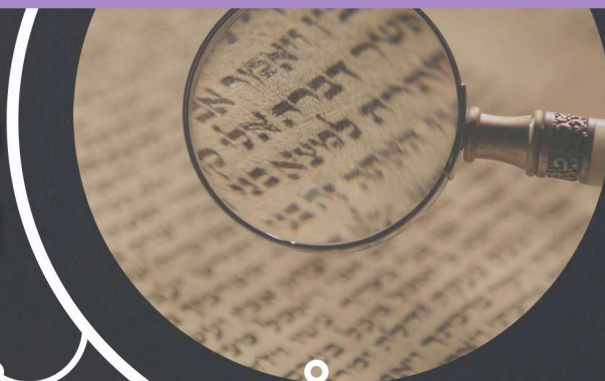


MY JOURNEY TO LIFE GOD THE FATHER



My Journey to Life, Step 9

Foreword

My Journey to Life provides the keys for living every day with peace of mind, harmony of body and wonderful relationships. As you read through each lesson guide, your daily outlook will be transformed and renewed by the Spirit. We pray you will experience a growing adoration for the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. Let's begin walking, step-by-step, on the pathway towards a new life together with Jesus.

Preface

Much of Christianity focuses on the role of Jesus in the plan of salvation. God the Father, is often pictured as a tyrant, Someone who needs to be appeased. But the Bible tells us that Jesus came to show us what the Father is like—in fact, Jesus told His disciples that if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father. Today's lesson will focus on God the Father, and a revelation of His true nature.

Step Nine—God the Father

What does the Bible say about God the Father? “God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father.”—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 35

Bible Discovery: Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 4:35; Psalm 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:28; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Revelation 4:11

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 416.4

1. What does God the Father, have to do with us and our daily living? All of us are shaped by life's experiences. If we had a bitter unhappy relationship with our earthly father, it may be difficult for us to imagine our heavenly Father as a warm, loving God. When we learn to know God as friend and experience His love for ourselves, our picture of Him changes.

At Sinai God expressed His desire to be Israel's friend—to be with them, to live life alongside of them. He said to Moses, “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8). It is still God's desire to “dwell among us.”

Bible Discovery: Psalm 34:8; Matthew 22:37; John 17:3; Romans 5:8

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 23.3

2. When the Old Testament references “God;” is it God the Father or God, the Son? It is the same God who speaks and acts in both Testaments for the salvation of His people. What the New Testament says of Christ's role in Creation and during the Exodus suggests that the Old Testament often conveys to us its portrait of God the Father through the agency of the Son. Through both Testaments, God works in a triune pattern—from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

Jesus Himself said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!” John 14:9.

Bible Discovery: Deuteronomy 1:31, Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 63:16; John 8:56-58; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Hebrews 11:26; Jude 1:5

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 207.2; *Patriarch's and Prophets*, p. 366.1

3. What is the relationship of God the Father to God, the Son (Jesus)? When God is called Father in the Old Testament, it's not as much to designate a person of the divine Trinity as it is to emphasize His tender care toward His chosen people (Deuteronomy 1:31; Deuteronomy 32:6; Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 63:16). A more distinctive usage of the three separate persons of the Godhead is found in the New Testament.

The use of the Father/Son imagery is not to imply Jesus is created by God the Father, but rather reveals the closeness of the divine plurality in language or metaphors that we can understand. The Father sent Christ to our planet to fulfill a specific mission—to save the world (1 John 4:14). Thus, the Father and Son are united in their redemptive action on our behalf. Both suffered at the cross for us. Both will rejoice with joy unspeakable on the day of our final redemption!

Bible Discovery: 2 Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 64:8; Malachi 2:10; John 6:38; 7:28, 29; Romans 8:32

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 6, p. 112.3; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 907.3

4. Is God the Father, in the Old Testament exacting and rigid in contrast to the merciful and loving God of the New Testament? Exodus 34:6, 7 paints a changeless picture of God the Father: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation.”

Though God is welcoming and forgiving to those who take a step toward Him in repentance, those who reject His mercy will reap punishment for their unforsaken sins. Thus, we find many

expressions of the Father's love in the Old Testament, as well as descriptions of the results of persistent rebellion in the New Testament.

Bible Discovery: Deuteronomy 32:6; Psalm 27:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 10:26, 27; 13:8

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 115.1-2

5. Why is it common to think of the Father as the vengeful God of the Old Testament? The "God of vengeance" must be seen in the context of God's redemptive action on behalf of His people at the end of time. The dire predictions of some of the Old Testament prophets are addressing the destruction of the enemies of God's people. There is comfort in knowing God intervenes to save His people from those who hate them. Even here, God takes no delight in the destruction of the wicked, He deeply mourns the loss of their salvation.

Bible Discovery: Isaiah 28:21, 22; Ezekiel 33:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Steps to Jesus*, p. 5.1-2

6. Has any human being seen God? No mortal human being has seen God the Father (Exodus 33:20). We know nothing of His features, except the Genesis 1:26 statement: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." However, we do know about His character from His gracious acts described in His Word, from the descriptions of His character throughout Scripture, and from Jesus' words such as "I and my Father are one" John 10:30. Christian believers can speak with confidence, as did Job, that one day "in my flesh I will see God" (Job 19:26).

