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# ILLUMINER

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## Such Love

**“God’s love, however, differs from ours. God loves those who are unlovable by human standards or even by his own standards—sinners. God loves us even if we do not love ourselves!”**



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**W**e have never experienced love that is comparable to God’s. Human love is conditional.

Unattractive people are hard to love. Even though it was my first visit, the lady at the post office counter greeted me with a very friendly smile. I visited that town after 30 long years. She acted as if she is meeting a friend, but her appearance scared me so that I did not greet her or smile back. The left side of her face was charred, and she had lost the left eye. Her gums and teeth were visible since the left portion of her lips were burnt too. Her smile was frightening.

A young man, envious of her relationship with another person, threw sulfuric acid at her face, disfiguring her. As a result, her

real lover abandoned her since she was no longer as beautiful as she was before the accident. It turned out that we were friends at school thirty years ago, which explains her friendly smile. At school, I remember her as a vibrant and winsome girl. One of the conditions we set for people to deserve our love is their physical attractiveness.

A morally acceptable behavior is also a requirement for our love. Criminals, muggers, women who sell their bodies for a living - who will love them? She is not even beloved by her own customers, even if they hire her body for the evening.

We tend not to love people who are not useful despite their physical beauty and moral uprightness. My friend is an engineer who moved with his family to another country

to find a better life. His preferred job was not available. He became a burden to his family since he was dependent on his wife and daughter, who were the only earners in the family. Therefore, the wife turned hostile, the daughter joined in, and they conspired to send him back to his country of origin. As soon as he landed, they revoked his visa, so he cannot return. His wife and daughter live in the land of promise while he lives on charity. Her marriage vow of love was only valid if he helped her.

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**Rick Warren to retire as lead pastor**

Rick Warren is set to retire as lead pastor of Saddleback Church in Orange County. However, Warren informed that he would take the title of “founding pastor” of the church, which he has led for 40 years. In a video service, Warren, 67, said that the church would soon begin the search for his successor and cited his declining health as the reason for this direction. He has a rare neurological disease called spinal myoclonus, and it causes spasms and blurs his vision, which makes preaching in six services in a single day very tough.



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DAD, YOU’RE THE BEST.  
**HAPPY FATHER’S DAY!**

FROM THE  
**editor**



**FATHER’S HEART**

**“The father’s “heart” is needed to show mercy and give grace to the next generation to be welcomed back and not be estranged from the Father’s house forever.”**

**J**ewish thought of a father is dual – both Life-giver and Law-giver. If giving of life established a relationship, then giving of law declared the discipline in life. A father is the one who governs his family and the house. “Father’s house” refers to the patriarchal society that prevailed in the Middle East, where the Bible has its setting. Such a house signifies the place where a father is responsible for providing for the life and godliness of all under his care. If someone from the “house” is taken captive, the patriarchal father will send his trained men to take back the lost; if someone lacks, their needs were met; if someone is sick, they were treated to get well. This house was the place of protection and provision, all because of the generosity of the father.

Jesus addressed the Temple as His Father’s house, which should be the place of prayer to the Almighty God, protection of the weak and helpless, provision for the needy, and preservation of the poor – all stemming from love and devotion towards the Eternal Father. Jesus became angry when the place became one of merchandise where wealth became the intent of worship and not loving-kindness to fellow beings.

The father in the story of the two sons was the head of his house, which was the place

that the younger son remembered when he came to his senses. Of all the places he has been to in his wasteful spending spree, the son recognized that only one place could provide for his life and protect his identity. So, based on what he saw in his kind father, the son decided to return home to tender an apology to become the recipient of kindness meted to the servants. But, instead, he became the beneficiary of the mercy and grace of his father to get all that he lost – robe, ring, and sandals – righteousness, authority, and sonship.

The father’s “heart” is needed to show mercy and give grace to the next generation to be welcomed back and not be estranged from the Father’s house forever. American poet Maya Angelou said, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” Therefore, let the father-hearted increase - to not only bring many to this faith but also to give godly instructions with the timely protection and opportune provisions to build a new generation in the Life and Law of Christ!

## RESTORING BIBLICAL FATHERHOOD



God's fatherhood denotes origin, belonging, dependence, trust, and numerous other essential aspects that determine the identity and meaning of human existence, rather than authority, supremacy, and hierarchy that are oppressive and exploitative.

In the wake of constant paradigm shifts occurring in numerous aspects of human life, the changing concept of fatherhood is a crucial one that will determine the sustainability of the socio-ethical fabric of the growing generations around the world. The Father's perception as the progenitor, provider, protector, mentor, and guide is eroding along with the surging tide of evolving perceptions on gender, family, and parenthood. The abuse of power and privileges associated with fatherhood in the past is highlighted as a reason to redefine the role of fathers in societies open for change. Therefore, in the current discussions, patriarchy is deemed an oppressive practice rather than a significant aspect of social order. Furthermore, the scriptural endorsement, especially of the Abrahamic religions, available for patriarchy is portrayed in a bad light along with its misuse in history.

Consequently, the neo-ethical norms and values of the postmodern world built on principles divorced from any religious dogmas and scriptures strive to detach any religious undergirding of

fatherhood. One of the outcomes that transpired from these changes is single parenthood, even to the extent of confining the Father's role to just donating the sperm and relieving him from any parental, financial, or moral responsibility towards 'his own' child. Similarly, fathers who live in the family yet uninvolved and detached from raising children produce the same result. Therefore, a growing number of children around the world are deprived of fatherly nurture and care that is essential for attaining complete personhood. Studies reveal the lack of a father's influence is one of the major causes of dropouts and delinquency among children.

The meaning and purpose of fatherhood cannot be defined more clearly and profoundly than what the Bible presents. Although the Bible took shape in a highly patriarchal atmosphere, the true essence of fatherhood is vividly laid out throughout the Bible. One of the dominant appellations of God as 'the Father' is an intimate relational term, which is unparalleled in other scriptures. God's fatherhood denotes origin, belonging, dependence,

trust, and numerous other essential aspects that determine the identity and meaning of human existence, rather than authority, supremacy, and hierarchy that are oppressive and exploitative. God related to the people of Israel as their Father. "Is he not your Father and Creator" (Deut. 32:6). "In the wilderness, Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son" (Deut. 1:31).

