



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## KNOWING GOD AS OUR FATHER

**KEY PASSAGE:** Matthew 6:8-14 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Psalm 32:8 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | Malachi 2:10  
Matthew 6:6, 25-26; 7:7-11; 26:39 | John 8:37-44; 10:27-30; 11:41, 42; 16:13; 17:1 | Romans 8:15-17  
Galatians 3:26 | Philippians 4:19 | Hebrews 12:5-11 | 1 John 3:1-2, 10

### ► SUMMARY

**Perhaps the most reassuring, intimate title of God shared in the Bible is “Father.”**

No matter what our need, we have the privilege of turning to the Sovereign of the universe as a child might turn to an earthly parent. The Father is always there to guide, provide, and protect. What a privilege we have to draw near to the Lord in a close and loving relationship made possible through His Son, Jesus Christ.

### ► SERMON POINTS

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples how to approach God in what is often called “The Lord’s Prayer,” a model for us to follow. He said,

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil!’” (Matt. 6:8-13).

**We can know God as Father because of the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

In the Old Testament, God is called the Father of the Hebrew nation. However, individuals couldn’t claim His fatherhood in any special way for themselves. In contrast, the New Testament reveals that each believer can relate personally to the Father as part of a loving, intimate relationship with their Maker.

### Jesus referred to God as Father.

Christ revealed the Creator to us, not as a transcendent, distant deity, but as a loving, heavenly Father.

- In the model prayer, Jesus instructed His disciples to begin their prayers with “Our Father ...” (Matt. 6:9).
- He explained the importance of doing the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21).
- In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matt. 26:39).
- Fourteen times in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ refers to God as “your Father” (Matt. 5-7).
- When outside the tomb of Lazarus, He said: “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me” (John 11:41).
- The night before the crucifixion, Jesus began His prayer, “Father, the hour has come ...” (v. 17:1).

Jesus always addressed God as Father, and the message of the New Testament is that we are invited to experience a similar relationship with the Lord.

### The apostle Paul also knew God as Father.

Paul began each of his epistles with a reference to Christ. Paul’s theology is based on this intimate relationship; we are children of God, part of His household, and joint-heirs with the Son, Jesus Christ. The message of the apostle’s letters is that we can know our Maker, not just in His greatness, but as a capable and loving Parent.

## Through Jesus Christ, we can know God as our heavenly Father.

In a sense, the Creator is the Father of all humanity. However, it's only through trusting in Jesus that a person becomes a child of God (Gal. 3:26). Some people claim that it doesn't matter if someone believes in Christ, he or she can still have an intimate relationship with God as Father. But that's not what our Savior said (John 8:42).

The good news is that anyone can call on the name of Jesus and become one of God's children. Paul says we "have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Romans 8:15). He lavishes us with affection: "How great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called children of God" (1 John 3:1). Our actions, in general, will reflect that we belong to Jesus (v. 10).

Thankfully, even if we fail from time to time, our relationship with God is sealed and secure. Jesus said of His followers, "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:29).

### How does God express fatherhood toward us?

A good dad cares for and provides for his children. Jesus revealed a loving Father who ...

- **Desires to have an intimate relationship with us.** A friendship with God is possible through Jesus Christ. We can be honest with Him and share our struggles. He is ready to help us overcome temptation and eager to provide for us. Knowing God as Father gives us fellowship and a sense of oneness with Him.
- **Wants to communicate with us.** When we pray, He listens. When He speaks, we can recognize His voice. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened"

(Matt.7:7-8). God is like a good dad who delights in meeting the needs of his children (v. 6:6).

- **Loves us unconditionally.** The Lord is committed to us based on His own loving nature, not a sinless performance. The word "unconditional" may not appear in the Bible, but God the Father loves us just as He loved Jesus (John 17:23).
- **Meets all our needs.** Our Father knows what we need before we ask (Matt. 6:8). We don't have to be anxious about basic provision; He will provide necessities, just as He does for the birds (vv. 6:25-26). No human parent can always be available to help. But we have a loving Father Who never leaves us (John 15:26-27).
- **Disciplines us.** The fact that God corrects us is one of the signs that we are His children (Heb. 12:5-11). Just as earthly parents discipline their kids to help them develop character, the Father corrects us so that we will grow in holiness. It's not pleasant to be chastised, but discipline eventually leads to a harvest of righteousness.
- **Guides us to do the right thing.** Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." Psalm 32:8 expresses a similar reassurance: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will advise you with My eye upon you."

### ► RESPONSE

- Which one of the statements about God as Father is most encouraging to you, and why?
- Have you ever experienced divine discipline? Describe what happened. In what ways is the Lord currently correcting an area of your life or challenging you to a higher level of integrity and fruitfulness?
- The Father guides us to do what is right. When are some moments you've clearly experienced His direction? What is something He's speaking to you about right now?

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