke 10:21-22, which is very similar)

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

<sup>26</sup> "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

<sup>27</sup> "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

John 1:18 AMP

18 No man has ever seen God at any time; {the only} {unique Son}, {or} the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known].

The night before Jesus was crucified as he prayed to his heavenly Father, he confidently states that he had accomplished one of the major tasks he had been sent to do as seen in the following verses:

John 17:6 AMP

6 I have manifested Your Name [I have revealed Your very Self, Your real Self] to the people whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have obeyed {and} kept Your word.

John 17:26 AMP

26 I have made Your Name known to them {and} revealed Your character {and} Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them.

#### Questions That We Will Seek To Answer In This Lesson:

1. Who truly knows the Father and therefore can accurately reveal what He is really like?
2. What quality will hinder our receiving the revelation Jesus wants to give to us?
3. What quality will allow us to receive what Jesus wants to reveal to us?
4. Who will Jesus reveal the Father to?
5. What are two purposes of Jesus' revelation of the Father?

#### Who Truly Knows The Father And Therefore Can Accurately Reveal What He Is Really Like? Jesus!

Notice again this portion of Mt 11:27: "... **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son...**" Jesus is making it absolutely clear that he is the only person who intimately knows the Father. This truth is also mentioned in John 1:18, which no human being had ever seen the heavenly Father in all of His fullness; but Jesus had lived and dwelt with the Father from eternity past and therefore had complete and full knowledge of the heavenly Father. (See also John 6:46, 7:28-29, 8:54-55 & 10:15). The knowledge that Jesus is speaking of here is something that no other human being had ever experienced up until this time.

Jesus knew that a few privileged individuals had seen visions of God, even had experiences with Him, but all those were just momentary glimpses, nothing close to really knowing the heavenly Father in all of His fullness. A modern day parallel would be to say that I have seen Billy Graham many times, by images on TV, even read books about him or written by him, and attended his meetings; but, there is no way I can say I have personal knowledge of him. Those individuals that saw images of God or had momentary encounters with Him only received a small fraction of information of what the Father is really like. Therefore Jesus, being the only one with complete intimate and experiential knowledge of the heavenly Father, is able accurately to reveal to us what He is really like.

### **What Quality Will Hinder Our Receiving What Jesus Wants To Reveal To Us? Pride.**

Note what Jesus said in Matt 11:25 (NAS), **“I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from {the} wise and intelligent...”**. As Jesus begins his prayer, he acknowledges the absolute sovereignty of his heavenly Father as Lord over all things in heaven and on earth. Knowing totally the Father’s heart and mind, Jesus confesses his understanding of the ways the Father works by hiding spiritual truths from those that think themselves to have superior wisdom and to be super smart. Or another way of putting it is that the Father resists those who’s hearts and minds are filled with pride about their own knowledge and understanding. It’s not that the Father won’t reveal things to those with this attitude, but their pride hinders their ability to receive what He wants to reveal.

Jesus, knowing exactly how the Father works, operates in exactly the same way. Therefore what Jesus wants to reveal about the Father remains hidden from those whose hearts and minds are dominated by pride in their intellectual knowledge and wisdom.

### **What Quality Will Allow Us To Receive What Jesus Wants To Reveal To Us? Childlikeness.**

Jesus continued in verse 25 explaining the positive truth about how the Father works, **“...and have revealed them to infants”**. The word translated in the NAS version as “infants” is translated in other versions as “babes”, “little children/ones”, “young children”, and “childlike”. Taking the different translations together we could sum them all up in the one word “childlikeness”. Jesus often spoke of this as essential to experiencing the Kingdom of God (Matt. 18:1-7, & 19:13-15; Mk 9:33-37, & 10:13-16, & Luke 9:46-48, & 18:15-17).

What qualities are involved in childlikeness?

1. Willingness to receive – Children are born with a great capacity simply to receive. Sadly, as children grow older, parents and other authority figures train this special quality out of them, so that they begin to think they have to earn things by performing.
2. Trust - Children are born with an awesome capacity to trust as part of their core makeup, unless they were damaged in the womb by generational issues or emotional wounding.
3. Faith – Children find it very easy to believe what they are told especially by their parents and those in positions of authority. Thus they easily accept without questioning what parents and other authorities teach them about God.

