

Can You Trust God?

The Nature Of Our Heavenly Father

Introduction

This week we want to talk about a fundamental issue in a Christian's life. Can God be trusted? This question needs to be settled at some point in our life. In fact this question, Can You Trust God, is key to drawing closer to God. It is our faith in the trustworthiness of God that will determine how much we will allow God to do for us. Many Christian people who are trying to walk with God, do not know in the deepest fibers of their being if they can really trust Him.

I. Can God Lie?

We need to come to the place where we learn how to go to our Heavenly Father for all of our needs: physical, emotional, spiritual, social, family. However many of us have a difficult time with this, because we do not know our Heavenly Father.

We do not know if we can really trust Him. We do not know if He cares for us like a good Father would care for His children. We do not know how to go to Him with our whole heart. Can His words to us be really trusted?

I had this problem too. I could not believe that God could be trusted. I was afraid to really trust Him and what He said. I was not convinced that He had my best interests at heart. I actually did not know how to trust God or what genuine faith was. I had a head knowledge of God, but no real heart faith in Him and in His goodness toward me. Nobody had really taught me.

Eve's Temptation

In the Garden of Eve, the serpent challenged Eve's trust in God, suggesting that God lied to her when He said: "*But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die*" (Gen. 2:17). Listen to how the serpent challenged Eve:

...and the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die? For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4,5).

What is the serpent really challenging Eve on? The trustworthiness of God! He is challenging her understanding of the nature of God. Is God *really* good? Can He *really* be trusted? Or will He withhold good things from us?

A. I Need The Lord!

Back in 1970, I had just received the news that our seven year old son had leukemia. I knew that if I wanted to survive this, I needed to find a living God; I needed the Holy Spirit. Even though I had invited Jesus into my heart as a young teenager, I had no confidence that I really belonged to God. That Jesus had really come into my heart.

Now in my crisis, I begged God to do something for me. I need some kind of inner strength and inner power. I poured over the scriptures again and again about being born again and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again...

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!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16).

...that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!". Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son...(Galatians 4:5,6).

At age 30, I still did not know the presence of God in my heart, even though it has been promised to us. I often knelt down beside my bed and cried out to God to reveal Himself to me. Nothing happened.

One day, I stretched out on the floor before God, crying out to Him. Yet nothing seemed to happen. I tried following all of the steps in a books, reading the prayers, confessing His name, and praising God. But to no avail. Nothing happened. I was still the same on the inside. I couldn't find the 'magic' formula!

I ask for help

During this time, something unusual was taking place in our Sunday School class. The room had swelled to overflowing with people standing at the door. An air of expectancy was present. People were searching for something – they wanted more. These were good church people!

I noticed that one couple in the class seemed different from the others. When they prayed, they acted as if they really believed God heard them. They even gave reports of answered prayers and physical healing.

After crying out to God for months, I finally called this woman (Nancy) and asked her to come and pray with me. Feeling very nervous, self-conscious, and embarrassed, I did not know what to say. I blurted out that I wanted to receive the Holy Spirit.

"Let's begin at the beginning"

She began by asking me about my relationship with God. I told her about my church experience, going down the aisle at age twelve to receive Christ as my Savior and of being baptized in water. I told her how I had dedicated my life to God at age 14 as summer camp.

But I also told her of my fear of God and of my lack of confidence that He was *really* in me. I explained how hard I had been praying, and yet nothing seemed to change. I

Then Nancy said, "*Let's begin at the beginning; let's talk about your spiritual foundation.*" She explained to me the underlying premise of receiving anything from God. In so doing, I was

given the *key* which opened the door for me to an ongoing relationship with the living God: genuine heart faith.

Even though I had prayed many times, went to church all my life, been baptized, read my Bible, and prayed, I had no genuine faith or heart belief in God. My mind believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, but I had never learned how to apply faith in God when I came to Him. At thirty years of age, I finally understood.

B. Matthew 7:7-11 & Luke 11:8-13

Nancy read out loud to me this story that Jesus Christ gave us:

Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?

If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (Matthew. 7:7-11).

Building My Faith

When she finished, she turned to me and asked, "*What does Jesus say a child will get if he asks his father for a fish? Will he get a snake?*"

"No," I said, "*the child will not get a snake; he will receive what he asked for, a fish.*"

"*What does Jesus say a child will get if he asks his father for bread? Will he get a stone?*"

"No", I said, "*He will not get stone; he will be given bread.*"

“Can God Lie?”

