



On My Father's Lap
Drawing Near to Your Father in Heaven
Guidelines for Bible study and Discussion

Introduction

1. What do you expect to get out of this materials? In what way would you like to see your relationship with God change?
2. What kind of father did you have? Is this a difficult or pleasant topic for you?
3. What positive things did your father do? What negative things?

Chapter 1

ABBA FATHER

1. What is the importance of a parent being in control of and caring for their children?

With this in mind, can you try and see God as your parent, especially when trials come?

2. *Father* in Scripture: Look up at least 7 of the following verses and meditate on 3 of them. Write down any thoughts below.
Ps 89:24-26, Ps 103:13, Pr 10:1, Mal 1:6, Is 63:16, Jer 31:9, Mat 6:32, Mat 7:11, Lk 10:21-22, 2 Cor 1:3, Eph 4:6, Col 1:12-13

3. There is a controversy about *Abba Father* being translated as *Daddy*. Do you believe thinking of God in this way brings Him down or is disrespectful? Why or why not?

How can we prevent from having a too casual approach to God?

4. In regards to Jesus' relationship with His Father, what are some ways/verses that show Jesus had:
 - A close relationship?
 - Respected Him?

- Loved Him?
 - Obeyed Him?
 - Continuously communicated with Him?
5. Can you start to see yourself as God's daughter and respond toward Him like Jesus did? Write a prayer expressing to your heavenly Father of your desire to have this perspective and need of His help in achieving it.

Chapter 2
WHY IT IS POSSIBLE TO DRAW CLOSE TO OUR HEAVENLY
FATHER

1. Was the filthy rag illustration helpful to you? In what ways?
2. How does it make you feel to be adopted?

If you are adopted by human parents, or have adopted a child please give your perspective here:

Why do you think adoption is so important to understand?

3. When does eternal life begin? Write out Jn 17:3.
4. Ponder the fact that you, an imperfect sinful person, can approach such a perfect Holy Being. Meditate on Heb 10:19-23. Sing praises to Him for such a privilege. Record any thoughts.
5. If you have never asked God to forgive and cleanse you from your sins, would you do so now?

Chapter 3

WHY WE DON'T DRAW CLOSE TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

1. Are you the typical Christian, going to God only when you need or want something? Or do you also go to Him to be in His presence; to give as well as receive affection? Are you in a position to receive?

Hindrances and Solutions

Wrong concept of God

2. Do any of the views given on page 27 fit you?
If so, look up, study, and meditate on verses that address that specific issue. [I challenge you to put in the effort to change your thinking. Are you willing to? These truths will set you free (Jn 8:32)!]

Here are a few to get you started in each category:

God is uncaring: Ps 8:4, Ps 95:6-8, Is 40:11, 1 Pet 5:7

God is like a policeman: Is 53:3-5, Jer 5:1-11, Joel 2:12-13, Heb 12: 4-11

God is too busy for my little problem: Is 40, Is 30:1-2 (self-reliance)

God is supposed to say yes to all my desires. Ps 37: 3-6, Pr 3:5-6

If you have never studied the attributes of God, here are a few good resources:

Behold Your God by Myrna Alexander

God: As He Longs for You to See Him by Chip Ingram

The Real God by Chip Ingram- updated version of the above

Lack of know-how

1. What do Eph 1:17, Eph 3:14-19, and Col 1:9-10 say?
2. Do you believe God wants to be known?
Do you believe that God could teach you about Himself and His ways?
Are you willing to learn?

For more on this watch: *God Wants to be Known*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FbyaCFMoP4>

Unbelief that God could love you

3. Do you feel unworthy of God's love?

What is the truth found in the Word of God? rephrase point to verse in book

Explain how a simple suffix change to the word worth can make all the difference in the world to accepting God's love.

If you need help in this area:

- Watch *Precious in His Sight* here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpPadSVGrCE&t=6s>

- Meditate on the list below and circle the ones in which you have difficulty believing and look up those verses

your true identity in Christ (Partial List) [Taken from [*Our Knowable God*](#) chapter 9]

A child of God (Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 3:1)

Loved and valued (Is 43:4; Rom 5:8; Lk 12:24)

A friend of Christ (Jn 15:15)

Justified/declared righteous (Rom 5:1)

Redeemed and forgiven of all sins (Col 1:14)
Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11)
Heirs of God (Rom 8:17)
Bought with a price/belong to God (1 Cor 6:19-20)
Adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)
Complete in Christ (Col 2:10)
Free in Christ (Jn 8:36)
New creation (2 Cor 5:17)
Cannot be separated from God's love (Rom 8:35-39)
Chosen (Col 3:12)
Member of Christ's body (1 Cor 12:27)
Have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18)
Not given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7)
Accepted (Eph 1:6 NKJV)

Refusal to Accept His forgiveness

4. Read Heb 7:27 and Heb 10:1-2, 10.
For the believer, is there any sin that God cannot or will not forgive?
5. Why *can* God forgive you?

