

FAITH IS ACTION

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“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Galatians 4:6



Abba, Father

By R.G. Hardy

This is the month we honor fathers and celebrate *Father's Day*, and the greatest father of all is our *Heavenly Father*. If you are a blood-washed child of God, *He is your Father*. In fact, the Bible tells us that not only is God our Father, but we can address Him in the most familiar and endearing term: "*Abba Father.*"

The Aramaic term *Abba* is one of affection and familiarity and was used on a daily basis by the children within the family circle. Our English equivalent could literally be translated *Daddy*.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:6-7).

When you are a son or daughter, there is no intimidation in your heart. When there is no sin in your life to bring condemnation, you can come boldly to your Father and cry, "*Abba Father,*" and know that

everything is going to be all right. It is only when there is sin in one's life that he cannot come boldly to the throne of God and cry, "*Dear Dad,*" because his heart condemns him, and God is greater than his heart and knows all things (Ref. 1 Jn. 3:20-21). But when everything is under the blood, God sends forth His sonship spirit into your heart crying, "*Abba Father!*"

The Fear Factor

Only sinners and the ungodly and unrighteous are afraid of God. To His children, He is a loving, protective, caring Father, *and there is no fear in His perfect love*. The sinner, who still has a healthy conscience and knows his deeds are evil, is terrorized by God. And of a truth, God's Word declares, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God!*" (Heb. 10:31). *God is angry with the wicked everyday!* In fact, during the Great Tribulation when God begins to roll back the cover and lets men see His judgments, they will run to

the rocks and the mountains and cry, “*Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*” (Rev. 6:16).

What was the initial reaction of Adam and Eve after they had disobeyed God and sinned in the Garden? When they heard the voice of God walking in the Garden, *they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God*. They had never feared the presence of God before. They had never hidden themselves from His presence before. But when one is not living right and he knows it, he becomes afraid when he gets near the presence of God. He wants to run from God’s Spirit and presence, because there is sin and condemnation in his life. Paul said, “*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*” (Heb. 4:13).

What about when there is no sin and no disobedience in a person’s life, and yet he still feels fearful in the presence of God? Often this is the case of someone who has not been saved for very long. This happened to me right after I first got saved. I would get away in my prayer closet and begin to meditate on the Lord, and soon the presence of God would come right down in my room. At first I felt uneasy and afraid. But the Spirit of God would speak to my heart; “*There is noth-*

ing to fear in the presence of God. He is your Father! He loves you! He is here to fellowship with you.”

John said that when *our love is made perfect*, then we have boldness, even in the day of judgment: “*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts our fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love*” (1 Jn. 4:17-18).

A child of God should never fear his Father. When we understand what our Father God has done to remove His anger toward us, by giving the life and blood of His Son Jesus to remove our sins and iniquities that had alienated us from Him, and caused Him to hide His face from us, we can only cry out, “*Abba Father.*” This is exactly the kind of relationship God desires that we have with Him. As our Father, He is responsible for our care and well-being. Having given His very best in Jesus, will He withhold any lesser thing?

God Is For Us!

“*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*” (Rom. 8:31-32).

The term *freely* denotes two things: *Without price to us*. Secondly, *God is not stingy*, but the manner in which He gives to us is abundantly! Jesus said, “*I have come*

that they might have life, and have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).

Peter said, *“According to His divine power, hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...” (2 Pet. 1:3).* It is His intention that we freely partake of all He has freely given. *“Let us therefore come boldly (not in fear or condemnation) to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).*

In the natural, a little son or daughter does not fear to come to Daddy and ask for something. He or she just jumps up on Dad’s lap and gives him a big hug and says, *“Daddy, Can I have...?”* There is no fear of judgment or anger. Even if Dad says, “No,” he is not going to hurt them. Chances are, he is not going to be able to resist that little one’s request when he or she comes endearingly and says, *“O Daddy, I love you!”*

I am not afraid of my Father God. *I am a son—not a servant.* In Bible times, a servant would not have dared to call his master “Abba.” This terminology was reserved only for the *children* of the master. I am not afraid to go to my Father and say, *“Dear Dad.”* Because I am His child, He has sent forth His sonship spirit into my heart crying, *“Abba Father,”* and as His son, I can ask for my petition without fear or hesitation.

If we allow him, the enemy will try to put us under condemnation.