Then she asked me a question, "*Judy, can God lie?*"

This brought me up short. Nancy was asking me to make a 'decision' about the nature of God. I struggled with it for a moment, then I knew my answer, "*No, I said, "I do not believe God can lie."*

At that moment something happened. Something quickened in my heart: it was genuine heart faith. In the moment I made the decision that God could not lie, faith became alive and active in me.

My hungry heart was like a dry sponge soaking up the truth. Nancy made it sound so easy: "*Judy, Jesus taught those who seek will find, and those who ask will receive. Jesus absolutely believed this. Do you? From what you tell me, you have been asking, but not receiving. Why? Does God, or does He not, want to give what is good to you?*" she probed.

Now for the first time, I really heard the words of Jesus and they were united by faith in me. My faith expanded more. "*Now,*" she said, "*let's start at the beginning again. You've asked many times but never applied any faith. Now this time as you ask, apply your faith in God and in what He has said.*"

We have had the good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard (Heb. 4:2b).

I Pray,

Under her guidance, I began to pray, "God I ask for your help. I want to know you. I need your son Jesus. I place my faith in His work on the cross, His burial and His resurrection. I accept the blood He shed as enough for my sins and the sins of others against me. Please come into my heart and cause me to live."

As I spoke these words aloud, my heart looked only to the trustworthiness of God and to what He said. I did not look to my feelings or my own thoughts.

"Where is Jesus now?"

When I finished, Nancy asked, "Where is Jesus now?"

Still not feeling anything, my mind went back to what she had read: "If a child asks his father for bread, he will not give him a stone... how much more will the heavenly Father give what is good to those who ask."

I had asked my heavenly Father to forgive my sins and to send Jesus to live within my heart, hadn't I? These were good things, weren't they? I reasoned to myself. Then had He done what He promised to do? It was decision time. If I chose not to take God at His word, I would be calling Him a liar. And I could not do that. My decision was made.

"He is in my heart," I responded with confidence. I kept my faith centered in on God and His trustworthiness.

Nancy pressed, "Why is He in your heart?"

"Because God simply cannot lie," I replied. "I choose to place my faith and trust in His words and His words."

Something quickened in my heart: it was faith. In the moment I made the decision God could not lie, faith became alive and active in me. I really heard the words of Jesus and they were united by faith in me. My faith expanded more.

I want to make it clear, I was doing something more than mouthing words or giving mental assent when I prayed. I did that for years.. I was adding something to my words: faith.

Jesus said, "the man who hears His words and does not act upon them is like the foolish man who builds his house upon the sand" (Matt. 7:24-27).

Up until that point, I was like the foolish person; the words I had listened to about God had not benefited me at all.

Receiving The Holy Spirit

Nancy then took me to Luke 11:8-13 and read about receiving the Holy Spirit:

And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock; and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.

Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:8-13).

She asked me I would like to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. She explained this is what the Father promised to those who believed (Acts 1:8; 2:17; 2:33-39).

For weeks I'd poured over the Scriptures about this and decided the promise of the Holy Spirit was meant for "all who were far off", and that was me.

Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off...(Acts 2:38,29).

Jesus had promised that He would send back the Holy Spirit and we would know this Presence in our hearts (John 14:16-19).

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (*Paracletos*, i.e., one called along side to help) that He may be with you forever...and He will be in you (John 14:16-17).

...for He gives the Spirit without measure (John 3:34).

It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing...(John 6:63).

He who believes in Me...From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; ...(John 7:38-39).

"Abba Father, I belong to You"

When it came time to pray, I was so frightened and embarrassed I told her I'd go into my bedroom and pray alone. She waited in the living room. I got down on my knees and prayed to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit...applying my faith just like Nancy had taught me. I was asking for a good thing, the Holy Spirit, and I will receive. Because God cannot lie...and my heart filled with joy and excitement.

Suddenly, an inner knowing of God's presence burst forth in my heart. I *knew that I knew*, with a deep inner awareness, that God was my Father, Jesus was in me, and my sins were forgiven. A feeling of peace permeated me from within. Listen to this scripture:

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! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:15,16).

God came in a way that He never had before. For the first time in my life, I *knew*—I knew God was within me! There was some place within me where I *knew* for certain that He had forgiven me, that I was His child.