The fatherhood of God gets more vivid and profound in the New Testament. The very essence of God's fatherhood is at the core of the prayer Jesus taught the disciples, which begins with addressing God, "our Father" and goes on to assure their adherence to His will, ask Him for their daily bread; confidently request Him for the forgiveness of their sins and put their confidence in Him to protect them from temptation and evil. Paul's statement in Ephesians 3:15. "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name" indicates how the concept of family is embedded in God's fatherhood. Furthermore, he underscores the significance of Christian families to follow

the example of Christ's sacrificial love for the Church (Eph 5). Paul perceived his relationship with the church in the light of fatherhood rather than a steward (1Cor. 4:15). The biblical model of fatherhood is par excellence, as it provides a firm foundation for a functional and stable society. It transcends the postmodern models of fatherhood confined to a biological necessity and provides a robust paradigm enriched with the responsible, caring, and self-giving attitude of Christ.



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# “HESED” – THE FATHER’S *Extravagant Love*



*“The LORD is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love (hesed). He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He has not punished us for all our sins, nor does he deal with us as we deserve” Psalms 103:8-10.*

**H**esed, the Hebrew word for “love” is difficult to translate in English as a single word; and is barely enough to express all that hesed means. It is an action-oriented word with attributes of strength, steadfastness, loyalty, and devotion. It has been translated as loving-kindness, mercy, steadfast love, compassion, loyalty, goodness, great kindness, favor, loyal love, etc.

*Hesed* is the *distinguishing characteristic* of our heavenly Father. The famous author Michael Card defines it as ‘when the person from whom I have a right to expect nothing gives me everything’. Jesus, in His parable of ‘the prodigal son’ expresses this in a profound way. The repentance and return of the son to the father were ample to experience the hesed of the father. The punishment that he deserved was waived (mercy), instead the love and forgiveness that he never deserved (grace) was unleashed on him. (Luke 15:11-32).

The Bible asserts that “The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him” (Psalms 103:13). When God appeared to Moses to give the Law the second time, He described

Himself as ‘abounding in’ or ‘filled with’ *hesed* (Exodus 34:6-7). As *hesed* is intricately linked with God’s covenant to Israel, it also expresses God’s faithfulness to His people (Psalms 98:3). Human faith is fully dependent on God’s faithfulness. We put our trust in God because He is faithful, true, and trustworthy (2 Timothy 2:13).

As a God of *Hesed*, He is also just and righteous (Jeremiah 9:24). In the books of the Prophets, a vivid picture of God relentlessly reaching out to His stubborn people to return to Him is depicted frequently (Isaiah 65:2). In His *hesed*, God warns them about the consequences of their rebellion decades before the actual punishment came into effect (Jeremiah 25:4-6). But God’s gracious *hesed* has seldom been reciprocated by His people. When they did not listen, they had to succumb to chastisement (2 King 24:14). Nevertheless, God voluntarily reached out to keep the covenant that His people broke. He promised to establish a New Covenant with them where He Himself would write His teachings on their hearts and would forgive and forget their sins (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

John 3:16 is the greatest expression of God’s *hesed*. Romans 5:8, further says “God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners (an act of *hesed*)”. God’s greatest desire is that we join Him in His eternal home as His children and as co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). He has made the way possible by paying the price for our sins (1 Corinthians 7:23) at the cross of Calvary. Amazingly God has given those who receive His Son Jesus as their Savior, the power to love (*hesed*) as He does, through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 3: 23-24).

The power of the father and his influence upon his child is tremendous. It is the duty of an earthly father to represent Christ, who is the personification of ‘*Hesed*’. A father’s heart filled with *hesed* encourages, comforts, chastises, and directs the child to lead a life worthy of God (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). “*Let all who fear the Lord repeat: His faithful love (hesed) endures forever*” Psalms 118:4.

**“The power of the father and his influence upon his child is tremendous. It is the duty of an earthly father to represent Christ.”**



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BROKEN BREAD



## “You are the MAN!”

**H**ave you ever realized that you were wrong about yourselves? Have you ever been disappointed at your behavior and been genuinely regretful? We all have blind spots in our life, where we do not see ourselves as we are. How can that affect our spiritual life and our relationship with God? I want to take your attention to 2 Samuel 12:1-14. In 2 Samuel 12:13, we see then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin.”

Nathan told David a story about a rich man who robbed a poor man of his only lamb. Though the rich man owned herds of animals, he slaughtered the poor man’s lone sheep and made it into a meal. When David heard this story, he burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over because he did such a thing and had no pity.” When Nathan revealed that the story illustrated David’s actions, David saw how he had harmed Uriah. Nathan explained the consequences, but more importantly, he assured David, “the Lord has taken away his sin.”

I remember the story of a man who installed a security camera

outside his house for the first time. He checked the video feature often to ensure that the system was working correctly. Once he was going through the video, he was alarmed to see a broad-shouldered figure in dark clothing wandering around his yard. He observed to see what the man would do. However, the intruder seemed familiar. To his surprise, he realized he was not watching a stranger roam his property but a recording of himself in his backyard!

What might we see if we could step out of our skin and observe ourselves in certain situations? When David’s heart was hardened, and he needed an outside perspective - a godly perspective - on his involvement with Bathsheba. God sent Nathan to the rescue. David had committed brutal and terrible crimes of adultery and shrewdly planned the murder of Uriah. Many out there live their lives like this, as though in forgetfulness, unmindful of God and what they have done; nonetheless, the bubble would burst soon. Never think God is unaware of what we are doing. He is watching us as our eyes wander lustfully and our thoughts run like thunder with evil thoughts. In the story, we see, David did not go to Nathan, the prophet, but God sent the prophet to David to wake him up from a ‘coma,’ and therefore,

**“One confession may be the turning-point of a man’s life, and may eliminate all the sinful past, and may bring you into loving, reconciled, harmonious relationship with the almighty God.”**

Nathan told a story of a rich man and poor man who owned a little ewe lamb. When David’s anger flared at the rich man in the story, Nathan sprung the trap by pointing his finger at David’s face and saying boldly, “You are the man!” David had condemned himself.

It is interesting how horrible our sins look to us if someone else is committing them. The very thing that we are condemning others for, if you will change the scene and circumstances slightly, you discover that you are the man. The Bible says that the person is inexcusable, who judges others but does the same thing himself. If God reveals sin in our lives, His ultimate purpose is not to condemn us but to restore us and to help us reconcile with those we have hurt. Repentance clears the way for renewed closeness with God through the power of His forgiveness and grace. What sins do you need to bring to God in repentance in your life? How disgusting is the act of wickedness and greediness! Friends, when you look at your neighbor’s car, salary,

wife, husband, clothes, and house with wickedness and evil eyes, then you are not different from the rich man of the story.