He tells a lot of Christians, *“You don’t deserve God’s blessings.”* None of us deserve anything from God! If God had given me what I deserved, I would be in hell today, but when I was unloveable and a slave to sin, He loved me, and saved me, and begat me into His family, and made me *His son!*

Saved From Wrath

“For when we were yet without strength (powerless to resist sin), in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:6-9).

I know I don’t deserve God’s love, but the fact is, He loved me anyhow, even when I was in my ungodly state of sin and disobedience. And now that I stand justified in His sight by the blood of His Son Jesus, I do not fear His wrath or His vengeance or His power or His judgment, because I am His child, and He is my Father! I have been begotten into the family of God, *and I am not a stepchild either!* My Father doesn’t have any *stepchildren*. Either you are a child of God or not, and if you are, then we are all one in Christ! And this means we

all have *equal opportunity*.

The Gospel is the only place where you will find equal opportunity. God doesn't have any big "I's" and little "you's." He doesn't have any under-privileged children. Paul said in Gal. 3:28, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ!*"

The Jews thought they were the greatest of all nations, because they are God's chosen people. The Greeks thought they were the wisest of all men, and the rest were all barbarians. The Jew was proud because he was a Jew and knew God, and the Greek was proud because he was a Greek and knew wisdom and philosophy. Paul was stating the social order of that day, and he said that in Christ, none of these credentials mean anything. In fact, Paul stated in Philippians his own background, that he was a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, but he counted all that as *dung* that he might win Christ! (Phil. 3:5-8).

"Dear Dad"

I'm not a stepchild: I am a son of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ! I am one of the family, and I can come boldly to the Father's throne and ask for my needs. Jesus promised me in the Word: "*Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you*" (Matt. 7:7).

I knocked on the door. The

Father answered, "*Who is it?*" I replied without fear, "*Your son!*" "*Come on in, Son!*" He called. Running to His everlasting arms I cried, "*Abba Father—Dear Dad—This is what I need!*"

Providing for the family and for the children is the *Father's responsibility* in God's order of government. In fact, He said that if any provide not for his own house, *he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel* (1 Tim. 5:8). An infidel is someone who does not even believe in God. If God holds the man responsible to take care of the needs of his natural family, **how much more is our Heavenly Father going to provide for His own?**

The children do not worry about where the rent money is going to come from, or where the groceries are going to come from. They just grow and play and go to school, and know that Mom and Dad will take care of all of these things. They don't worry about it or fret about it. They play until they're tired and hungry, and then when they come in from play they want to know, "*Hey, what ya got to eat?*"

Whenever they want something, they just go to Dad (or Mom) and tell them what they want, and they use those familiar terms of endearment that only they can use to address that parent: "*Daddy.*" It's kind of like when a boy goes away to summer camp or to college when he's older. He needs some cash, and

he knows where he can get it, so he sits down and writes a letter home:

*“Dear Mom & Dad:
I am fine. I miss you.
Love, Your Son*

P.S. Dear Dad: Send money!”

He knows that Dad has the money, and even if Dad doesn't want to send it to him, he knows that Mom will make him. Dad might hold the purse strings, but Mom holds the man! That son rests assured that his father will provide for his needs, and he doesn't hesitate to ask him, *because he is his son!*

This is how God intended for the natural family to be provided for. The father is to be the provider and need supplier of the family. The children are to have confidence and security that Dad will provide for all of their needs, and they do not fear him, because his manifestation of love for them is proven everyday as he provides for their care and material needs. I remember when I was a little boy my mother would sing this song to me. It describes in a child's terms the order of the family members' responsibilities:

*“Little fishies in the brook,
Daddy catch 'em with the hook,
Mama fry them in the pan,
Baby eat 'em like a man!”*

How Much More Shall?

If God holds the earthly father

responsible to take care of the needs of his family, and He *demands* it of the earthly father to provide for them, *how much more will He take care of His household of faith?* In Eph. 2:19, Paul said, *“We are the household of God.”* We are God's responsibility. As His children, God has certain responsibilities to us, and this includes having all of our needs supplied.

If God holds the natural father responsible for his child's welfare, to supply his needs, and if he does not, then God does not count him saved, but worse than an infidel and a denier of the faith, do you mean to tell me that He is not going to supply the needs of His children? Do you mean to tell me that the love of God is not greater than the love of the human parent, when it cost Him the precious blood of His Only Begotten Son to bring us to birth? Jesus said, *“If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, **how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good gifts to them that ask?”*** (Matt. 7:11).