C. Why Is Faith Important?

Catholic lay evangelist, Ralph Nault (The New Life, Inc.), says that when it comes to Christianity, "*We often put the cart before the horse. We teach people how to have a nice cart, how to be a good Christian, but give them nothing to pull it with.*"

This was me. For most of my life, I followed all the rules and tried very hard to behave like a Christian person, yet had no genuine faith in my heart—nothing to pull my nice cart with.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things *not seen*. For by it the men of old gained approval...without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:1-6).

The Scriptures make it clear that genuine faith is necessary in obtaining and receiving all of God's provisions and promises.

- Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him that believes (Mark 9:23).
- Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you (Mt. 17:20).
- ...be it done to you according to your faith (Mt. 9:29).
- ...faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word (utterance) of Christ (Rom. 10:17).
- But if any of you lacks wisdom let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded (hesitating, doubting) man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:6-7).
- And these signs will accompany those who have believed; in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mark 16:17-18).

The extent to which I receive God's blessings depends precisely upon the degree to which I can believe God. My faith will determine what I will allow God to do for me.

What is faith?

Faith is hard to describe because we often get it confused with what our church believes, our theology and doctrine. However faith is far more than ideas or mental beliefs about God. It is also far more than any emotion we may feel. The Bible tells us that faith is a substance or assurance and that it must be in our heart.

Now faith is the "substance or assurance" of things hoped for, the conviction of things *not seen*. (Heb. 11:1-6).

...the righteousness based on faith...(says), "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" — that is the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead,

you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Rom. 10:8-10).

The word for “faith” is *Pistis* and it means to be fully persuaded, convinced, and convicted in our heart and mind, that what God says is true.

Faith is something more than a system of religious truths, but it is a vital life force. One author notes that an electric atmosphere seems to develop when authentic spiritual power is released. I too have this invisible sense of presence in a room when genuine faith is present in the hearts of the people. It makes teaching and praying with them much easier.

Faith must reside in the heart

Faith goes beyond our doctrine and theology; it must reside in a deeper place within us—in our heart. The Bible says it is “with the heart man believes” (Rom. 10:10). True faith goes beyond doctrine and theology; it must reside in a deeper place within us—in our heart.

The heart is a much deeper thing than our mind. We come to know truth with our hearts or spirits, rather than with our minds. Our western world has not known very much about heart faith. We have been trapped in our heads and tried to make our relationship with God work through it.

Abraham’s Example of Faith

With respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform (Rom. 4:20-21).

D. The Meaning Of The Bread, Fish, and Egg

To build your faith, reflect on the images Jesus gave us in this story about a little boy and bread

Reflect for just a moment on the images Jesus chose to illustrate the nature of our Heavenly Father. Why did He choose the fish and a snake, the egg and a scorpion, and the loaf of bread and a stone? Keeping in mind Jesus often used images, symbols and metaphors when teaching, what do these images suggest? I believe if we grasp them, it will help us understand the true nature of the Father's desire for us.

1. The Bread and Stone

A loaf of bread is something we take into ourselves which provides fundamental nourishment for our bodies. Called the staff of life, it is full of life. Symbolically it may represent that which we take into ourselves which nourishes our spirit and makes us full of life. In contrast, a stone is an inanimate object which is lifeless; inner sterility. It has no life-giving qualities.

Bread: the most important of physical foods. Fundamental nourishment, basic emotional and biological needs. Symbol of spiritual nourishment; bread of life,

Stone—hardness, loss of feeling, dead, unfeeling. Heart of stone, stone dead.

2. The Egg and Scorpion

An egg often represents the potential for new life, but which first must be fertilized from the outside, whereas a scorpion stands for death.

The Egg: The germ of life; The totality of all creative forces (the wealth of possibilities reside within it); Potential: holds all of the parts of the self, as yet unrealized; Promise, hope; New life; The true self; Perfection; Easter and the resurrection: Christ broke forth from the grave, like a mature chick from the egg);

The Scorpion: Dangerous powers; Punishment from God; The devil or Satan; Death

3. The Fish and The Snake

The fish, an ancient symbol in Christianity, may represent the healing Christ who lives in the deep ocean of our heart, the healing energy of Christ, or the wisdom we have deep inside of us. In contrast, the snake may symbolize the principle of evil, the destroyer or the evil one.

Fish—treasures from waters. Unconscious processes, most precious content of life, which can be appreciated through realm of intuition and feeling. One of the oldest secret symbols of Christ. The Christ, Wisdom the true self. Spiritual nourishment.

