



Links Players

Knowing God | The Lord as Father

...because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7, ESV)

How many golfers were introduced to this game by their dads? Our dads' passion for golf found its way down the family tree at some point in our youth and lodged deep in our souls.

It seems like yesterday when my dad took me to the local sporting goods store and bought my first set of clubs. As great as many Christmases have been, none compares to that summer day. I slightly exaggerate!

I am watching this happen again with my son-in-law and my grandson. Did I mention he won the Junior Club Championship for his age bracket this past summer? His dad and I also watched in anguish as he finished tied for fourth in a Georgia Junior PGA event, collapsing on his final hole. I'm not sure who was hurt more—Dad, the grandson, or the granddad.

The joy of being loved by and loving our dads in return is one of life's greatest joys! My dad, now 95 years old, no longer plays golf, but I have enough golf memories for a few lifetimes.

As meaningful as these moments and memories are, they pale in comparison to being loved by our Father in heaven. Even now, after walking with the Ancient of Days for forty-seven years, every other joy is a distant second to understanding him as "Abba," and craving deeper experiences of his love.

To know God as Father through the Son is the summum bonum of life. To have our hearts ravished by the love of the eternal Father, and to know deep down in the marrow of our bones his abiding affection for us, his sons and daughters, is the most remarkable treasure one can find in this life.

In Jesus' farewell discourse, he tells the remaining eleven disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." (John 15:9). That is mind-boggling! To think of the inestimable love that God the Father has for God the Son, and to begin to understand that he loves us just like that, is way over this country boy's mental capacities.

Paul says, "...the love of Christ controls me..." (2 Corinthians 5:14). By that, Paul did not mean his love for Christ; rather, he means Christ's love for him, which motivated, sustained, and raptured his heart.

For this former Jewish Pharisee who once persecuted Christians, the "love of God" is not just an external idea; instead, the "love of the Father" is an internalized experience and ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit. Paul reminds us, "...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:5)."

For Paul, the Father's love expressed through Christ's love was the defining reality of his life. May it be the defining reality of our lives, as well.

Prayer: Jesus! Send the Spirit to breathe on us that we might "taste and see the goodness of God" as Father.

READING: Galatians 4:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:6-15; John 15:9; Romans 5:1-5.

1. Dredge up some fond memories from childhood or young adulthood and enjoy reminiscing with one another about memories of golf with dad.

2. After reading these texts, why is Paul emphasizing the "love of God" found in the love of Christ?

3. Application: If you are a "quart low" on knowing and experiencing the love of Christ, what are some practical ways to position yourself to receive his love?