Bible Discovery: Psalm 146:7-9; Isaiah 35:4; Malachi 2:10; John 14:8, 9

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 15.1; *12LtMS, Manuscript 41*, 1897, par. 17

7. What does "a covenant God" mean? Covenant means "agreement" or "promise." If you are in a relationship with someone, you may have promised that person that you would be there for them as long as life lasts. That's a "covenant." Of course, if the person to whom you made that promise walks out of your life, you are unable to fulfill that promise.

God is a "covenant-keeping God." Because He longed to establish lasting relationships, God made solemn covenants with people such as Noah and Abraham. This is a personal God who seeks friendship with His created beings!

A covenant or promise that God makes to us today is, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.” If we remain faithful to God, He will hold us by His mighty hand that will never let us go!

Bible Discovery: Genesis 8:22; 9:1-17; 12:3, 7; 13:14-17, Isaiah 41:10; Revelation 2:10

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 288.4

8. Is Jesus personal and relational while the Father is stern and detached? Absolutely not! Thinking of the Father as stern and detached is a common misconception; perhaps because no sinful human being has ever seen God (Exodus 33:20), whereas Jesus lived thirty-three years as a man on earth.

The loving personal character of God the Father was illustrated best by Jesus while He lived among us—especially while He hung dying on the cross. Imagine for a moment the Father’s loving sacrifice, having to witness His beloved Son being crucified by unrepentant sinners for their salvation!

“God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1, 2). All the beautiful and loving attributes that we appreciate about Jesus are also found in the Father!

Bible Discovery: Isaiah 9:6; 44:22; John 16:27; Colossians 2:9

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 204.2

9. Can God the Father be described as our Redeemer, as Jesus is? Certainly! Every character attribute that describes Jesus Christ also describes the Father. They are one—in character, purpose, and love for the redemption of humanity.

Perhaps the most compelling example of God’s longing to be our Redeemer is the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. This redemptive event illustrates the theme of Scripture—God’s desire to deliver us from the slavery of sin and redeem us forever from Satan’s stronghold. In this miraculous deliverance, God the Father and God, the Son cooperate.

Bible Discovery: Job 19:25; Psalm 8:3, 4; 18:1, 2; 22:24; Isaiah 63:16; John 3:16

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*, p. 222.2; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 267.4

10. Who forgives our sins? God the Father, or Jesus, the Son? Both! The Godhead works together for our redemption, which includes the forgiveness of sins for which we ask pardon. After his sins of adultery and murder, David repented and pleaded for God’s mercy. How comforting must have been this assurance: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:11-13).

Bible Discovery: Matthew 6:14, 15; Mark 11:25; Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 2:1

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 114.1; *Steps to Christ*, p. 41.2

11. Does God punish unfaithfulness and disobedience to Him? What about God’s attitude toward the sinner who repents and wants to return to God? There are many references in Scripture that describe the faithfulness and mercy of God toward the repentant sinner. For instance, the entire book of Hosea is a graphic symbol of God’s willingness to forgive, shown through the lens of Hosea’s forgiveness of his prostitute wife.

Another compelling illustration of the love of the Father for the repentant sinner is the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Read it and rejoice as you put yourself in that “Welcome Home” scene!

Bible Discovery: Proverbs 8:17; Jeremiah 31:3; Luke 6:35, 36; Romans 2:4; 5:8, 10; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 4:19

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 28.2; 30.2

12. What Scriptural images can help us have a better understanding of the loving nature of God the Father? Will the redeemed have the privilege of seeing God the Father in heaven? John the Revelator saw that in eternity, we “shall see His face” (Revelation 22:4). Imagine the Father singing a song of tenderness, acceptance, and compassion to you! “The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17). What a beautiful, heart-warming picture of God!

Bible Discovery: Matthew 5:8; John 1:1, 14, 18; 6:38; 14:9; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 John 3:1-3; Revelation 22:3, 4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 834.3-835.2; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 267.4

Reflection...

What a beautiful picture we've seen of God the Father, in sharp contrast to common ideas that He is stern, harsh, and overbearing. Through the redemption Christ has wrought, believers are adopted as God's own children! Christ came to "redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons [and daughters]. And because you are sons [and daughters], God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son in your hearts, crying out, 'Abba [a familial term of endearment], Father!'" (Galatians 4:5, 6).

If there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7), imagine the joy of the Father to see you, redeemed and radiant, at Christ's Second Coming!

Next Step...

In our next lesson, we will delve deeper into Jesus as God's Son, our Creator, Redeemer, and ultimate Friend.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn about the Father's love for you in this lesson?
2. Had you thought before that the Father is also our Redeemer, as is Jesus?
3. What did Jesus mean when He stated, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9)?

Further Reading

Official Adventist Website: <https://www.adventist.org/father>

Contact Information

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Request a personal Bible study: <https://www.bibleschools.com/en/personal-studies>

Visit your local Seventh-day Adventist Church: <https://www.adventistlocator.org>

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