Snake/serpent—lower level of instincts, unclean, unconsciousness

4. How does the egg compare with the new birth experience?

For the egg to fulfill its potential what has to happen? It must first be fertilized from the outside. It must be penetrated by the sperm.

We are like dark matter that must be penetrated by the light of consciousness before it can come to fruition in the birth of new being. In the new birth, Christ is the light which penetrates us.

The reality of the spiritual realm cannot be experienced without the new birth or conversion experience.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ...unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:3,5,6),

...that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:15-16).

➤ Doing Business With God

Today I hope that I can encourage you in your faith in God and His resurrection power. For the same power that brought Jesus Christ out of the tomb is available to us. And it is by our faith that we activate the power of God in our lives. It is through genuine faith that we can do the impossible. We can be led by His Spirit and go to the highways and byways to the people in our generation.

The world is hurting, and they need words of faith and comfort from us. Can you say to someone, "You can trust God?" My husband often says this to me: "Judy, you can trust God." I need to be reminded of this very often.

Key Questions

1. Can God lie?
2. How true does this sentence *feel*, "God can be trusted" ?
3. Do you believe that God *feels* toward you as a good father feels toward his child?
4. Do you believe that God *loves* you as a good father loves his child?
5. Do you know this love of God in your *heart*?

How true is this sentence?

Using a scale of zero to 10, (zero being not true at all, and ten, being absolutely true, how true does the following sentence *feel* to you? Do not answer by what you know to be true in your mind, but what feels true to you deep inside.

God is a good father who wants to give good things to me.

God cannot lie.

II. The Nature Of God

"God, Are You Good?"

At the core of our problem is the question: "God are you good?" We want to know... (The following questions are taken from the book, *Emotions, The Cry of the Soul* by Dan Allender.)

1. Does God *really love me*, or will He hate me if He sees me as I really am?
2. Is God *really just* or will He let the wicked win and prevail against me?
3. Is God *really good* or will He leave me in isolation? Will He offer His presence to others and leave me alone?
4. Is God *really good and will He satisfy my hunger*? Or will He bless others and leave me empty?
5. Can I trust God to protect me from harm?
6. Does God *really love me* or will He turn away in disgust?

"Is God Capricious?"

God is not capricious, never knowing what to expect, like dysfunctional parents. No, He works according to His established spiritual principles or laws and makes them clear to us in the Holy Scriptures. God works according to established Truths, a set of principles.

Yet God does not automatically give us all that His Holy Spirit can give us. Because His goal is for us to grow up and become sons of God, not only His uncomprehending little babies. He wants to transform me into the image of his son.

So sometimes he doesn't answer our prayers the way we think He should. My friend and spiritual mentor, Ralph Nault (a Catholic lay evangelist) once asked God why He waited so long to answer His prayer for the healing of his marriage. The Lord answered and said, "I waited until your prayer got bigger." Interesting!

A. God As Father

Some Biblical Word Pictures For God

Father	Light	Creator
Sanctuary	Shade	Maker
Architect	Builder	Rock
King	Shield	Banner
Shepherd	Gardener	Vine dresser
Consuming fire	Potter	Fortress
Hiding place	Strong tower	Stronghold in times of trouble
Shelter	Refuge	Shade from heat
Commander	I Am Who I am	Spring of living water

God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in His Being: wisdom, peace, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth. However God is more than divine wisdom, more than a current of power, He is our Father. The nature of God's life is that of a father — a good father who loves us. God feels toward us as a good father feels. God feels toward us as a human father would. Hence His life is nurturing, comforting, loving, sustaining, encouraging, warming, life-giving, wise, merciful, forgiving, healing, restorative, and regenerative.

Here are some descriptions of God as father...

- ❑ Father of compassion
- ❑ Father of our spirits
- ❑ Father of the heavenly lights
- ❑ Father of Jesus Christ I Pet. 1:3
- ❑ Righteous Father John 17:25
- ❑ The living Father John 6:57

Interesting the word *Rahamim* means God's tender compassion and comes from Hebrew noun *rehem*, meaning "womb" or "uterus". God's tender compassion is like the tender union between a pregnant mother and the child she protects and nourishes in her womb.

Scriptures

1. **Psalms 27:10:** For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the Lord will take me up.