We all can quote John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world...”* But what kind of love did the Father have for us? When God put all the silver and gold and riches of the world on the scales opposite just one soul, it could not balance it: *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”* (Mk. 8:36).

When there was no price that could be exchanged for my salvation and redemption, He did not withhold *His Only Begotten Son!* The Father reached into the heavens, as it were, and plucked out the *Bright and Morning Star*. He looked at His own right hand, at the *Sun of Righteousness*, the One in Whom He delighted, and said, “*I have to choose between You and sinful Hardy,*” and He chose *me!*

Jesus, the Word of God became flesh, took the punishment, and paid the penalty for R.G. Hardy’s sins, while I went free! The Father spared not His own Son, this One of whom He testified three times speaking out of heaven, “*This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*”

When we were rebels, haters of God, and blasphemers, the Father loved us with such a love that He would not hold back Jesus, but He plucked Him up, *the Jewel of Mankind, the Lily of the Valley*, and placed Him on the scales of judgment and retribution for sin and His broken law, so that He could save and deliver us out of hell and from all of the power of the devil!

Having made such great sacrifice to deliver us and bring us to the new birth as His sons, do you think that now He is going to abandon us and neglect us? In the O.T., speaking to the children of Israel who were not born-again in the N.T. sense, God declared, “*Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should*

not have compassion on the son of her womb?” And the Bible answers, “*Yes, she can.*” Sad to say, we have heard reports of mothers abandoning their children, and even murdering their own babies. But God told His children, “*Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee: Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands...*” (Isa. 49:15-16).

Heirs Of God

God wants us to take our place as His sons. We are no longer servants of sin, under fear of His judgment, *but we are sons and heirs!* “*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage (slavery) again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (sonship), whereby we cry, Abba, Father*” (Rom. 8:15).

The Greek word for *adoption* means “*placed as a son.*” It refers to one’s new relationship within the family with all of its rights, privileges, and responsibilities. Legally, it means to be an *heir*. This son and heir has no fear of the Father, but knowing that he is a son and not a slave, he cries out, “*Abba, Father!*”

“*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...*” (vs. 16-17).

On one hand, we are heirs of God. We are heirs to everything our Father God owns! On the other hand, we are joint or equal heirs with Christ! Just try sitting down

and listing your assets as an heir of God: Why, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and all there is therein! God said that all the silver and gold is His, and the cattle on a thousand hills! This does not even include the riches of Heaven, yet the Word of God declares in Phil. 4:19: "*But my God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

This means that He is going to supply our needs according to the rule of *His riches in Heaven*, and He is going to supply them *gloriously*, or in such a way that His glory will be manifested. Paul said in Eph. 3:20: "*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...*"

A lot of folks think that being rich is having a million dollars, but that is not being rich according to the Word of God. What is being rich then? *It is having what you need when you need it.* Let me give you a Bible illustration:

What You Need When You Need It

God call for the prophet Elijah to call for a famine in the land of Israel, and said, "Elijah, You are going to be my weatherman. Tell the king that it is not going to rain for three-and one-half years."

Now Elijah had to suffer the consequences of his prophecy right along with everyone else. Whenever God calls for judgment in the

land, it does not exempt His children from feeling the effects of it, but He will deliver them out of the trouble, and supply their needs in spite of it. Right now, when God has called for tight money in America and around the world, His people are feeling the pinch as well, but God is not going to fail His own: Our Father will provide for His household. I know by personal experience that God can supply one's needs even if he doesn't have a job (as long as he is not just lazy and shirking his duty to his family). God can not only bless His people in the time of prosperity (and He ought to be able to do that if He is God), but He can supply our need in the time of famine and unemployment, and make a way where there seemeth to be no way!

Angelic Caterers

Elijah obeyed God, and God shut up the heavens, and it did not rain. Soon they were running out of food, and the famine was so severe until even King Ahab left his royal palace and went out into the fields to find grass, splitting half of his sheep with the keeper of his goods. All of his riches could not supply his need in the time of famine. But God did not forsake the prophet who had obeyed Him and spoke His Word. While Elijah slept, God sent angelic caterers to prepare his meals. This was the first recorded *Meals on Wheels*. If you live right and obey God, He will take care of you and

supply your needs, if He has to send it by “Angel Express.”