The Bible talks a lot about being content and satisfied. Instead, greed and lust lead us to destruction. In this story, the rich man kept

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## BE A PLEASING SACRIFICE TO GOD

“We have a father in heaven that loves us so much and disciplines us to be righteous so that we may qualify to be worthy enough to be called His children.”

**T**he loving heart of a father is deep and fathomless. He always loves and, at the same time, is stringent in many matters. A good father always tries to solve problems at home. But to his children, sometimes he may seem like a dictator and sometimes a tender-hearted man because he scolds his children when they go wrong and cares and attends to them always; a la the carrot and stick policy.

Naturally, children don't like a rebuke from their father. To them, he should always be loving and he is not supposed to utter harsh words to them. If a family follows God's principles, such a family is like heaven on the earth. A good father finds the deficiencies in a family, all the child's needs, and shows the actual path for his children to follow. The father takes special care to see that he will be with them as much as possible. Most of the time, he is a silent listener at home and knows inherently what his children need and what the children do not need in life. And he also knows at what time his children need a particular thing.

He is ready to sacrifice everything for his children. He wants to save his children from all types of harm. A true, God-fearing earthly father is a representative of Almighty God. When I think about a father's real heart, I am instantly transported to the incident in mount Moriah, where Abraham brought his only begotten son, Isaac, for sacrifice. A true father is obedient to God, and he never looks down on others for

advice when God tells him something to do. But at the same time, he prays with a bleeding heart to keep his children safe. A true father is faithful and thankful to God and willing to give back whatever God asks of him.

Abraham's story in the Bible is the epitome of pure love and sacrifice, which means love for God is reckoned to be greater than anything else in the world. Abraham is still living in our hearts. He showed us that trusting the Lord is wiser than relying on the world. The story unfolds before me - when God directs Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, his mind and heart start shattering. When he thinks about his wife Sarah, his predicament further amplifies. A long-awaited and promised son by God, now being snatched away by another decree. Abraham desperately looked unto God and remembered His promise unto him - the Lord Himself decreed that he would become the father of nations. Despite this promise, he did not question God's intention but went on obeying God's order to sacrifice his son Isaac. Thus, God understands Abraham's real and loving heart towards God, which God vindicates in heaven - Jehovah-Jireh.

Against the backdrop of this story, what we see nowadays is the sorry figure of a worldly father often tumbling down the

righteous path with the conviction of sins. But we have a father in heaven that loves us so much and disciplines us to be righteous so that we may qualify to be worthy enough to be called His children. Hebrews 12:6 says, “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives.” Proverbs 3:12 says, “The Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.” But today's world has gone haywire. No laws in any country allow any father to correct, scold and train his children. The Bible says: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6) Unfortunately, the sad fact is that the worldly laws suppressed all these Biblical laws, disabling an everlasting system to create a short-sighted world in which eternal peace and prosperity are missing.



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# JOSEPH, A MAN APART FROM THE REST



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**“Joseph was a man of character and integrity. He was obedient and righteous. He was a man who didn’t do things for recognition, but rather a man that did what was expected of him ... no questions asked, no words wasted.”**

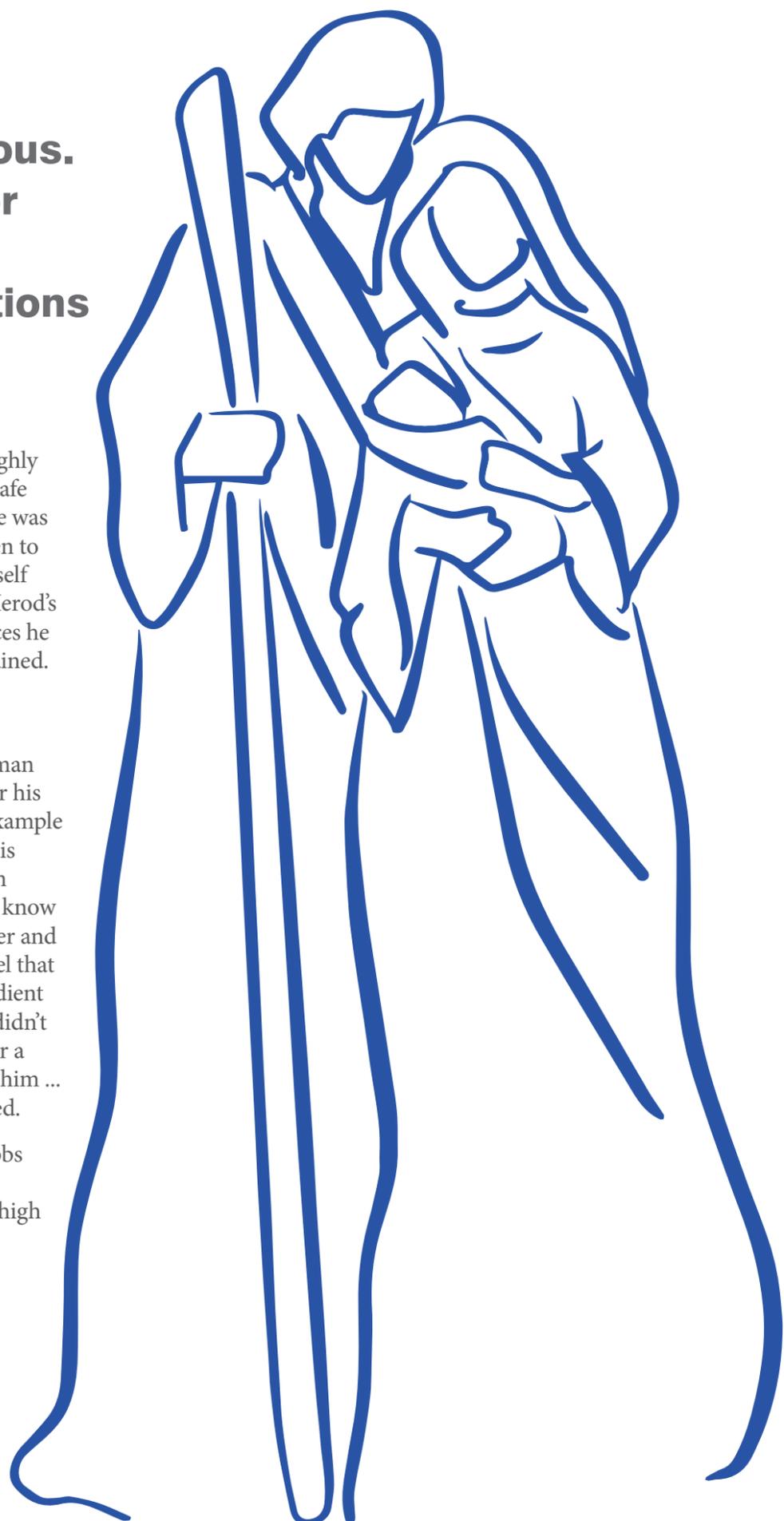
Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth, maintained a relatively low profile until he was betrothed to Mary. Much to his surprise, he discovers that his fiancée is pregnant. Stunned by the news and cognizant of the rumors that were sure to tarnish his reputation, Joseph was caught between a rock and a hard place. He knew the honorable thing to do was to follow through on the betrothal and protect this young woman’s reputation. Yet, his heart could not accept Mary’s out-of-wedlock pregnancy and especially one in which she could not disclose the father’s identity. This was not the marriage he envisioned for himself, so Joseph planned to quietly divorce Mary later. However, the Angel of the Lord intervened and instructed Joseph in his dream to trust Mary and take her home because what is conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit. The series of events that followed shows Joseph’s strength of character and why he was chosen to be Jesus’s earthly father.

