

“God’s Favorite Name Is Father”

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By Max Lucado

SAN ANTONIO—Of all his names, *Father* is God’s favorite. We know he loves this name most because this is the one He used most. While on earth, Jesus called God ‘Father’ more than 200 times.

■ In His first recorded words Jesus explained, “Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49).

■ In His final triumphant prayer He proclaims, “Father, I give You My life” (Luke 23:46).

■ In the Gospel of John alone, Jesus repeats this name 156 times. God loves to be called Father. After all, didn’t Jesus teach us to begin our prayer with the phrase, “Our Abba”?

Abba was an everyday word. It was a homely family word. The equivalent would be Poppa, Daddy or Dad. It is right for you to call God your Creator, indeed He is. You speak truth when you call Him your Master, indeed He is. It is appropriate for you to call Him your King, Lord and Sovereign God. But, if you want to touch His heart, call Him by the name He loves to hear. Call Him *Abba*. Call him your *Father*.

Some time ago my daughter and I spent several days in the Old City of Jerusalem. One afternoon, as we were exiting the Jaffa gate, my daughter and I found ourselves in a throng of people. From somewhere in the crowd we heard the voice of a small child. “Abba! Abba!” We turned and looked. There was a young girl, perhaps 4 or 5 years of age. She had become separated from her family. As the people were rushing passed, she was stopped and afraid. “Abba! Abba!”

From out of nowhere, her father appeared. By looking at his hair and clothing, I knew, he was a Hasidic Jew. When he heard his daughter cry *Abba!*, he had realized that she was separated from the family. I watched closely; I wanted to see what an *abba* would do.

He hurried over to her. Nothing was going to stop him from reaching his daughter. He immediately lowered himself to her level. He held her close. He

then looked at her in the face and brushed away the tear. He gave her a firm word. He then stood and lifted her up. She wrapped her arms around his neck and legs around his waist. He held her as they descended the ramp. When he stopped at a busy street, she stepped off the curb, so he pulled her back. When the signal changed, he led her and her sisters through the intersection. In the middle of the street, he reached down and swung her up in his arms and continued their journey.

That is what an abba does. Isn't that what God has done for us? When we wandered away, He found us. When He found us, He lowered Himself to our level. He brushed away our tears. He gave us a word of correction. He picked us up and He is leading us home. You have an Abba.

I know what some of you are thinking. *Yeah, God does that for some people. For good people. For strong people. Not me. I'm just ho-hum. I'm just average. I'm just measly old, little old, common, ordinary me.*

Really? Because I read something else. According to what I read in the Bible, you are anything but ordinary. I read that when you said yes to Jesus, He said yes to you, that, when you gave Him your heart, He returned the favor and gave you His.

I read that your Abba "has blessed [you] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

That you are a "new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

I read that you "have obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 1:11).

You are ". . . heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

I read that you are: "an ambassador of Christ . . ." (2 Cor. 5:20) ". . . the fragrance of Christ . . ." (2 Cor. 2:15) ". . . transformed into the image of Christ" (Rom. 8:29).

I read that you have been "delivered . . . from the power of darkness and conveyed . . . into the kingdom of the Son" (Col. 1:13). I read that ". . . no one will snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

Normal? I don't think so. I read that if you "Ask, you shall receive, seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you" (Mt. 7:7). "Whatever you ask in the name of your Father that will be given unto you" (Jn. 16:23).

I even read this: "Greater is he who is in you than He who is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4).

You used to be normal, ho-hum, and average. No longer. You are not who you used to be! You are:

- God's child (John 1:12)
- Christ's friend (John 15:15)
- A member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:27)
- A saint (Eph. 1:1)
- Redeemed and forgiven of all your sins (Col. 1:14)
- Complete in Christ, lacking in nothing (Col. 2:10)
- Free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1–2)
- God's coworker (2 Cor. 6:1)
- Seated with Christ in the heavenly realm (Eph. 2:6)
- God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)
- A citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20)
- Adopted into God's family (Eph. 1:5)
- Born of God, and the evil one cannot touch you (1 John 5:18)
- You have been bought with a price . . . you belong to God (1 Cor. 6:20)
- You cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom. 8:35)

It seems to me that your Abba has high affection for you! If you have taken on the name of Christ, then you have clout. When you speak, God listens. When you pray, heaven takes note. What you bind on earth is bound in heaven. What you loose on earth is loosed in heaven. Your prayer impacts the actions of God.

Why? Because you are a child of God. And you have a good Father . . . a good, good Father.