Meditate on Ps 103:10-12, Rom 8:1. Record any thoughts.

6. What other verses can you remember or find about forgiveness? (Use a concordance or go to Biblegateway.com for help.)

Can you name some biblical characters that were greatly forgiven?
Describe the circumstances and what happened.

7. What role does guilt play in accepting God's forgiveness?

Read Is 6:7, Ps 32:5, Heb 10:22

Are all guilty feelings wrong? What's the difference between good guilt and bad guilt?

8. Would you be able to explain God's forgiveness to someone who's struggling with forgiving themselves? (Being able to verbalize a truth to someone else will help in your own understanding.)

9. Do you agree with this statement by Dr. David Jeremiah?

Not forgiving yourself is saying you have higher standards than God!

Picture Jesus hanging on the cross, with arms outstretched saying, "Isn't this enough? Isn't my precious blood enough for you?"

Repeated sin

10. Name a few areas in which you repeatedly fail God.

11. Do you believe God will help you break that sin habit? Why or why not?

12. Read blog [7 Tips to Help You Break that Sinful Cycle!](#)

What may be a major reason why you can't kick a certain sin habit?

Will you ask for God's help and commit to change?

13. Oftentimes we simply don't want to stop sinning strongly enough.
Read blog [12 Ways to Increase Your DESIRE to Stop Sinning](#)
Were any of these ways new to you?

Which one(s) will motivate you the most to stop that sin?

14. Which sin issue will you commit to work on? Start by getting a few specific verses on that subject and begin applying their truths.

NOTE:

Don't work on more than 1-2 areas at a time! It'll be too overwhelming and you'll feel defeated and demotivated to continue on this lofty, yet wonderful goal. You will not have immediate victory all the time—be prepared to fall short. Satan doesn't want you to stop sinning. He may tempt you even more when you try to change. When you do fail, repent and ask God why you failed this time.

Additionally, ask God what issues you should be working on. Let Him direct your steps. If you're not sure, just start in an area and let the Holy Spirit redirect if necessary. Just start with a heart to please God. **Let your love for Him be your primary motivation.**

Fear

15. If you are afraid to approach God, why do you think that is?
Meditate on Rom 8:15-16, Heb 10:19-23, and 1 Jn 4:18.

Is it possible that the reason you are afraid is because you haven't truly repented?

If so, what do you need to do? Write out Joel 2:12.

Anger toward God

16. How do you typically respond when someone offends you?
17. Are you or have you ever been mad at God? Describe the situation and why you are angry?
18. Is anger toward God ever justified? Explain your answer.
19. What are some truths that will help a person not be angry with God?
Can you name a few verses?

Pride and Independence

20. Do you have a tendency to take control of little things, big things—all things?
21. Why do you think it's so hard for you to surrender control over to God?
22. Has doing it your way ever worked out better than God's?
If yes, explain your answer.

If no, will you begin to trust God?

What are some verses that will help you do just that? If you don't know, use a concordance or website such as Biblegateway.com to find some verses.

Lack of Repentance

23. To which aspects of Abby's story can you relate?

Do you have a similar life's experience when you didn't admit a wrongdoing to your parents, boss, or God?

When you admitted your guilt (if you did), how did you feel?

Remember how good it felt, so you won't wait too long to repent the next time you sin.

24. Abby adored her parents yet she sinned. Do you believe someone who genuinely loves the Lord can sin? Explain.

25. Although not written in the story, do you think Abby's father disciplined her in some way?

26. What does Heb 12:6-12 say about discipline.

Should God discipline us even if we confess our sin? Do you believe He will give you the appropriate amount and type of discipline?

If you had a parent that unjustly or inappropriately punished you, remember that God is good, wise, kind, and has your best interest in mind. He is NOT LIKE YOUR EARTHLY PARENT!