For Joseph, the path to marriage was not an easy one. He had to wholeheartedly put aside the disgrace he suffered to do what was asked of him. He was aware of the fact that Mary’s pregnancy was a social taboo and that it would be his duty to accept her and protect her from harm. The birth of Jesus was not easy on Joseph

either. Joseph found himself in a highly stressful situation having to find a safe place for Mary to deliver since there was no room available for them and then to make matters worse, he found himself having to protect his family from Herod’s men. Regardless of the circumstances he was placed in, Joseph never complained. Instead, he operated on faith.

Joseph is not your example of a traditional husband. He was not a man who lavishly proclaimed his love for his wife. He was not your traditional example of a father either. In fact, not much is mentioned in the Bible of his role in raising Jesus. However, what we do know is that Joseph was a man of character and integrity. He never once let Jesus feel that he was not his son. Joseph was obedient and righteous. He was a man who didn’t do things for recognition, but rather a man that did what was expected of him ... no questions asked, no words wasted.

In biblical history, Joseph’s role ebbs when Jesus hits his teens. Yet it is undeniable, that Joseph set the bar high for fatherhood in its truest form.



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DEVOTIONAL



## CALLED BY OUR DEAR FATHER

“As children of God, our response to our heavenly Father is to submit ourselves in obedience to his will.”

**O**ne of the most comforting truths of the Scripture is that we serve a God who is our Heavenly Father. The Bible starts by introducing God as the Creator. Still, if we study Scripture in its entirety, God’s redemptive work through his Son, Jesus Christ, is the most revolutionary act of God for humanity. The saving work of God clearly defines our relationship with him as our Father. In Christendom, the aspect of Father’s love is overlooked, and the focus many times turns more into our relationship with Christ. But if we search the Scripture, we can find that Christ was very keen on teaching us about God the Father and how it is vital to have a constant association with him.

The Old Testament portrays God as the Father of Israel. It is expressed mainly through the acts of forgiveness and redemption of Israel. God chose Israel, but they became restless consistently due to their sin. Nevertheless, God was always patient with them. He exhibited his love for Israel as a Father would love his children. Their redemption was the primary goal of God. But we see that most of Israel became disobedient and turned to idols, but God still did not forsake them. They have experienced a hardening in part, but they will look unto Christ whom they pierced, and their salvation will happen in the future.

We take it for granted about the Fatherhood of God, but we rarely look deep into what it means to us. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught his disciples to address God as - “*Our Father.*” The Greek root word for Father is “*Pater,*” which refers to *Father who imparts life and is committed to us.* The Jews of those days, including the disciples, were perplexed by the teachings of Jesus about God, the Father. When we read the Gospels, we find that Christ makes more than 100 references to God as a father. The language Jesus used was not a formal one, and he

taught about God, the Father, as the source of our life. God loved us immeasurably that he saved us by giving us his only son on the cross.

We know that children hate to be disciplined, but from a parental perspective, it is essential to correct the children when they go wrong. As a true Father, God disciplines us out of his love for us. Proverbs 3:12 says – “*For the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*” The writer of Hebrews says if we are left without discipline, then we are illegitimate children and not sons. God disciplines us for our good, and the ultimate reason is that we may share his holiness. Even if we go astray, we don’t serve a God who will forsake us and leave us in the middle of where we are. But instead, when we repent, he forgives all our iniquities and accepts us back as His dear child. His heart is compassionate and merciful. Remember the fact that God is interested in our sanctification. Even though the disciplinary actions may seem painful at present, it proves to be worth once we undergo it as we are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ through the process.

God knows our heart more than anyone else in this world, and he provides us what we need freely in his time. Matthew 7:11 says – “*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things*