It’s these qualities that allow a person’s heart to be open to receive whatever God the Father or Jesus wants to give.

### **Who Will Jesus Reveal The Father To? Those He Wills Or Chooses To.**

Note Jesus’ words in Mt 11:27 (NAS), **“...and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”** Correctly understanding what Jesus is saying depends primarily on two key words: “wills” and “reveal”. The Greek word translated as “wills” in the NAS is also used in 9 other translations, or by “chooses” in 10 other translations, whereas a few other translations use the words “pleases”, “wants”, “desires”, or “wishes”. The Greek word is “Boulomai” which means:

- to will deliberately
- have a purpose
- be willing as an affection
- to desire

Stop for a minute and replace each one of these definitions into what Jesus said and then meditate on it until you get a clear picture of what Jesus is saying.

Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* has the following comment about “Boulomai:”  
“...usually expresses the deliberate exercise of volition (the will).”

Jesus isn't indicating that he chooses some while denying others, but just the opposite. Jesus has a purpose, is of the mind to, has a willing affection and desire to reveal to all those who have a childlike spirit, which enables them to receive.

Once this truth infiltrates our hearts, we will then be able to stand against the attack of the enemy. It's in this area that our enemy will fiercely work to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10a). What method will the Devil use? Thoughts! They will begin to bombard our minds, like these:

1. I wish I was one of those that Jesus chooses, but I must not be.
2. Jesus wouldn't really want to reveal anything to me.
3. If only I were a better Christian, then maybe Jesus would reveal something to me.
4. I'm so sinful; Jesus certainly wouldn't want to reveal anything to me.

(For more information about this area read *Battlefield Of The Mind* by Joyce Meyer)

Satan knows the exact lies that we've believed and accepted as true, therefore he knows the right thoughts to suggest to our mind knowing that we've believed it for so long that we will quickly jump at the deception again. Just as the Devil came at Eve in the garden with doubt, tempting her to question what God had said, so he works the same way in our lives today by encouraging us to doubt what Jesus says. The real question is not if Jesus wants to reveal something to us, but rather is our heart open to receive what he wants to reveal to us? If we have a childlike attitude, then we will be open to receive his revelation. But if we don't have a child like attitude, then we will be like a TV that is turned off and can't receive or display the signal that is in the air.

Now to the second key word, "reveal", which is the Greek word, "Apokalupto", that means:

- to uncover
- lay open what has been veiled or covered up
- make bare
- to make known, make manifest,
- disclose what before was unknown

Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* provides the following comment in explaining how this verb is used: "The objective use is that in which something is presented to the senses, sight, or hearing".

So Jesus is saying that he has a deep affection and desire to share his knowledge of the Father with those who are childlike enough to receive it. He wants to fully uncover, open up what has been hidden, and make totally known what the Father is really like and present that to our senses.

**What Are Two Purposes Of Jesus' Revelation Of The Father?** Know Him and Feel His Love.

In Jesus' High Priestly prayer to his Father in John 17, he acknowledges what he has accomplished so far, and what he would continue to do, and then indicates what the results will be in the lives of those that receive what He reveals:

John 17:26 AMP

26 I have made Your Name known to them {and} revealed Your character {and} Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them.

In John 17:20-26 Jesus was praying for all those who will come to believe in him due to the testimony of the Apostles. He concludes this portion of his prayer by summing up what he had accomplished in the 33 years as a human being. I would paraphrase verse 26a this way, "**Father, I've finished the job You sent me to earth to do, by revealing Your name (Father) by showing and demonstrating to everyone what You're really like (Your character, nature, and attributes), and I will continue to reveal You even after I return to heaven in a few days. I've done this so that they might know You like I know You**".

Five times in John 17:25-26 Jesus uses the word “known”, of which four of them relate to our subject. The first “known” refers to those who don’t have any insight into or a growing knowledge of the Father. The second “known” refers to how Jesus knew the Father, and the last two times it refers to how Jesus had or would continue to reveal the Father. So the first purpose of Jesus revealing the Father is so that we will have a growing experiential knowledge of Him, not just head knowledge, but heart knowledge that is the result of personal experience.