2. **Psalms 68:5**: father to the fatherless
3. **Psalms 10:14**: helper of the fatherless
4. **I Chronicles 17:13**: I will be his father and he shall be my son; and I will not take My loving kindness away from him ...
5. **John 14:18**: I will not leave you as orphans (Gr. *Orphanos*: (3737) wandering in obscurity; darkness, with no identity; desolate); I will come to you.
6. **Psalms 71:5**: For thou art my hope, O lord God, thou art my (confidence) *trust* from my youth; upon by thee I have been supported from the womb; thou art he that took me from my mother's womb.
7. **Isaiah 63:16**: Thou O Lord, art our Father.
8. **II Corinthians 6:18**: And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.
9. **Ephesians 3:14**: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. all father hood in heaven and earth receive its true name. Eph. 3:14
10. **Col. 1:2**: God, our Father

Father : Gr. <i>Pater</i> , a father. By whom one is begotten; progenitor of a race, tribe or people; ancestor, forefather, patriarch; the author, source, beginner of something

B. Jesus Christ Reveals the Nature of God As A Father

When Jesus prayed, "*Abba Father*" he is associating trust in a loving parent with faith in a loving God. *Abba*, is a primitive word and means Daddy or Papa (Mark 14:37). Jesus is revealing the nature of God as warm affection, tenderness, familiarity, and filial confidence. *Abba* has passed into European language and in ecclesiastic form as "Abbott, Pater". Jesus also said...

...He who has seen Me has seen the Father...(John 14:9).

We are established as Sons of God who also say, "Abba, Father"

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! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16).

that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!. Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son...(Galatians 4:5,6).

C. Is God A Good Father?

1. The "Father of Compassion", Wants To Comfort Us

As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you. Is 66:13

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (II Cor. 1:3).

2. God, as Father, wants to meet our needs, bless us, forgive us, etc.

Be not ye therefore like them: for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him (Mt 6:8).

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom (Lu 12:32).

My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you (Mt 6:14).

...blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:2-3).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6).

For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

Slowly through my experiences in life, I learned that God is real, that He must love me like a father, that He wants to give good things to me, that his desire for me is to give me a future and a hope, that He cannot lie, that I can put my trust in Him. That He can speak to me, that I can know His voice. And I began to come to my Heavenly Father for all of my needs. For my physical needs, emotional needs, and for my desires in my heart.

Toothpaste and Shampoo

I want to share a little experience with you. When my husband left his career in 1986, we did not know what he would do, or how we would provide for our selves. He worked for a while at a Christian conference center, making \$5 per hours. It was a very difficult time for me. My faith in God was being challenged. Could I really trust my Heavenly Father to meet our needs?

On this particular day I needed to buy toothpaste and shampoo, and I didn't have any money. I was driving two hours to visit my mother, and during the drive I pondered my situation. I kept thinking about the scriptures:

So I had a long talk with my Heavenly Father as I drove two hours to visit my mother. I reminded Him that He had promised to meet all of my needs. Although they are very small things, toothpaste, and shampoo, they symbolized for me my underlying fears and conflicts.

When I walked in the door, the first thing out of my mother's mouth was the question: *You don't need some shampoo and toothpaste do you? I have some I don't need.*

Heals my broken heart

Frank, a Catholic lay minister, asked if he could pray with me for inner healing about when I was a little girl. When he came to 18 months old, I started crying, with the cry of a very small child. The cry was the sound of a deep agony in my soul: *Daddy, Daddy, I never had a Daddy.* Frank put his arms around me, held me, rocked me, and sang nursery rhymes to me; *"You have a daddy now."* God filled this need in me for a daddy.

3. God Desires Our Peace, Well-Being & Healing

The scriptures reveal God's great desire is for our well-being, our healing, freedom, wholeness, and restoration.

Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near, Says the Lord, and I will heal him (Isaiah 57:19).

I am the Lord, who heals you (Exodus 15:26). I will heal thee of thy wounds (Jer. 30:17).

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit...you satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle (Ps. 103:2-5).

But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall (Malachi 4:2).

4. God Is The Perfect Parent

- He knew us while we were yet in our Mother's womb.
- He formed our parts.
- He knows the hairs on our head.
- Before we cry; He will answer.
- Before we ask, He knows what we need
- He will never leave us or forsake us.
- He loves us with an everlasting love.
- He loved us while we yet in our sin, in our helpless condition (Rom. 5:8)
- God will no leave us as orphans; He will come to us. (John 14:18; Ps. 68:5)
- He has made peace with us (Rom. 5:1).
- He desires for us to know our union or bonding with Him.