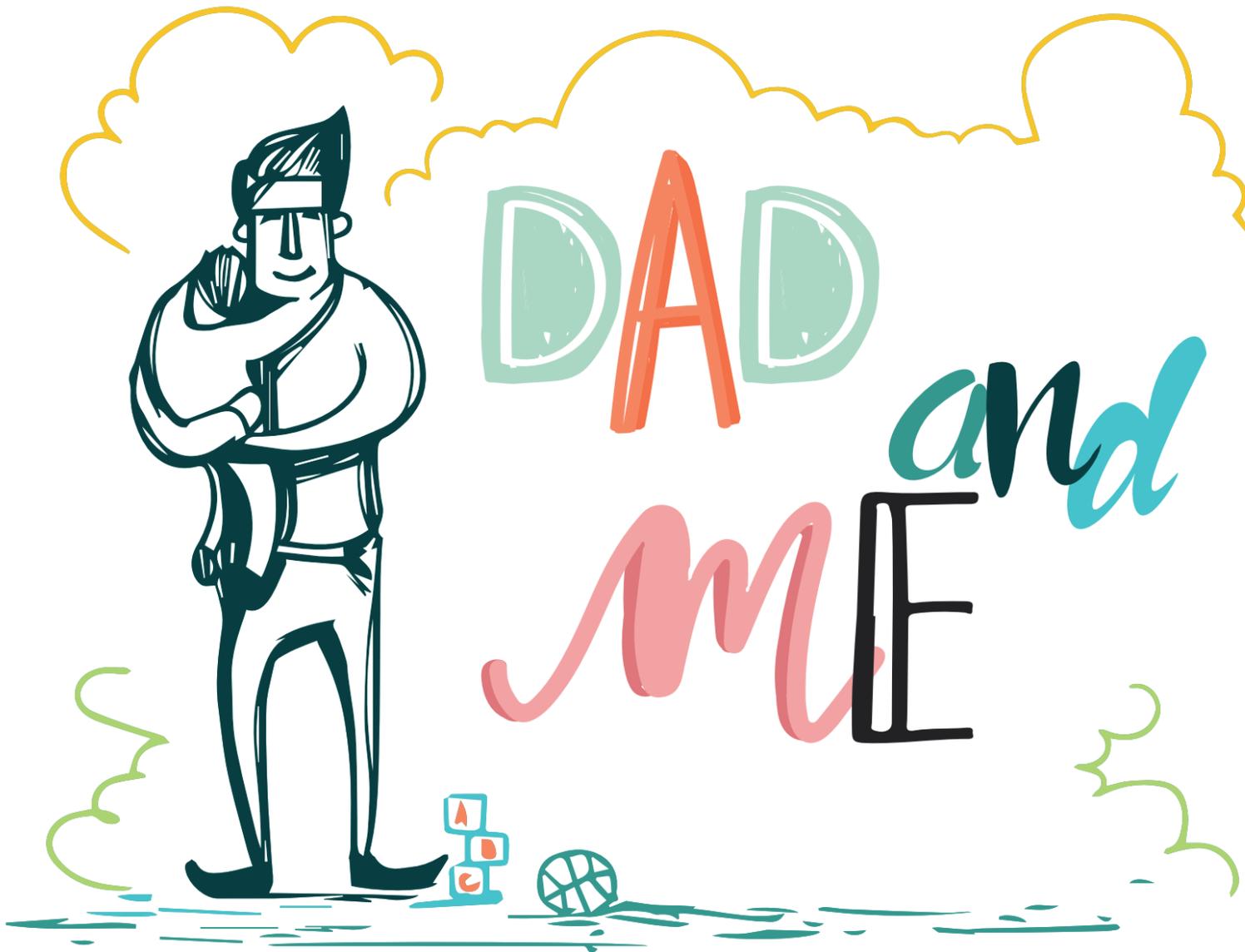
*to those who ask him.*” Along with providing for our needs, he gives us wisdom. James 1:5 says - “*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*” The inspired Word of God is the ultimate source of wisdom, and God speaks to us through his word, which corrects us and trains us for righteousness so that we would be equipped for every good work.

So as children of God, our response to our heavenly Father is to submit ourselves in obedience to his will. Jesus Christ showed the perfect model of obedience by sacrificing his life on the cross in accordance with the Father’s will. The Spirit regenerated us by believing in the finished work of Christ and adopted into the relationship with our heavenly Father. Through this Trinitarian work of salvation, we have been privileged to be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ. Hence, we should prove our allegiance to God by living our lives worthy of God who has called us and elected us unto salvation. God the Father has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing so let us worship him in Spirit and truth by offering our life as a pleasing sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.



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**T**hey used to have fun with their dad. Their dad loved spending time with them and would play with them for hours on end. Through this play, he would pass on essential survival skills to the next generation. He'll teach them a range of skills, like hiding food, hunting, locating food, and escaping predators. But then three months after birth, it's time for dad to impart the hard lessons of life: no more free food for the pups. The Father stops feeding his children so that he can get them to leave the den. He doesn't starve them; instead, he hides food near the den to teach them to sniff and search for food. This is how a Red fox male parent treats his pups. The classic saying even applies to animals like Red foxes: "A father is someone who wants to catch you before you fall, but instead, picks you up, brushes you, and lets you try again."

How incredibly blessed we are that we have God as the Lord and the Creator and our perfect Father and the most loving Father. Just like the pups who felt that their dad was unkind to them, there may be days when you thought God was leaving you, but they were the preparations to do something great in our lives. Our Heavenly Father wants us to come out stronger than before, after our struggles.

We've all been in a scenario where we've been in difficulties, and our worldly Father has been the one to listen and offer us his best advice on our issues and worries. However, we occasionally feel his advice to be unnecessary and ignore his involvement. He'd still help us and look after us, anyway.

Similarly, when we are in a problem and refuse to listen to our Heavenly Father and try to

sort things out in our manner and understanding, which leads to more troubles, we may think that He is disappointed in us. But how much more would our Heavenly Father who created us love us if our earthly Father loves us to that extent. So when you are in challenging situations, remember you have a Heavenly Father who is the Lord of all the earth who calmed the stormy sea can even calm the storm in your life and bring you out stronger.

"A father is someone who wants to catch you before you fall, **but instead, picks you up, brushes you, and lets you try again.**"



GRACE KATHETTU  
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# HOW CAN A COUPLE RESOLVE CONFLICTS AND SAVE THEIR MARRIAGE?

**T**he news about Bill and Melinda Gates' divorce was a shocking one to many of us. They were one of the world's richest couples and who runs one of the world's largest philanthropies. Soon after the Gates' divorce announcement, there appeared an article in the Washington Post under the headline: "If Bill and Melinda Gates can't make a marriage work, what hope is there for the rest of us?" It is a legitimate question. But as Christians, we have hope through Christ, our solid Rock!

Here are some important points to remember to resolve conflicts and restore marriages:

Resolving conflicts is the number one phase to restore any kind of broken relationship. The word of God gives explanations on how to resolve a conflict. The situation that has caused the relationship to be broken has to be addressed and taken care of first to rebuild the relationship. In order to reconcile with a person, the relationship has to be restored by addressing

the conflict prudently. "Reconciliation focuses on the relationship, while solution focuses on the problem" (Warren, 2002).

## STEPS TO RESTORE A RELATIONSHIP

### RECONCILIATION

In Mathew 18:15-17, we see Jesus explaining how to resolve a problem between the two brothers. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (verse 15). It is the responsibility of the person who was hurt to take initiative and inform the wrongdoer about his fault. If he heeds his brother, then he will win the situation. Matthew 5:23-25 also illustrates what to do in case you have adversity with your brother. The one who recalls the conflict has to take initiative and seek reconciliation. If you have a conflict

with your brother, you need to settle it before you come for your worship.