The second purpose of Jesus’ revealing the Father is found in this phrase from John 17:26 AMP, “... **that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts]...**” Jesus, having known and experienced the Father’s love, deeply desires that his followers might actually feel that very same love. The transforming power of experiencing and feeling the Father’s love is graphically portrayed in the life of the Apostle John. After Jesus prayed all night and was then led to choose John as one of his twelve Apostles, he did so knowing the explosive nature of John and his brother, James, whom Jesus nicknamed the “Sons of Thunder” (Mk 3:13-19, & Luke 6:12-16). This volatile nature can be clearly seen in just the few events from John’s life recorded by other gospel writers but which John failed to include in his own writings:

- His intolerance of those that did ministry different than the way he thought it should be done (Mk 9:38-40).
- His vindictiveness to destroy a whole city that failed to show hospitality to Jesus (Luke 9:51-56).
- His ambitious request for a special position of prominence, which may have been a generational family issue ( Mk 10:35-40 with Matt 20:20-28)
- His naïve idea of his own strength to endure suffering and death as Jesus would. (Mk 10:35-40, & Mt 20:20-28).
- His desire for special favors and position caused him to be the source of conflict and dissention with the other Apostles who Jesus was trying to develop into servants rather than acting as lords (Mk 10:41-45).

Yet, Jesus easily saw past John’s explosive nature to the potential of what he could be when impacted by love, so rather than reject him Jesus consistently loved him while also gently correcting him. Jesus knew that eventually that love would transform John so much that later he would become known as the Apostle of Love. In his writings, John always describes himself as the one “Jesus loved” (John 13:23, 20:2, & 21:7). It was this love of Jesus, in reality the love of the Father that constantly flowed through Jesus that transformed an angry explosive vindictive man into someone possessed and controlled by the love of the Father. This love is especially evident in John’s three letters, written during the later years of his life, especially in 1 John 4:7-21, but summed up succinctly in 1 John 3:1 AMP:

**1 SEE WHAT [an incredible] quality of love the Father has given (shown, bestowed on) us, that we should [be permitted to] be named {and} called {and} counted the children of God! And so we are! The reason that the world does not know (recognize, acknowledge) us is that it does not know (recognize, acknowledge) Him.**

John provides us with more specific information about the Father than any other writer. In the New Testament there are 240 verses that contain the word “Father”: 40 in Matthew, 5 in Mark, 23 in Luke and Acts, and 120 in John’s writings. Thus, he provides half of all the verses that provide written information about the Father, much of it actual quotes from Jesus. It’s interesting to note that the only two writers of the New Testament that actually lived and traveled with Jesus, Matthew and John, provide 67% of the information written about the Father. These two individuals understood the heart of Jesus for his Father, more than all the others whose writings appear in the New Testament but who never lived for three and a half years with Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus said he would continue that ministry to all that are open to receive it as a gift. So let us humble ourselves as little children and open our hearts to receive what Jesus wants to reveal about the Father so that we too can experience transformation from our destructive nature that results as we grow into the full knowledge of the Father and experience His love.



### **Testimonies: Jim's Testimony**

Jesus began revealing the Father to me in 1997 when I was 54 years old after being in the ministry for 27 years. That year was one of the worst of my life, but paradoxically today I look back on it as one of the best. My marriage of 33 years was dead, but we continued putting on a good show. My health was going down hill quickly. In March I had the first of many doctor appointments that always resulted in the doctors shaking their head while saying, "I don't know what is wrong with you". My blood count was dropping; I constantly ran a low grade fever. Every night I woke up with my pajamas wet from sweating. I coughed on and off all day and would throw up each time unless I immediately had a sip of pop, so I carried a can of pop with me constantly. Doctors thought I was losing blood but could not find where, then the week before Thanksgiving they finally discovered that my bones weren't producing blood. On Thanksgiving evening I was rushed to the hospital and in the following days was diagnosed with third stage Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer. The word "cancer" should have scared me, because of the number of my family members, friends, and church members that had died, but it didn't. In fact, I had an unbelievable peace because of what had been happening in my life spiritually the past few months.

