

He Pities Us Like A Father

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A loving and responsible father loves and takes good care of his children. We must be thankful for such fathers, especially godly fathers who nurture, admonish and care for us according to God's Word. It is a sad reality that many other children do not enjoy the love, care and sweet fellowship from their fathers in this cursed and sinful world, all because of men's sinful and selfish human nature. We are painfully aware that there are miserable children (who have been abandoned by their fathers) begging on the streets or doing hard manual work in order to subsist. Some turn to gambling or drugs or gangs due to their fathers failing to properly instruct and discipline them. In extreme cases, some others are even abused and beaten by drunken or violent fathers. To such disadvantaged children, the picture of a loving and caring father is an alien idea to their hearts and minds.

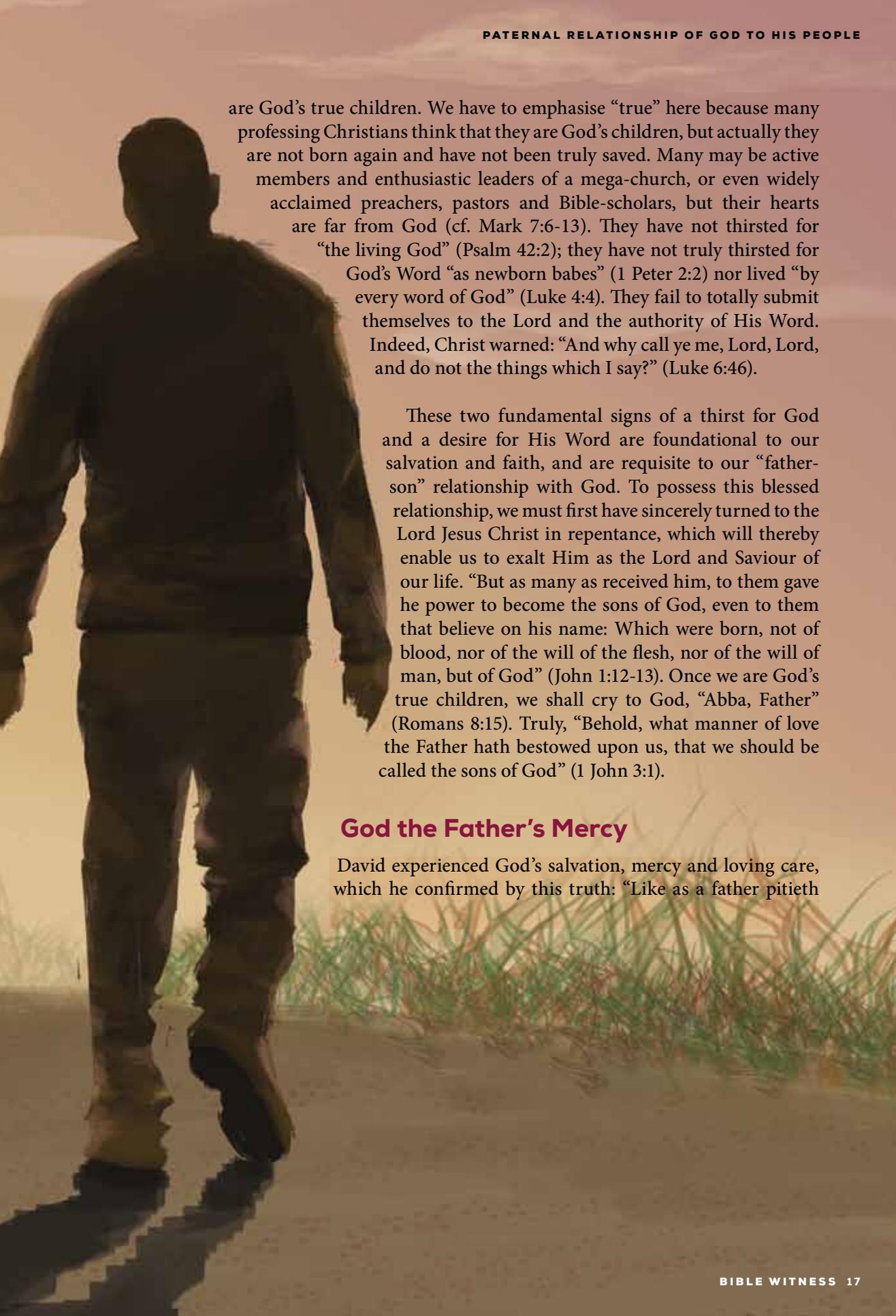
Granted, there are conscientious earthly fathers who love their children and work

very hard to take good care of them and provide for their every need. Yet they are but a far cry from God the Creator, who is always a good, loving, caring, merciful and almighty heavenly Father to His children. How blessed are they who have tasted the love and care from God their Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ their Saviour! They can say like David: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). They do not feel abandoned or forsaken at all, for they have a blessed "father-son" relationship with God!