27. Do you ever rationalize/justify a sinful action or tendency? Have you ever confused God's understanding with His justice?

Chapter 4

HOW TO DRAW CLOSE TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

1. Do you only run to your Father when you want or need something?

Do you have kids, friends, or family who only come to you when they want something from you?

How does that make you feel?

2. Did you spend time with your earthly father? (If this is too painful, skip to question 3.)

What are some of the things you did together?

Were they enjoyable? (If not, remember that God is not like your human father.)

3. Do you spend consistent quality and quantity time with God?

If not, what are some of your reasons? (Revisit the last chapter and work on any hindrances that you have identified.)

If busyness of life is one of your reasons, would you be willing to ask God for practical ideas on how to spend more focused time with Him. Can you think of any now?

[*A Place of Quiet Rest*](#) by Nancy DeMoss is a great resource in developing a quiet time of devotion with God.

4. Do you believe God desires for you to enjoy Him and that *He enjoys you*?

If this is hard for you, read and meditate on Deut 30:9-10 and Zep 3:17. Chapter 6 (*Enjoying One Another*) of [Our Knowable God](#) covers this in depth.

Our Heart Attitude

A Willing Heart

5. Can intimacy be forced?

What makes you want to be with someone and develop a close relationship?

6. Have you ever tried to pursue a relationship with someone and they either showed no interest or didn't have time? How did that make you feel?

How do you think God feels when you do the same to Him?

A Receiving Heart

7. Do you have a hard time receiving? From people, from God?

Why do you think that might be?

An Attentive Heart

8. Name some things that *keep* you from focusing on God when you are:

➤ Reading His word:

➤ Praying:

➤ In a trial:

9. What are some things you could do to counteract them?

➤ Reading His Word:

➤ Praying:

➤ In a trial:

10. Have you ever been mesmerized by someone or something?

With God?

How might you become more captivated with God?

Note: It takes great intentionality and effort *even after* you have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Ps 34:8). The world, Satan, and our own agendas easily pull us away from fully concentrating on our Redeemer.

An Expressive Heart

11. What type of things do you personally express to God? Are they only requests or complaints?

12. Do you think it is ok to express negative thoughts to God? Why or why not?

David Jeremiah says if you bring your requests to God without first praising and thanking Him, you not are rejuvenated but burdened with all the difficulties. You are focused on the problems. But if you put the greatness of God first then burdens seem much smaller.

An Adoring Heart

13. Do you believe you have to feel adoration *for* God before you can express adoration *to* Him? Why or why not?

Consider that feelings often follow actions.

A Listening Heart

14. Close communication always involves talking and *listening*. Do you accept the fact that God wants to speak to you?!
15. How does God primarily speak to us? (This is a huge topic and can be controversial. **See Appendix** for an excerpt from [*Our Knowable God*](#) on this topic.)
16. Do you have an experience where you *knew* God had clearly communicated something to you.

Note: *When God speaks He NEVER contradicts what He says in the Bible.*

A Searching Heart

17. Have you ever gone to God and just cried?

Have you ever gone to Him when you didn't even know why you were upset? Describe the circumstances.

Did you sense anything from God? Did God meet you at your point of need?

18. Did you ever have a parent or friend to whom you could just talk things through?
19. Do you see that your heavenly Father is inviting you to discuss *any* issue with Him?

A Believing, Accepting Heart

20. Do you believe what God says in His Word? Do you act on it in faith?

If you have difficulty in believing in the absolute truth of God's Word, consider doing a study on the validity of the Bible.

Resources:

<http://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/the-study-of-god/how-do-we-know-the-bible-is-true/how-do-we-know-bible-is-true>

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-323/the-bible-is-gods-word>

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-248/the-truthfulness-of-scripture>

21. Nobody likes to be reprimanded or disciplined. What does Heb 12:5-11 say about God's discipline?
22. Do you agree that a loving parent should reprimand and discipline their child?
23. If your parents were unjust or abusive disciplinarians, can you accept that God is NOT like them? Ask God for help to do so.

A Submissive Heart

24. What do you think is meant by a submissive heart?

25. Read Ps 46:9-10.
What is the context of verse 9?

If you have access, read verse 10 in the NASB. What is the phrase used in place of "be still?"

26. What are you to do when God tells you or allows things you don't like?

What are you not to do?