5. Descriptions and Characteristics of God

Faithful God

Forgiving God

Source of strength

Refuge for his people

Shade from the heat	Shelter from the storm
Defender of widows	Ever present help in trouble
Eternal king	Almighty, El Shaddai
Compassionate & gracious	He who comforts you
God of glory	God of all comfort
Jealous	Living and true God
God of peace	God of retribution
God of truth	God our strength
God who avenges me	God who relents from sending calamity
Lord is peace	Lord is my rock
Lord our shield	Lord who heals you
Lord who is there	Lord who makes you holy
Lord will provide	Love
My advocate	My confidence
My helper	My hiding place, shield,
My hope	My light Ps. 27:1
My song	My strong deliverer
My support	One to be feared
My maker	My rock
The majestic Glory	The one who sustains me
The strength of my heart Ps. 73:26	Tests the heart and mind
Only wise God	Our dwelling place
Our lawgiver	Our leader
Our redeemer	Our refuge and strength
He who blots out your transgressions	
He who forms the hearts of all	
He who raised Christ from the dead	
He who reveals His thoughts to man	
Him who is able to do more than we ask or imagine	
Him who is able to keep you from falling	
Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead	
The God who sees me (Gen. 16:13)	
The just and mighty one	

D. Summary

God longs to meet our needs, do good for us, heal us, fulfill the desires of our hearts.

- He feels a great compassion for us.
- He wants to give us a future and a hope.
- He wants to supply all of our needs.
- He wants us to put our trust in Him.
- He has chosen gladly to give us the kingdom.
- He wants to forgive us for all of our failures to measure up to what He wanted for us.
- He has given us every spiritual blessing.
- He does not want us to be ashamed.
- He will not forget us.
- He feels toward us like a mother does for her child.

E. What are some reasons why don't we go to the Father?

- If I admit I have a need, then I am weak. Weakness is terrible.
- I have to be strong.
- Our wrong image of Him formed by how our earthly parents treated us.
- Don't think I have the right to have needs.
- I am afraid of what He will ask me to do?
- I am guilty, too bad to go to God.

What are your reasons for not trusting God as Father?

➤ **Doing Business With God**

Affirm God as your Father

The basis of all healing is to affirm the presence of God in you. I encourage you to make the following affirmation aloud many times every day.

Abba Father, I belong to you.

Your Image of God?

Think about how your experiences with your father and mother may have influenced your image of God?

Finish these sentences: God is like a... ; and when I think of God I feel . . .

Draw a picture of your earliest impression of God. Some people draw God as a...

Eye looking down at them

A stone tablet
A strong arm
An ear
A big heart
A finger pointing down at them
A judge with a measuring stick.
A frowning face

Can you trust God? Has God betrayed you?

Memorize Jeremiah 29:11:

For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Memorize this prayer and pray it daily. Eph. 3:14-20.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant me according to His riches in glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in my inner man; so that Christ might dwell in my heart through faith; and that I will be rooted and grounded in love, so I may be able to understand what is the breathe and length and height and depth, and to (experientially) know the love of Christ; this is better than any intellectual understanding, so that I may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to exceeding abundantly beyond all that I ask or think, according to the power that works within me.

Possible questions for reflections

1. What personal evidence do you have that God is real? Jesus is Lord
2. How has God manifested Himself to you through the earth and His creation?
3. Share testimonies of how Jesus has touched your life.
4. Do you know of any miracles Jesus has done.
5. Have you ever had the feeling of being very close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you out of yourself? Describe it.
6. Ask God to show you the various kinds of intuitive, spiritual experiences you have had with Him in your life.
7. List spiritual experience, those times when it seems that God had broken through and touched your life.
8. Recall the time in your life when you came to Jesus or God. What factors in your life led you to the point that wanted to know Jesus better? What was the precipitating cause that led you to the actual experience of commitment? Mystical experience? Intellectual decision? Emotional decision?

9. Write out the story of your experience: novel form-dialogue, poem allegory, essay.
10. Draw that which will express what happened to you. Express the significance of the grand encounter to you. Record what happened to you during this drawing.
11. Write a spiritual autobiography.
12. Describe one thing that the Lord has done for you.
13. How has God been there for you?
14. Perception of the miraculous requires no faith or assumptions: simply pay full and close attention to the givens of life, to that what is usually taken for granted, observe closely what goes on within and around this week and list at least one miracle you see each day.
15. Write a letter to God about how you feel about hearing Him.
16. Write a letter to God from one who is in exile.
20. Write a letter to God telling Him what you want, what you need.
21. Draw a heart, sketch symbols of the ways that your heart yearns for God, or would look like if it did?
22. Does your view of God hinder your spiritual growth? In what ways does it hinder it?