### PRAYER

Prayer is the first and most important step to resolving any problems in life. The Bible gives detailed explanations on the importance of prayer and how God answers the prayers of His people. It is a privilege to tell God about the conflict and ask God to help with the situation. God can change the hearts of people or show the solution to the problem. Prayer was the number one answer for Jesus Christ when he was faced with challenging situations (Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16; John 6:15) during His life on earth. We see Him praying to God before any big occasion in His earthly ministry. Jesus said to his disciples to watch and pray that they should not enter into temptation.



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# ILLUMINER

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**LOVE**

God's word speaks about the importance of loving one another. In fact, loving our neighbors is a commandment of God. The scripture says, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). When a person loves his neighbor, he is fulfilling the law of God. 1 Corinthians Ch.13 explains love in detail. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ... beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

John the apostle wrote, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:7, 8). He continued, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (John 4:11,12). Love is kind; love beareth all things; it endureth all things. Solving problems with love and without attacking the person will win the situation (Warren, 2002).

**FORGIVENESS**

The scripture teaches us the importance of forgiving each other. Christians should be diligent in asking forgiveness and in

offering forgiveness. When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, he asked them to pray like this, "... forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). "To be a Christian is to be forgiven. To live as a Christian is to forgive others. Anyone who is acquainted with the Christian faith understands the centrality of forgiveness" (Youssef, 2008). Christ's followers are commanded to forgive others just as Christ has forgiven them. When His enemies scourged and crucified Him, His prayer to the father was to forgive them. The scripture says, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34). Apostle Paul wrote, "And be ye kind to one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). We see in Acts how Stephen turns out to be a perfect example to the followers of Christ. When he was stoned to death by his accusers for spreading the gospel, he was praying, "... Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:60).

As Christ forgave our sins, Christians have the responsibility to forgive each other (Eph. 4:32; Matt. 6:12, 14). A Christian should never forget how God forgave him and should be always forgiving others (Matt. 18:23-35). In the scriptures, forgiveness is a large multi-dimensional concept. Forgiveness is a state in which

one's sin is no longer charged against him. Freedom from liability of guilt occurs as a result of forgiveness. Forgiveness has a cost to the one who grants it even if it is free to the one who receives it.

The Bible has the answers with illustrations, analogies, and metaphors to address various challenging situations. It gives many examples of how to get through a troublesome situation. The Bible has sufficient scriptures to analyze and navigate through difficult situations. God requires His children to obey His word with reverence. God's people are called to study and obey the scripture. It is given "by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16). It is given to equip us unto all good works. Once we start obeying the commandments of God we will be able to apply the word as it is to our life problems. It will show us the next step to be taken. So let us hope in God and His word when we face conflicts and struggles in our marriages. Our God is mighty and He can preserve our marriages.

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## TB JOSHUA NO MORE



the man who initiated many into accepting Jesus Christ as their saviour.

In the early part of his life, he struggled considerably to eke out a living, and for a period he did many menial jobs including waste picking. Graciously, he was involved in church activities and later grew into an iconic figure within a short span of time. Thus, he founded Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos in Nigeria, which attracted a congregation of over 15,000 people. The incredible thing was that people travelled to his synagogue from several countries across the globe. And icing on the cake was that he was an outstanding philanthropist and his magnanimity and largesse could endear him to many, who admired him. The greatest incredible achievement and accomplishment was that he healed countless numbers of sick people through the power of the Holy spirit. Also, he used to heal many including Covid patients, who were away in other countries, through Emmanuel TV broadcast from Lagos. Yes, an era of abundant healing and manifestation of the Holy Spirit through this man of God has come to an end, and it is indeed joyous for the believers' world that this man of God further glorified the Lord, Jesus Christ in this world by obeying Him completely. Surely, the time has come for TB Joshua's departure. It is believed he has fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. Now it is up to the Lord to judge him righteously to award the crown of righteousness.

In recent history, there was no one else in the entire Africa, who had influenced Africans as profoundly and deeply as Temitope Balogun Joshua (TB Joshua) through his preaching and ministry named Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, the biggest city in Nigeria. He was the founder of this church. He was also very popular in South America and Asia where he held many religious crusades and healed many. But sending millions into deep sorrow, TB Joshua breathed his last in the wee hours of Sunday, June 6. Just before his departure for his Heavenly abode, Joshua spoke during the Emmanuel TV Partners' Meeting, "Time for everything-time to come here for prayer and time to return home after the service." TB Joshua Ministries wrote in a Facebook post, "God has taken His servant prophet TB Joshua home- as it should be by divine will. His last moments on earth were spent in the service of God. This is what he was born for, lived for and died for."

Regarding his immediate cause of death, no one is in a position to say anything except those who are dear and near to him. However, it is heard on the grapevine that prophet TB Joshua walked out of a Saturday night sermon to take a little break but sadly, he did not return to continue the mass. Since he failed to return even after a long while, church authorities went in search of him and found him in an unusual position in his apartment. Later he was declared dead by a hospital around 3 a.m. Thus, a preacher par excellence and a televangelist by fame passed into oblivion. But he will live in the hearts of millions as he was



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TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi with their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.



A Dad is a person who is loving and kind. And often he knows what you have on your mind. He's someone who listens, suggests, and defends. A Dad can be one of your very best friends! He's proud of your triumphs, but when things go wrong, A dad can be patient and helpful and strong In all that you do,

a dad's love plays a part. There's always a place for him deep in your heart. And each year that passes, you're even more glad, More grateful and proud just to call him your dad! Thank you, Dad... for listening and caring, for giving and sharing, but, especially, for just being you! Happy Father's Day



## WHAT GOOD IS THE LOCKDOWN?



What good could pandemic do, you ask. Well, here is a story of a teenager who turned boredom into the most creative phase of his life.