27. If you are having a hard time submitting, pray this: *Lord, make me willing to be willing.* Your enabling Father will get you to this place of total surrender.

28. Will you commit to working on the heart attitudes in which you fall short? The closeness you gain with God will far outweigh the cost and effort necessary to achieve the proper mindset. On which one will you begin?

Chapter 5

PICTURING YOURSELF THERE

Stage 1: Seeing God as a Father

1. Are you comfortable in addressing God as Father? What do you usually call Him when praying?
2. Make a list of what you think a good human father should look like. Use a separate sheet to record your thoughts.
 - Look at your list. Are any based on false beliefs? If so, remove them.
 - Look at the remaining items. According to God's inerrant Word, does God measure up?

If you can, write some verses that show how He does for each one.

- If you were blessed to have a great human father, did he *always* and *perfectly* fulfill all the items on your list?
3. Considering your list and how God fulfills them, would you begin to address God as heavenly Father, even if you're not quite there yet? You could pray something like this:

God, I know what Your Word says—that You are My Father. Please help me to see You in that way. I know it in my head, now I want to know it in my heart.

Stage 2: Knowing God is safe and accepting His love

4. Is there anyone with whom you feel safe? Why or why not?

What does it take to feel safe with someone?

5. Do you feel safe with God? Do you trust Him? Usually, sometimes, never? Expound.
6. How can you learn to trust God? (See text in chapter)
7. Did you ever have an “Odie moment”? That is, when you *knew* God met your need, or revealed Himself in a profound way? Describe it here.

Has it changed your view of God; your relationship with Him? In what way?

If you haven't already applied it to your life, will you do so now?

Stage 3: Understanding it's a slow process

8. Would you classify yourself as a patient person? Usually, sometimes, working on it, never?

Was your father a patient man?

Is God patient?

In what ways has your Father shown His longsuffering with you? Name at least one specific way.

Do you think God will be patient with *you* as you learn to understand and accept that you are His precious and cherished daughter? If you struggle with this, can you imagine the words I sensed from my Father on the bottom of page 49-50 being said to you? ["Yes, honey..."]

9. Where are you on your journey?

Is sitting next to Jesus easier for you to picture at this point? Then start there.

Note: I am not implying you should ever stop picturing yourself going to Jesus, even after you can envision being on your *Abba* Father's lap.

10. What is the most important thing to remember about this word picture of sitting on your Father's lap? (see p 51-52)

11. Do you believe one can stand still in a relationship?

12. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

How close we become or stay largely depends upon us.
[In regards to our relationship with God]

Chapter 6

A HELPFUL EXERCISE

1. Do you ever personalize Scripture? Why is this so helpful?

2. Do the exercise described in chapter 6. If you are not able to listen to the audio [found [here](#)], then at least speak the words OUTLOUD.
Allow sufficient time to do the exercise, at least 30 minutes so you won't feel rushed.
Note: References used in the exercise are in the endnote in the book.

Was the exercise helpful in moving you closer to God? Describe your experience.

3. Will you accept God's precious Word spoken to you as the *truth*?

You are His precious daughter!

Chapter 7

WHEN IT'S TIME TO GET OFF THE FATHER'S LAP

1. Have you ever been afraid to do what God has asked of you? Describe the circumstances.
2. In what ways are you currently serving God?
3. Is God leading you (or do you sense He may be leading you) to do something?
 - An action step in a relationship, a habit to break or start, some act of obedience?
 - In ministry? Describe.

Why do you believe or sense this? That is, what circumstances, people, messages, or Word from God have you received to believe that this is or may be what He wants you to do?

4. If you are afraid to step out like I was, picture your *Abba* Father placing your hand in Jesus' hand, with the next step in front of you illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Hear from behind your Holy Father saying reassuringly, "This is the right way; walk in it."

Meditate on: Ps 119:105, Is 30:21, and Ps 73:23-24.

5. Remember you are not going alone! He is with you every step of the way. Feel free to run back to His lap anytime you get frightened.

CONCLUSION

How has this book helped you?

If you would like to discuss any of the questions or need clarification, please feel free to contact me: rose@heisworthit.com

If you have found this material helpful would you consider being a part of my mission and help me expand this ministry? I help people connect with their invisible God in a deeper way so that they can experience a contented Christ-filled life every day.

If you know anybody who wants that (maybe you?) I have something to give them (you):

My free E-book **[7 Secrets to the Abundant Life](#)**.