Appendix A: Going To Jesus

A. Draw Close To Jesus

We must come to place where we realize that nobody else is responsible but me. I must have a direct relationship, an individual relationship between me and God, this is the freeing agent. If you have not made a decision to invite Jesus Christ into your heart, you need to do this. It is key to the transformation and healing of your broken heart and life.

1. “Go To Jesus”

You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life (John 5:39-40).

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:28).

Have you really experienced Jesus? If not, you need to repent and turn to Him. Jesus Christ is the only answer! Jesus Christ is the only way, He is the uncorrupted seed, He is righteous, He brings fullness of life. Acknowledge that it is solely on the basis of what Jesus has done on your behalf that you are receiving your righteousness now.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame’ (Rom. 10:9-11).

As a result of a genuine conversion or born again experience, you have access to the Kingdom of Heaven which is right within you. You need to seek the truth and walk in it. Then you will gradually become free, feel free. Christianity is the only way to be totally free.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days... (Deut. 30:19,20).

Spiritual Realm Does Not Work By Magic

The spiritual realm of God *does not* work through “magic,” but through faith that resides in an honest heart. There are no magical words that will make God become real to you—but only an honest heart that recognizes its need and a tiny bit of faith *that God cannot lie, that what He said is true.*

God Himself said that He sent Jesus to die for our sins so we can have newness of life. Did God lie when He said this? Can you trust what He says? It is faith in God Himself and in the power

of God, revealed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that brings about changes within us.

Use The Key: Apply Your Faith In A God Who Cannot Lie!

Now simply go to God, praying from an *honest* heart. Begin your journey to God by praying something that is honest to you, such as...

God, I don't know if you are real, and if you are really there for me, but if you are, I need You in my life. I don't understand everything, but I know that I need a power greater than myself. I need You. Please come into my life. Thank you.

Here is the prayer I prayed thirty-five years ago:

God, I ask for your help. I want to know You. I need Your son Jesus. I place my faith in His work on the cross, His burial and His resurrection. I accept the blood He shed as enough for my sins and the sins of others against me. Jesus, I ask You to come live inside of me. I invite You to come into my life. And I thank you. Amen.

Two examples of the "Sinner's Prayer"

God I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. I know according to your Word that I cannot make myself righteous, but I thank You because You love me and sent the Lord Jesus to die for me. And through His righteousness, redemption is made available to me. I believe that He died for my sins according to the scripture. I believe that He was raised from the dead and is my justification. I confess Him now and take Him as my Savior.

Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen." (taken from <http://www.gotquestions.org/sinners-prayer.html>)

Now, Where Is Jesus?

If I ask you where is Jesus, can you say with confidence: "He is in my heart. I asked Him to come in, and I know He did, because God cannot lie."

Make Jesus Christ Lord

Make a decision to make Jesus Christ Lord of your life, to follow Him in faith and obedience. Decide to lay down your rebellion, surrender, and make Jesus Christ Lord of your life. Decide to do all that the Lord Your God asks of you. You may want to pray something like this:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You better, to come closer to You. Please cause me to see more clearly who You are and what You have done for me. Please reveal Christ in me. I thank you. Lord, I make a decision to follow You, in faith and obedience. I will do what You ask me to do. Lay down your rebellion and surrender to the Lord. I choose to make You Lord of my life. Amen

To learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit see Program Notes, "The Work of the Holy Spirit," 22 January 2006.

At this time I understand that when individuals receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through genuine heart faith, they receive the "Spirit of Christ" and their own spirit is quickened and made alive, because of the righteousness of Christ Jesus (Romans 8:9,10). I understand the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a distinct work of grace which is not to be confused with the conversion or born again experience. It involves a filling or immersion into God's power and authority and the capability of praying in tongues and functioning with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Please note that my program notes are not a treatise or doctrinal position on salvation, faith or the Holy Spirit. They simply reflect my understanding at this time. I encourage you to go to God, asking Him to bring revelation to your own heart. He will not fail an honest heart. If we desire to be of service to God and fulfill His purposes for us.