For years I had been graced to spend up to three hours a day in prayer and Bible study, and although it was beneficial and resulted in some good fruit in my life, it hadn't produced the closeness with Abba Father that I desperately wanted. I constantly struggled with feeling unloved, abandoned, and a failure as a husband, father, and pastor. I kept wondering where the abundant life was that Jesus said he came to give (John 10:10b). Sadly, I knew more about the work of the enemy of stealing, killing, and destroying than I had experienced of the abundant life. But that was in the process of slowly changing as Jesus started breaking into the dark night (actually years) of my soul and revealing the Father, which resulted in changes in my life that worked from my heart outward.

It began during a private retreat at a Christian Camp in August of 1997. During those five days the Holy Spirit began to deal with me about specific events and times when I'd made judgments against my earthly father and sister that were impacting my relationship with my wife and my heavenly Father. When I left the camp I knew that there was a breakthrough from some of the attitudes that held me back. It was at that time that Jesus began to reveal the Father to me daily, which reached a high one day in October when I heard the Father say, "Come sit in My lap". That experience, and many other similar ones in the following days brought a radical change in my life that people began asking me to explain. Did I become perfect? Not at all, but the sense of feeling loved and accepted became knowledge of experience. I began to understand what my heavenly Father thought about me and the special place I had in his heart. This enabled me to deal with the cancer (by March of 1998 I was miraculously healed and have been for 14 years now), nor did I allow the dissolution of a marriage, or the resulting problems with my children, church, and friends to steal the knowledge of my heavenly Father's love for me.

### **John Sandford:**

During the late 1970's and for the next 12 to 15 years my life and ministry was greatly impacted by the teachings of John and Paula Sandford, founders of Elijah House Ministries. Below are some excerpts from John's testimony about how the Father was revealed to him after being in the ministry for many years, which is taken from their book "Healing The Wounded Spirit", beginning on page 412:

"One night as I (John) was driving home alone on the freeway from Spokane, there came a tap on my shoulder, a very real physical tap. The Lord said, *John?*

I said, "Yes, Lord."

He said, *I have someone I want you to meet.*

I said, "Yes, Lord"

*I want you to meet My Father.*

"Yes, Lord."

The next second, pouring over me was the most wonderful, gracious, tender, safe and secure Presence I had ever experienced. As one can know a multitude of things in a split second, I knew this was not a passing experience. Father God had come to stay. In the same instant I knew Father God was not at all like my childish reading of the Old Testament had said He was when I read how God was angry when Saul failed to kill all those Amalekites (1 Sam 15). Father God was perfectly tender lovingkindness. I knew in that moment that the battle and the search was (sic) over; from that moment on Father God had me, and nothing could be more wonderful. I felt safe, at rest, secure. I could do nothing but hang on to the wheel, grateful that in His wisdom He had come when the freeway was empty and cry (sic) out, over and over, "Oh Father."...

For two weeks I staggered around overwhelmed by the Father's loving presence and knew firsthand what the Scripture means when it says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8)...

By then, however, I had been down so many seemingly good blind alleys, and suffered so many misleading mystical experiences, that though I was certain this was what it seemed to be, I wasn't going to have even this wonderful gift unless the Lord could show it to me in Scripture, and said so..." (Jesus then quoted the following verses and discussed them with John)

John 14:21 & 23(NAS)

21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

Eph 3:14-21(NAS) Underlined is my emphasis, and the point which Jesus will draw John's attention to later.

14 For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; {and} that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

21 to Him {be} the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

"...Then, while I basked in the Father's presence, and drove slowly on, Jesus taught me. He said, *John, when you received Me as Lord and Savior, I entered with My Father and with the Holy Spirit. Implicitly, you possessed all three of us then. You soon learned you needed to experience the Holy Spirit explicitly. But I came with the Holy Spirit precisely in order to restore you to My Father! That's My purpose. You needed to experience Father explicitly too. This is my way you or anyone comes into the "fullness of God."*

"...Since that time I have been far more at peace and rest. I *know* Father God has me. The search is over. I know if I fall, Father God will pick me up. I know the source of power. Jesus said, "The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works." It is the Father who sent Jesus who sends us all. It is the Father who works in Him who works in me. I do not have to strive to make anything happen. It is the Father's work and His responsibility. I have only the joy of serving the most compassionate, tender, safe, and loving Father who ever was."

