



“ABBA! FATHER!”



## ***ROMANS 8:15-16***

<sup>15</sup> For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God...



## ***SOME QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE TODAY***

- It has become trendy in the broader religious community to “casualize” interaction with God. The intent, not totally without merit, is to get away from viewing God in a stuffy, distant, ritualistic/formulaic way, and instead relate to Him intimately, casually, and in familial terms (such as “Daddy God”).
- Is this appropriate or Biblical? What does it mean that God is our Father, and how does our language reflect that relationship? What can we be doing better to fully understand and embrace God as He reaches out to us?



## ***ABBA! FATHER!***

- Some mistakenly assume that the term is childish, as if it was viewed by Jesus and others in His time as “baby talk.” While it’s true that the word Abba is easy to say, and one of the first verbalizations of a baby, it was not used in that time to formulate a stunted, immature view of God (or any father, for that matter).
- It represents child-like trust. Notice that I didn’t say *childish*, but *child-like*. There are many words that are easy to say, but have huge significance (such as “No”), while others words are easy to say but are childish in nature (“I have a boo boo”).



## ***ABBA! FATHER!***

- The phrase appears three times in the New Testament, beginning with the utterance of Jesus Himself in Mark 14:36. He is expressing unwavering trust in God, even as He buckles under the pressure of His circumstance.
- Galatians 4:6 amazingly draws a connection between us and Jesus Christ. It is “His Spirit” sent into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” This is no less than an invitation to share in the Father-Son relationship that we see between Jesus and God. Because we are adopted members of His house, we share in all the family blessings, privileges, and intimacy (Heb. 2:10-18).

to a...  
in Matt. 23... shall  
the R.V. "shall  
in the Middle Voice sense...  
Matt. 18:4; 2 Cor. 12:21 and Phil.  
Cp., *tapeinos*, lowly, *tapeinōsis*, humiliation, and...

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### ABBA

ABBA (Ἀββᾶ) is an Aramaic word, found in Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6. In the Gemara (a Rabbinical commentary on the Mishna, the traditional teaching of the Jews) it is stated that slaves were forbidden to address the head of the family by this title. It approximates to a personal name, in contrast to "Father," with which it is always joined in the N.T. This is probably due to the fact that "Abba" having practically become a proper name, Greek-speaking Jews added the Greek word *patēr*, father, from the language they used. "Abba" is always joined in by the lips of infants, and betokens unreasoning trust; "father" expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child.

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### ABHOR

(ἀποστύγέω) denotes to shudder (ἀπο, from, here hence, to abhor, Rom. 12:9. ¶ der foul (from *bdeō*, to stink) Lev. 11:43; 20: self away

**ABBA! FATHER!**

## **ROMANS 8:12-17**

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— <sup>13</sup> for if you are living in accord with the flesh, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God. <sup>15</sup> For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.



# ***CHILD-LIKE TRUST, GROWN-UP UNDERSTANDING***

So, “Abba! Father!” is the beautiful combination of two qualities that both must thrive in Christians. Like small children, we hold our arms out to our Heavenly Father. We know Him and He knows us. We trust Him. We rely on Him. But like reasoning adults, our relationship to God is not “one note.” It is multi-faceted and fills more than just one need. Along with simple trust, we also feel meaning, belonging, intellectual challenge, virtue, bold courage, and perspective.





***1 CORINTHIANS 14:20***

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babies,  
but in your thinking be mature.



## ***IN EVIL, BE LIKE BABIES***

- All analogies break down if bent too far (Jesus compares Himself to a chicken in Matthew 23, remember?). So we are not to “be converted like children” in *every* way (Matthew 18:3-4).
- We are being called to emulate the simple trust of children. It’s ironic that as we get older, most of our big problems in life come because of a failure to trust (trust in a marriage, trust in leadership, trust in a process of some kind). It is not a bad thing to trust (Psalm 131). Oh, how hard we have to work to regain a quality that came so easily to us at one point in life!



## ***IN EVIL, BE LIKE BABIES***

- Children also have a sense of awe and wonder. It gets lost along the way, replaced by cynicism, pragmatism, boredom, and bitterness.
- And then there is innocence! Because they trust their parents, children accept the message that there are “good” things and “bad” things. Choices are binary, and often straightforward. But Satan comes along and muddies the water, offering alternative explanations to things that should be obvious (“Don’t eat from that tree, for you shall die” suddenly becomes debatable). We need our hearts turned back to the children (Luke 1:17).

# ***BUT IN YOUR THINKING***

## ***BE MATURE***

- Isaiah 46:3-4 beautifully shows that God is our Father at every age – *some things never change* – but acknowledges we change throughout our lives. As we journey from baby to “graying years” we should grow in our thinking.
- 1 Peter 2:1ff – We must “grow” and be “built up.”
- Hebrews 5:12-14 – A lack of growth is frustrating to God. We have work to do, spiritual goals, a Great Commission that requires our participation. We are the hands and feet in Christ’s body. So the writer calls for “practice” and having “senses trained.” We must “grow up” (Ephesians 4:15).