The Father-Son Relationship

It is a great blessing to have a Christian father who is God's true son, as well as to have Christian children who





are God's true children. We have to emphasise "true" here because many professing Christians think that they are God's children, but actually they are not born again and have not been truly saved. Many may be active members and enthusiastic leaders of a mega-church, or even widely acclaimed preachers, pastors and Bible-scholars, but their hearts are far from God (cf. Mark 7:6-13). They have not thirsted for "the living God" (Psalm 42:2); they have not truly thirsted for God's Word "as newborn babes" (1 Peter 2:2) nor lived "by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). They fail to totally submit themselves to the Lord and the authority of His Word. Indeed, Christ warned: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

These two fundamental signs of a thirst for God and a desire for His Word are foundational to our salvation and faith, and are requisite to our "father-son" relationship with God. To possess this blessed relationship, we must first have sincerely turned to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance, which will thereby enable us to exalt Him as the Lord and Saviour of our life. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). Once we are God's true children, we shall cry to God, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). Truly, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1).

God the Father's Mercy

David experienced God's salvation, mercy and loving care, which he confirmed by this truth: "Like as a father pitieth

his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him” (Psalm 103:13). The Hebrew word translated as “pity” comes from the root verb *rukhamāh*, which means “to have compassion, to have mercy”. Quoting from The Complete Word Study Dictionary (AMG), “the word pictures a deep, kindly sympathy and sorrow felt for another who has been struck with affliction or misfortune, accompanied with a desire to relieve the suffering. The word occurs forty-seven times in the Old Testament, with God being by far the most common subject and His afflicted people the object ... Though the Lord showed compassion, it was not because of any meritorious work the recipient had done; it was solely due to God’s sovereign freedom to bestow it on whom He chose (Exodus 33:19; cf. Romans 9:14-16).”

Indeed, God has shown His common love, grace and mercy to all mankind, and “left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). The unsurpassed climax of God’s mercy was demonstrated when “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). For those who have been saved and born again in Christ, God’s special mercy is manifested in the following (though not exhaustive) ways:

Loving Care

God, as our heavenly Father, loves and cares for us, just as our earthly fathers do so for their children. Unlike our earthly fathers who sometimes (or rather, oftentimes)

cannot care for their children sufficiently (thereby causing them to feel a tinge of guilt in their hearts), our Almighty Father’s loving care is always great and perfect. “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matthew 6:31-32). Let us wisely seek God’s Kingdom and His righteousness first (v. 33), and learn to cast “all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Loving Comfort

Just as it pains our heart when our children suffer illness, accidents, afflictions or trials, our merciful God is also “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15). While we usually try to comfort them to soothe their sufferings and pains, God the Father, ironically, may allow His children to go through tough times to mould them and let them experience more of His love and mercy. Job’s pitiful plight (by the permissive will of God) is a classic case in point. Man’s comfort may fail like that of Job’s three friends (or rather, “miserable comforters”), but God’s loving comfort is sweet, tender and perfect. As “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3), He will surely show His mercy to His children in their afflictions. And in His Son, “what a Friend we have in Jesus, (who) all our sins and griefs to bear”. God knows our frame (which consists of nothing but weaknesses and infirmities), and His grace is always sufficient for His children (Psalm 103:14; cf. 2 Corinthians

12:9). Let us, therefore, run to our merciful Father to receive His comfort in our times of troubles and trials, “that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Loving Guidance

Earthly fathers who truly love their children will want them to make wise choices and decisions in various aspects of their life and to walk in the right way. How much more God our heavenly Father in regard to His children! God gently directs and guides His children to walk in the narrow way that leads to life, and to do His Will according to His Word. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Let us fear God with a humble and meek heart to receive His loving guidance in this world that is filled with confusion and deception. Truly, “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way... What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose” (Psalm 25:9, 12).

Loving Protection

As loving fathers, we want our children to be protected from all harm and danger. We become anxious and worried when we cannot protect them as we should. Not so for our Almighty Father. He is completely able to protect us by His loving and omnipotent Hand. Like a father who holds his child’s hand while they walk together, the heavenly Father will also hold the hands of His people along life’s treacherous journey (cf. Isaiah 41:13a). The father holds the child’s hand in

order to protect the child from falling and to provide assurance of safety. Likewise, God also mercifully promises to protect His people, saying, “Fear not; I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:13b). Realising this truth should make us run to Him for His loving protection. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:28-29).

How to Enjoy God’s Mercy

God shows His mercy to those who fear Him [“so the LORD pitieth them that fear him” (Psalm 103:13b)] and to those who acknowledge their sins and come back to God in repentance [“but whoso confesseth and forsaketh (his sins) shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13b)]. We see this truth manifested in the prodigal son’s repentance of his sins: he decided to come back home and was duly welcomed by his merciful and loving father. “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20).

Let us fear God, and depart from sin and evil. Let us come back to God our merciful heavenly Father in repentance, and let us always abide in His Presence to enjoy His “pity” or mercy, together with all the attendant loving care, comfort, guidance and protection that come with it. Amen.