Here are other ways you can help me get the word out:

- Tell others about this book and my website. **[He's So Worth It Ministries](#)**
- Write a book review on Amazon.
- Subscribe to my weekly blog if you haven't already and make comments on the blogs. Even a simple *Amen* is helpful.
- Spread the word on social media and email; comment on and share my Facebook posts.
- Pray.

Thank you for your support. Be on the lookout for more freebies in the future!

APPENDIX

Suggested schedule for small group Bible Studies

These guidelines are designed for a 6-week course, 1.5 hour sessions with a small group of 5-12 women. Note: use your discretion as to which questions to discuss in your own particular group. Some of these questions are not necessarily meant to be shared publically.

Class 1

Intro and chapter 1

Class 2

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 through Hindrance: *Unbelief that God could love you* (page 29)

Class 3

Finish chapter 3

Class 4

Chapter 4 through “A Searching Heart” (page 43)

Class 5

Finish chapter 4 and do chapter 5

Class 6

Chapters 6, 7, and Conclusion

For Chapter 4 under A Listening Heart

Excerpt from *Our Knowable God Communicating with Each Other*

HOW HE SPEAKS

So how does God speak to us? First, He speaks to all mankind through His creation. When you look at the number of stars in the heavens, or the immensity of the oceans, or the uncountable grains of sand on just one beach, don't you sense the vastness of it all? When you wonder at the complexity of nature, the intricate details of a cell's function, the symbiotic relationship between coral and algae, the migration of birds, or a bee pollinating a flower, don't you sense there has to be a designer? When you view the breathtaking mountains or the Grand Canyon, aren't you stunned by their majesty and grandeur? When you look at the colors of flowers or autumn leaves, the intense hues of a sunset, the shapes and sizes of plants and animals, the complex pattern of a cat's fur or a peacock's feathers, aren't you in awe of their beauty? When you see the force of a tidal wave, lightning bolt, or hurricane, don't you tremble at its formidable power? That's God speaking! Just as art reflects the artist, so too does creation reflect the Creator. He's telling us of His greatness, His immenseness, His intelligence, His imagination, His control, His majesty, His beauty, and His divine almighty power! Creation also tells us that He is there, that He is real. Creation truly proclaims the work of the Lord (Ps 19:1)!

Secondly, God speaks to His people directly. "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways" (Heb 1:1). In *Experiencing God*, Blackaby and King explain that God does speak *clearly* to His people. The Old Testament people knew that it was God speaking to them, and they knew what He said. In the gospels, God spoke through His Son, Jesus.ⁱ

God can clearly speak to believers because we have the Holy Spirit residing within us. He does so primarily through His Word, prayer, His people (the church), and circumstances....

HOW TO LISTEN TO AND RECOGNIZE GOD'S VOICE

What I have learned is that it takes diligence and a great desire, but it is invariably worth the effort....

GUIDELINES

1. Understand a few facts:

- This is a lifelong process of learning....

2. Learn the ways in which God speaks

God doesn't speak to us in the same way as humans. Although God could speak audibly, today He chooses not to. However, there have been times when God spoke to me so pointedly that it wouldn't have been any clearer if He had spoken out loud. I've heard others say the same thing. God is capable of anything. And if He wants to communicate with His child, He can do so unmistakably and clearly....

One of the methods He uses to communicate with us is speaking directly to our hearts.... While He may speak clearly on occasion, often I have found that He communicates to me more with a general sense of His will, which He confirms with time....

God's communication to us can come in various forms. It could be a conviction of the Holy Spirit for something we've done wrong, which manifests itself as guilt. It could be a warning with a small or great sense of uneasiness. It could be a burden on our hearts to pray or call someone, or for a ministry need. It could be a sense of urgency to do something right away, or simply a sense of overwhelming peace, love, or comfort.

I cannot verbalize exactly how God conveys His message to us. All I know is that He does....

The other thing I must say here is a warning about our emotions. It is so easy to confuse our feelings as God's voice, especially when we desperately want something. We have to be extremely careful not to run ahead of God if we are sensing something, and to remember God only speaks to us in accordance with His will. Ask the Lord to confirm it somehow. I have made too many mistakes in this area, so now I often plead with God to make His will clear about a matter, and He has

always come through—provided I am yielded, truly seeking, and willing to wait for His answer.

ⁱ Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 1990), 73, 74, 76.