Samuel John Joshy, a 10th grade student, took his versatility to the next level when he began to experiment his skills in video editing and started his own YouTube channel during the pandemic. Creativity is not new to Samuel. He began sketching at the age of two. His sketches exhibit originality, which immediately drew attention of the art pundits. Growing up, he

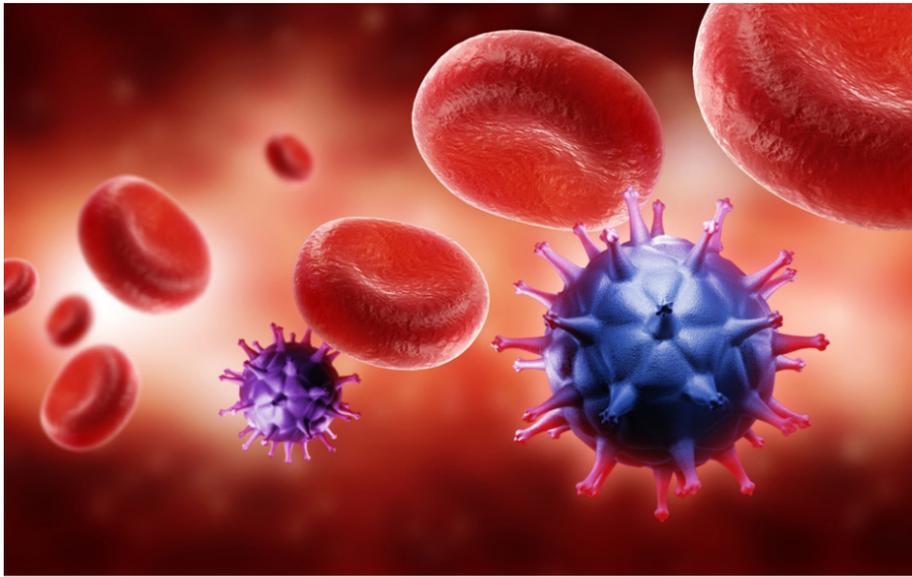
began to acquire more feathers to his hat – skills in drawing, painting, playing keyboard, western vocals and finally, video editing. His paintings and installations were exhibited at The Kerala Lalitha Kala Academy Hall, Ernakulam, from 2-10 January 2020, under the title Creation 66 Books. The event was featured by many leading dailies including *The Indian Express*, *Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *Malayala Manorama*, and *Deshabhimani*. He was interviewed by the *Goodness TV*, Kerala. Samuel would like to pursue his studies in Group I (Math & Computer Science) after Grade 10 and further earn his Engineering degree in Mechatronics.

So next time you complain about boredom, remember Samuel.

<https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCeWNZZ0buvkDFLVQABaVprg>



# Opportunistic infection



## BASIC FACTS

An opportunistic infection is easily explained as an infection which is caused by pathogens (bacteria, fungi, parasites, or viruses) which attack our body when there is an opportunity provided. It is mostly seen among people with weakened immune system. These germs are spread in various ways, through the air, body fluids, or through contaminated food and water.

## CAUSES

There are several factors that can cause weakening of our immune system and hence provide a medium for an opportunistic infection, such as, malnutrition, frequent infections, use of immunosuppressive agents by organ transplant recipients, chronic diseases, HIV infection, chemotherapy, skin damage, exposure to infectious diseases, prolonged antibiotic treatment which suppress our immune

system, non-healing wounds, medical procedures, burns, etc.

## PREVENTION

Any infection can lead to serious illness, so prevention of infection is important. There are several methods to prevent infection, such as hand hygiene, not eating undercooked meat, egg, use of unpasteurized dairy products, building our immune system by taking vitamins, adding fruits and vegetables to your diet, and avoiding exposure to infectious agents.

## TREATMENT

The treatment is based on the type of infection or infectious agents, and it includes, antibiotics, anti-fungal, and antiviral medications as directed by the provider. It is always recommended to take medications as prescribed by your physician. Self-treatment can be dangerous.

## SPIRITUAL COMPARISON

Similarly, there is possibility of opportunistic infection can

happen in our spiritual life. No infection usually attacks a healthy host, whereas a person with compromised immune system gets attacked by the disease. Likewise, as mentioned in 1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may destroy”. We should be vigilant and should not give an opportunity for sin to destroy our life just like an opportunistic infection.



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# Such Love

*Continued from Page 01*

God's love, however, differs from ours. God loves those who are unlovable by human standards or even by his own standards—sinners. God loves us even if we do not love ourselves!

The cross is the greatest display of God's love. The Bible says that “in this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).

The love of God does not have any conditions, so he loves everyone regardless of their appearance, their purpose, or how useless they are. In Romans 5:8, Saint Paul

addresses this aspect of God's love. “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” In other words. “God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...” (Eph 2:4).

The love of God is unparalleled, unsurpassed, and all-surpassing. It has not been fully explained or understood. Christ's love “surpasses knowledge” (Eph 3:19), according to Paul. God's love is self-initiated, without riders. John the apostle of love, declares in a note of jubilation: “In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he has loved

us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Most importantly, it is not outdated, but it is still relevant today. “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever” (Revelation 1:5-6). Even though the King James Version translates all the verbs in a sentence to align them with the past tense – “freed us” and “made us.” The Greek uses the present tense, as in, “loves us,” currently.

In the first century, the present reality of God's love was relevant

to the communities suffering persecution for their faith in Christ. They need to know that Christ still loves them. God does not abandon Christians when they go through pain. They suffer, but God's love is not diminished. Yet God continues to love them despite everything. Love from God is a reality now. God gives us this assurance even when we find it difficult to love ourselves.



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## “You are the man!”

his flock safe but killed the little ewe lamb and prepared a feast for his friend. What I saw in this story was not only the wickedness and greed but the dirty, arrogant, overbearing, and pompous attitude of David; this is totally from the enemy. Any highhanded behavior, pride, and arrogance are from the devil. If we see deeply, this ‘sin of adultery’ happens when people are full of blessings, talents, skills, and bank balance, then their heart becomes puffed up, and their heart now wanders.

We ought to be very thankful that Scripture never conceals the faults of its noblest men.

What a divine simplicity there is in the words of our text: “David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.” Not an easy thing to say, and as the story shows us, a thing that David took a long time to mount up. It is more than an acknowledgment of imperfection and breach of morality. It is something different altogether from the disclosure that I have committed a fault against my fellow. Do not go away from God because you feel that you have sinned against Him. Look, my friends, at your character and conduct; measure the deficiencies and imperfections, the transgressions and faults. Can

there be anything more striking than when David said unto Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord?” And Nathan said unto David, “The Lord has taken away your sin.” Immediate forgiveness is the lesson that we would learn from this story. It needs but the confession so that the forgiveness should come. And that one confession may be the turning-point of a man’s life, and may eliminate all the sinful past, and may bring you into loving, reconciled, harmonious relationship with the Almighty God.

FROM THE HISTORY

## A DAY FOR FATHER

**M**any of the world’s most important holidays are tethered to Christian themes and events. This is true of such days as Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. It is also true of Halloween (Hallowed Evening) which once was closely linked to All Soul’s Day. Father’s Day, too, is linked to Christianity in that it was founded to celebrate the ideals of fatherhood outlined in the Scripture.

