

WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: House of the Lord, Infinitely Glorious, Good, Good Father, All of the Glory

WELCOME

What's the best advice that your father, or a father-figure in your life has given you?

WORD

ROMANS 8:14-17

14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 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.

The sad reality is that because of fatherlessness, many of us have a difficult time understanding what it means to have God as our Father. The best dad on earth can never compare to our Heavenly Father (**Job 38:4-11**). How are we to respond to our great God? We are to live as God's children! Let's look at the kind of Father He is.

LEADS (Romans 8:14)

Our Heavenly Father is someone who leads His children (**Romans 8:14**). We must understand that not all people are children of God, but only those who receive Jesus and believe in what Jesus has done to save us (**John 1:12**). We also acknowledge that though not all people are children of God, everyone is His "creation", both male and female were created His image (**Genesis 1:27**).

If you are a child of God, He leads you through His Spirit. You will see Him at work and the fruit of the Spirit will be real in your life (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

1. He provides (**Genesis 2:7-9**)

When we look at the first family that God created (Adam and Eve), we see that God leads us by providing for our needs. He gives us life ("breath of life") and gives us food.

2. He protects (**Genesis 2:16-17**)

As a good Father, God commanded His children to stay away from what will harm and destroy them. God's heart is to keep us from sinning and experiencing the awful consequences of sin.

3. He disciplines (**Genesis 3:17,19**)

However, when we do sin, our Heavenly Father

disciplines us. The consequence of sin is death, which came through Adam's disobedience to God. When God disciplines us, it's not for His benefit, but for our good out of His love for us so that we learn from the correction (**Hebrews 12:6**).

Who is leading your life right now? Are you forcing your way to get what you want instead of following His will (ex., who you marry, decisions at work)? If you want to live as His child, let Him lead your life. Don't play "god", let God lead!

LINKS (Romans 8:15-16)

The cultural circumstances around us makes it challenging for us to think of God as "father". In the Old Testament, God was understood to be the Father of the nation of Israel, rather distant, not so much on a personal level (**Deuteronomy 32:6, Exodus 4:22**). During New Testament times, the Greco-Roman perspective of God as Father was taken to the extreme through "Patria Potestas". This Roman law pertains to the "power of the father", that includes authority over all descendants as long as he lived; control of property and finances --- children technically owned nothing; everything belonged to the father. Rights over marriage arrangements of the children and even the right of life and death over newborns. The father was looked upon as this "all-powerful" being to be feared!

In writing to the Romans, Paul wanted them to know that this is not what God as a father looks like; we can have a personal, loving relationship with God, referring to Him as our "Abba, Father", because Jesus radically changed

paradigms, as He referred to God as His "Abba", a term of endearment like "daddy" or "papa" that we use today **(Romans 8:15-16, Mark 14:36)**. If you are a child of God, He is no longer "distant", or an extreme "Patria Potestas" kind of father. God the Father, reinforced this intimate bond, referring to Jesus as "My beloved Son" **(Matthew 3:16-17)**.

A Harvard Business Review study revealed that the top use for gen AI in 2025 showed a shift from technical to emotional applications --- for companionship. Sadly, despite the connectivity we have through technology, more people are experiencing loneliness today. Having God as our Father means that we are never alone --- we have a direct link to the Father through Jesus! The word "adoption" **(Romans 8:15)** reinforces the idea of the intimate link we have to our Heavenly Father. There was a radical provision on adoption in Roman law which reinforces Jesus' new paradigm and our LINK with God as Father: 1-An adopted child lost all ties to their old family. Adult adoption was also allowed, wherein ALL debts and obligations of the adopted person were cancelled. Just like this provision, God adopted us and cancelled all our debts (sins) through Jesus. 2-They came fully under the authority of their new father. 3- They gained full rights of inheritance --- as if born into the family. This is our story --- we are adopted children of God, though we do not deserve it.

LAVISHES (Romans 8:17)

God lavishes an inheritance on all His children because He made us fellow heirs of Christ! This is unimaginable given how we have treated God, as we see in the story of the Prodigal Son **(Luke 15:20-24)**. The lavish welcome of the father upon the return of the son was unheard of in Middle Eastern culture --- the father ran to welcome back his son and gave an extravagant celebration for the occasion. Although we know this as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, it's also about the "prodigal" father. While the son threw away his inheritance through his lavish ("prodigal") lifestyle, the father lavishes forgiveness, acceptance and restoration of the son's privileges as his family member. That's how much the Father lavishes His love on His children. If you're following the Lord, and you are His child, trust that He wants to lavish His love on you in the situation you're in today.

Live like heirs of our Heavenly Father; in and through Jesus Christ, we can be confident not afraid, be a giver not a grabber and be obedient not stubborn. Surrender all to your Heavenly Father as Jesus modeled **(Mark 14:36)**. Live as God's child --- let your Abba, Father lead you, link with you and lavish love on you. Remember that obedience brings blessings, so live your life in obedience to your Father in heaven!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Who is leading your life? You or God?
2. How intimate is your relationship with God? 1-10? What can you do to improve this?
3. Do we live like "heirs" of God? Why or why not?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for families all around you among your relatives, your work environment, school, neighborhood, friends. Ask God to reveal Himself to them as our loving Heavenly Father through their interactions with you and other believers. Share Jesus with them so that through Him, they can be adopted into God's family!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.
- For the rest of the Israeli hostages to be restored to their families safely. For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory.
- Pray for Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism; may this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.
- For protection of Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout their region.
- Pray for Sudanese and Nigerian persecuted Christians; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and

love God, and make disciples

- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:15

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!"