## **Mother Teresa:**

Like many I've been awed by the compassionate ministry of Mother Teresa, who for over 50 years directed the Missionaries of Charities to the poor of the world until her death in 1997. Her life was a beautiful example of loving the "unlovable", those that no one else cared for. Today many would say that she was truly an "Apostle of love", simply meaning one sent forth by God to show His love to those she was called to minister to, a calling that began very early in her life.

Recently I read, *An Unquenchable Thirst*, written by Mary Johnson who worked as a missionary under Mother Teresa, but was led out of the community after 20 years. Mary makes some stunning revelations that truly saddened my heart. She tells how in 2007, coinciding with the 10th year celebration of Mother's death, the book, *Mother Teresa, Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the "Saint of Calcutta"* was released. It was written by a close confidant of Mother Theresa's who is leading the way to have her canonized as a Saint within the Catholic Church. Speaking at the celebration service the author tells how he had pieced together from Mother's personal journal that she experienced 50 years of dark nights without consolation in prayer, in a state of spiritual emptiness that led her to even question God's existence. How can a person have such an ability to love the unlovable around the world and yet doubt even God's existence? It's fairly simple: commitment and discipline at any cost to a principle and man made rules.

She possessed marvelous grace in her ability to show love to the poor of the world, but what about showing it to those within her own family, to those who came to her community to experience for themselves that love and to learn how to give it away to others? Lacking the ability to experience love from God herself, how well could Mother Teresa communicate God's love to the leaders under her authority that were responsible for training those entering the ministry?

Mary shares how she was given copies of letters, which Mother Teresa had written to all the mother superiors, so Mary could type them into a book. Here is what Mary writes (pages 227-228):

"Typing Mother's letters was terrifying - and inspiring; these letters were filled with Mother's pain. Over and over, Mother spoke of her sorrow at the superior's harshness. Mother begged superiors to be kind to their sisters, not to call the sisters names, not to humiliate them in public, not to punish them.... Until reading the letters I'd assumed Mother advised the toughness superiors usually dished out; knowing that she wanted superiors not to be kind made me no less afraid of one day being given the responsibility."

Mary tells about the time when Mother Teresa confronts her about why she is leaving and puts tremendous pressure on her to stay, using anger and guilt to try to control her. Mother seemed to have thought that if someone left the group that it cast a negative reflection on her and the ministry. Mary knew the uselessness of trying to persuade Mother, so she didn't offer any explanation other than "Mother, I am going home". Yet here is what was stirring in her heart as stated in the last chapter on pages 501-502 (Underlined is my emphasis):

*"Mother, I wanted to say, Mother, my God isn't like yours. Your God asks you to deny yourself. He counts each sacrifice and will reward each act of self denial. Your God is Jesus Crucified. My God is the God of the resurrection- the God who says, "Enough of this suffering. Let's heal the world."*

*Your God is a jealous God, one who says, "So long as you never get too close to any human being, I will be close to you. You may not feel my closeness on earth, but I will be close in heaven." My God says, "I offer you friends, I offer you lovers. I am present in the people I give you now, people in whom I hope you will delight as I do."*

*Your God says, "I bind you to this life forever, you are my spouse. Marriage is an unbreakable covenant." My God says, "I invite you to walk with me. I'm not sure where we'll end up, but we will walk together, and others will join us on the way."*



*Mother, I'd like you to understand. But I can't take the chance that you won't. I don't want your God anymore. My God says, "I came that you might have life, and have it to the full." I'm following my God out the door, Mother, and you can't stop me.*

It's difficult to comprehend all that Mary is saying unless you've read the whole book and understand the background and experiences from which she is thinking. How shameful when after twenty years of submitting to one's authority, that a person wants to say to his or her parent, pastor, or spiritual leader that claims to be a Christian, "I don't want your God anymore." The world today is full of those individuals whose leaders lacked a consistent experience with the love of their heavenly Father, and thus have crushed the spirit and broken the hearts of those under their authority.