The first widely-promoted Father’s Day celebration of modern America was held in Spokane, Washington on this day, June 19, 1910 (a father’s day had been observed in Fairmont, West Virginia two years earlier with little publicity). The Spokane event was the brainchild of Sonora Louise Smart Dodd (Mrs. John Bruce) envisioned an event focused on special religious services and involving small gifts as well as loving greetings from children to their fathers. She brought

up the matter with her pastor and he communicated the idea to the local pastor’s association. The mayor of the city and the governor of the state endorsed her concept and issued proclamations in support. The famed politician William Jennings Bryan weighed in with words of encouragement.

Mrs. Dodd dearly loved her father. When his wife died in childbirth, he was left with six children. Somehow, he overcame the difficulties of rearing them while operating his farm. His devotion to his children sparked Louise’s gratitude. Father’s Day was slow to catch on. What Louise had done was not even well known in her state despite the governor’s proclamation. The idea of honoring fathers with a special day was reinvented independently in several other places, each locality thinking it was starting something new. Curiously, circumstances led

other founders to select the month of June. In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson had endorsed the idea and in 1924 Calvin Coolidge recommended national observance of the day “to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligation” and strengthen intimate ties between fathers and children. Despite these presidential pronouncements, it was 1966 before President Johnson established the third Sunday in June as the date of the celebration. Even so, this was not made official until 1972 under President Nixon.

The ideals of fatherhood are strong in the Bible. Unlike the gods of other religions, the Christian God is portrayed as a loving Father. Christ described God as his own intimate Father and claimed to show in himself what the Father was like. God gave his beloved son for the salvation of the world. Consequently, wherever the Christian ideal has

prospered, fatherhood has taken on deeper and more lyrical meaning. The tender appeals of the apostles John and Paul to their “children” helped foster this attitude. William Jackson Smart’s self-sacrificing love for his children led to a national day of recognition for all fathers. We have a grateful daughter to thank for that.

Source: www.christianity.com



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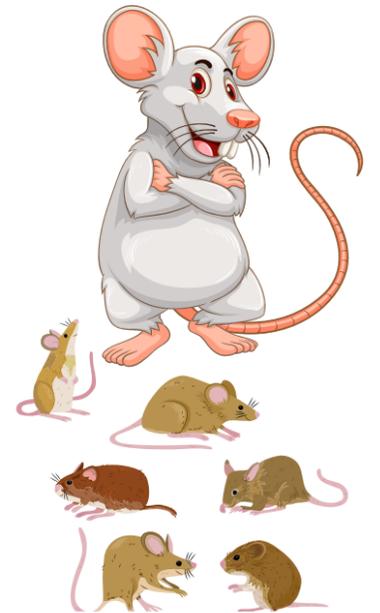


## RETRACING MAYFLOWER'S JOURNEY

A robotic ship named Mayflower will embark on a journey using artificial intelligence technology for a trans-Atlantic trip to retrace the original Mayflower ship's historic sea journey four centuries earlier. This project is expected to take up to three weeks. IBM built this ship and has informed that the trip started on early Tuesday. The vessel is equipped with artificial intelligence-powered cameras and many onboard sensors, which

are supposed to collect acidification of the ocean and marine mammal conservation. The 50-foot ship is propelled by a solar-powered hybrid electric motor. Although it was initially scheduled for Mayflower's 400th anniversary last year, it got delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the ship is expected to chart the same path as that of the 1620 Mayflower and is set to land at Provincetown on Cape Cod.

## World News



### Mouse plague should be rehomed

Mice plague in regional areas of eastern Australia has led Michael McCormack, the country's acting Prime Minister, to comment that the mice from regional Australia should be "rehomed" to the suburbs in inner-cities to nibble the feet of animal rights activists. He said that there is nothing worse than the stench of mice, having them eat the grain, and running around the houses, farms, and factories. The PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has not dis-endorsed this suggestion.

### Gaza militants launch Balloon attack on Israel

Palestinian militants in Gaza launched flaming balloons into Israel, causing wildfires in southern Israel. Arson attacks were reported, and they came after Israeli jets struck Hamas military compounds early Wednesday. Israel holds Hamas responsible for all events happening in Palestinian territory. Hamas stated that the balloons were a pre-emptive warning to Israel for the nationalist flag march through the city of Jerusalem on Tuesday. This new violence is the sign of a dangerous new dynamic that threatens to engulf the new Israeli government that was sworn in a few days ago. The new government is already under pressure by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party to respond with more force.

### Delta Covid variant keeps mutating

The delta Covid variant, first detected in India, has spread to 80 countries and keeps mutating. This variant makes up for 10% of all new cases in the United States and more than 60% of new cases in the U.K. WHO officials informed that some reports state that this variant causes more severe symptoms and is more transmissible than the other variants. In addition, the WHO is tracking a new variant called the "delta plus." The CDC has designated the delta variant as one of the concerns in the U.S. on Tuesday. The WHO is said to be monitoring more than 50 different Covid variants.

### China launches astronauts to Space Station



The Shenzhou-2 spacecraft blasted off from China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Wednesday, carrying three astronauts to China's new space station. The astronauts will stay onboard the space station Tianhe for three months. The three astronauts, Nie Haisheng, Liu Boming, and Tang Hongbo are part of the first crewed mission of this new space station which is being built after the previous one, Tinagong-2 deorbited in 2019. The core module of Tianhe, which included the crew's living quarters, was launched in April 2021. However, two more modules and crew missions are needed before the space station gets finished in 2022. China is also building partnerships with Russia to land astronauts on the Moon in the coming decade.

### Post-Brexit trade between UK and Australia



The U.K. has agreed to a free trade deal with Australia, which makes the selling of British products like cars and confectionery in Australia cost less for British businesses. This step is expected to boost the British industries spread across the country. It also opens up the avenue for young people under the age of 35 in the U.K. to get a chance to work and live on the other side of the world. The U.K. is now keen to strike trade deals with nations worldwide following its departure from the E.U. The U.K. was Australia's fifth-largest trading partner in the previous two years.



### Botswana with world's third-largest diamond

A 1,098-carat diamond which is considered to be the third-largest to be mined, was discovered in Botswana. The largest in the world is the 3106-carat Cullinan stone discovered in South Africa in 1905, followed by the 1,109-carat Lesedi La Rona unearthed in Botswana in 2015. The stone was presented to President Mokgweetsi Masisi on Wednesday by Lynette Armstrong, the acting managing director of Debswana Diamond Company.