There was a little widow woman in that land who had a son, and they had exhausted all of their food supply. There was enough meal and oil left to make one last cake, and then they were going to sit down and wait for death to come. But God was going to take care of His prophet, because He is going to keep His message and messenger alive, even if He has to do a miracle. The Word of the Lord came to the prophet and told him to go down to Zarephath where the little widow woman was preparing for her and her son to die. God said, “*I have commanded the widow woman to sustain thee*” (1 Kings 17:9).

The word *sustain* means to *keep alive*—Not just to feed once, and that’s it, but to keep alive. How was that widow going to keep the man of God alive when she could not even sustain herself or her son? But God knew how He was going to use her to keep the three of them alive in the time of famine, if she would obey Him and believe.

Elijah came to the edge of the city, thirsty and hungry from his long journey, and he saw the woman gathering sticks to make a fire. He asked her to fetch him a drink of water, which she did. Then he asked her for a morsel of bread. To this she desperately replied:

“As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of

meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die” (vs. 12).

Elijah looked at that little widow and said, “*Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make a cake first, and bring it to me, and after make for you and your son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth”* (vv. 13-14).

Shame on you, Elijah! *Taking the last meal from that little widow and her son!* But the prophet knew that if she would have faith and obey God, that God would work not just *a miracle*, but a *continuous miracle* to supply her need throughout the entire time of famine and judgment. He was ready to take that cake right out of that widow’s mouth, because he knew that he was the messenger of God, and God would keep His message going by a miracle, and He would bless all who would bless His messenger!

Do you want to know the formula for being blessed by God? *Bless what God is blessing! If you will bless the thing which God is blessing, He will bless you!* That is what God told Abraham. He said, “*I’ll bless them that bless you*” (Gen. 12:3).

That little woman had faith in the Word of God. She only had one promise. As children of God in the

N.T., we have thousands of promises. “*She went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she, and he, and her house did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail*” (vv. 15-16).

Whenever God chastens a nation or people and pours His judgments out, His people living in that setting are going to be affected as well, but I have found out that God is able to supply their needs regardless of the hardships. We must trust and obey His Word and support the Gospel, and God will continue to bless us and make a way in our time of need: *This is being rich!*

Our Heavenly Father

God has stated on record that *He is our Father*. Therefore, we are His responsibility. We belong to the household of faith, and God is not an infidel: He is going to take care of us. When we are in need, we are to come boldly to Him in prayer. Coming *boldly* indicates two things: First, *there is no condemnation* to cause us to draw back in fear. We cannot come boldly when we know that we are disobedient. Secondly, it shows *we believe the promises of God*. We have confidence in Him as our Father and Provider.

In His model prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, “*Our Father...*” We are not to pray, “*O Great Creator,*” or “*Mighty Omnipotent God,*” or even “*My Father.*” But we are to

pray “*Our Father—Jesus’ and My Father.*” Don’t you see, He has put us on an equal standing with Himself as His joint-heirs!

When Jesus prayed to His Father, He said, “*Thank you, Father, because I know that you always hear me.*” As a son of God, I am not going to waste time on a bunch of dead prayers of unbelief and doubt, but I am going to come boldly and confidently into His presence and cry out, “*Abba Father!*”

It is a simple message, but a powerful truth. If we will accept the faithfulness and goodness of our Heavenly Father to provide for us, even as an earthly child looks to his father to supply his needs, we would not allow ourselves to be fretted by fear, doubt, and unbelief. This is exactly the message of Jesus to us in Matthew 6. He pointed out that the sparrows of the air do not sow or reap, or gather into barns, and yet our *Heavenly Father* feeds them. He asked, “*Aren’t you much better than they?*” (vs. 26)

He told us to consider also the lilies of the field, how they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed as one of these, because *our Heavenly Father* clothes them. “*Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*” Jesus exclaimed.

“*Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal*

*shall we be clothed? For all these things do the Gentiles (heathen) seek: for **your heavenly Father** knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (vv. 31-32).*

If our Father knows our necessary needs, is He going to overlook them when He cares for every sparrow? Jesus said that not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge: *“Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than*

many sparrows” (Matt. 10:29&31). I am reminded of this little poem:

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
“I would really like to know
Why these anxious humans
Rush around and worry so?”

Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
“I think that it must be,
They have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me!”

***New in FIA: “The Mirror of the Man” by Sharon Hardy Knotts —
Coming Next Month!***