Mother Theresa, like all spiritual leaders, had her strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, there wasn't anything negative revealed about Mother or the leaders of the group that I haven't seen or experienced, with few exceptions, in the churches where I was either the pastor or a member. Mother did a marvelous work, one that I believe she was clearly directed by God to do. Reading the book reminded me again how easy it is once a person is placed into a position of authority, that she or he begins either lording it over those under them or pleasing their authorities rather than God. Every leader has to make difficult decisions that can be unpopular, but when those under their authority know and sense that they are loved, then those decisions will be more easily accepted. But until a leader enters into the fullness of God and experiences the Father's amazing love, he or she will simply never be able to communicate that love to those closest to them, their immediate family members, although they may impact many outside their own family. For example, I've heard it reported that 70% of all pastor's children require counseling. How much more could Mother Teresa have accomplished if she had allowed Jesus to reveal the Father to her so she could have known His presence and felt His love/ I pray that none of us will fall into the scheme of the enemy that leads us to ministry solely out of discipline, commitment, or the rules of men rather than from an overflow of the Father's love.

### **Conclusion And Prayer**

What is Abba Father really like? Abba Father knows how much we all need the answer to that question, which is exactly why He sent Jesus. Therefore, Jesus is willing and ready to reveal to every believer the true nature, character, and attributes of his heavenly Father. However, the more important question for each one of us is: Will we allow pride and/or the lack of being childlike to hinder us from receiving what Jesus wants to reveal? To maintain that kind of attitude would deeply grieve the heart of both our heavenly Father and Jesus. Consider the following prayer:

*Heavenly Father, thanks for sending Jesus to reveal to me what You're really like. Grant me the grace to lay aside my pride in thinking I can fully know and understand you with my own human intellect. Empower me to become more childlike so that I can freely receive the revelation of You that Jesus wants to give to me.*

*Jesus, thank you that for the joy that was set before you that you laid down the glories of heaven, came to earth so that you could reveal what your Abba Father is really like. I'm thankful that you told the Father that even after your ascension that you would continue to reveal Him to those who are childlike. Jesus, I truly want to know what my heavenly Father is really like. I trust that you will begin to give me that revelation, and I expectantly wait on your timing. Amen*

In the Father's service,  
**Jim & Susan McCorkle**  
[www.rtbministry.org](http://www.rtbministry.org)

### **Personal Application Questions:**

1. Prior to reading this lesson, how would you have answered the question “Why did Jesus come to earth?”
2. Describe how childlike you are in the following areas:
  - a. The ability to accept gifts without feeling you have to earn them?
  - b. The ability to trust your heavenly Father when things don’t go the way you wanted them to, or turn out the way you planned for them to?
  - c. The ability to believe what Abba Father has told you when circumstances seem to contradict what He has told you?
3. How would you reply to a friend asking, Why should Jesus reveal anything to you?
4. Ask Jesus what nickname he would give to you? \_\_\_\_\_ Once you’ve received his answer, what insight could you learn from the nickname?
5. What lies are still residing in your heart that need healing before you can accept the truths that Jesus wants to reveal to you?
6. Describe the positive transformations that have occurred in your life, after experiencing the love of your heavenly Father, in the following areas:
  - a. Intolerance of others that minister in different ways from what you’ve been taught.
  - b. Vindictiveness toward those who don’t respond to Jesus the way you think they should.
  - c. Ambition for a special place of authority or position so you can rule over others.
  - d. An inaccurate view of your ability to endure suffering like what Jesus experienced.
  - e. Being a source of conflict and dissention among fellow believers.
7. Ask this question of those under your authority (first ask them to read the portion under Mother Teresa’s testimony): What part does love play as the primary motivation for your life, behavior, and ministry as a Christian? Then take some time to get alone with your heavenly Father and discuss their comments with Him.