

The No. 1 Way You Can Look Like Your Heavenly Father

Sometimes it's so obvious.

The eyes. The hair color. The dimple on the left cheek.

They come in smaller packages, but some children look just like their fathers. It's right there for everyone to see. From the ambling way of walking, to drawn out vowels when they talk—it's even in the facial expressions and the little nondescript attributes that make a person so unique.

Many times, a father's DNA is extremely evident in his child. But it's more than just genetics. The actual process of raising a child gives the youngster a front-row seat to absorb a father's character, behavior and subtle mannerisms.

Jesus was no exception.

Of all who have ever walked the earth, Jesus knew the Father. He was intimately acquainted with the Lord God gracious and communed with Him regularly, even seeking time away from His disciples and ministry in order to spend time with the God He knew so well.

Seeing Him as more than just the God of Israel—as many in Israel thought of Him—Jesus' relationship with His Father brought a radically new dimension of understanding to the Israelites. Like a tint on a painting or a filter on a photo, Jesus highlighted a different aspect of God's nature—one that is crucial to our relationship with Him and His plan for redemption. Jesus knew God as a *Father*.

Though many during Jesus' time had a view of God that likened Him to a "harsh taskmaster," Jesus desired to show the true nature of His Father, the God who has never been ashamed about

making known His heart for His creation.

When Jesus taught parables about a woman rejoicing over a lost coin and the prodigal son, He revealed a kind father who joyfully reclaims His most precious possessions and forgives the harshest of insults. More than just a story, Jesus was teaching about His Father, the Ancient of Days, who loves to lavish His goodness on His creation.

Many today still don't know the Father. Often He is seen through rules and regulations, a list of dos and don'ts, or even misunderstandings of other's experiences or the perspective of the sin-ridden world.

But this is the same view many had in Jesus' day, causing Him to unashamedly declare to His disciples, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father."

We see the kindness of the Father in Jesus. We see the patience of the Father in Jesus. We see the forgiveness of the Father in Jesus.

As our slain lamb, good teacher and gracious friend, Jesus readily displayed the true nature of the Father.

He also displayed the fruit of His relationship with His Father.

Perfectly secure and strong, vulnerable and yet trusting, Jesus displayed the outworking of His healthy relationship with His Father in times of prayer and through His submission to the plan of the cross, freely able to say "not My will, but Yours be done."

His confidence remained unshakeable, settled, in the Father of lights.

Despite the physical discomfort that led to sweat drops of blood, the lack of emotional support from friends and the looming reality of humiliation and execution, the only

begotten Son of the Father said yes. He agreed to a punishment He did not deserve in order to enact the greatest rescue plan of all time with the highest price of all time—His life.

In this relationship, we see freedom, love, trust and the power of agreement that has yielded fruit that remains.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).

“He says, ‘It is a light thing that you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light to the nations so that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).

Through Jesus we see and receive what is possible in our relationship with God, the Father. We enter into unhindered access to holy, holy, holy God, the uncreated Supreme Being, presiding over creation. We get to come to the Ancient of Days as His children. Free from shame, free from fear of reprisal, we can approach the throne of grace with the boldness of well-loved family members who are always welcomed into His presence.

As children, we will always be in the place to hear the Lord whisper those soothing words to our souls, “Come closer.”

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

Through Jesus, we see the heart and desire of God for us to be with Him, and we’re free to experience that desire daily, to know there’s more and enter into the more He has always desired us to experience. But Jesus has also opened the way for every believer to reveal His nature to those He’s placed around us, to allow His love to not just penetrate our hearts,

but to flow through us.

As we encounter His heart, we remain free to share what He's given us from a place of wholeness, strength, and vulnerability. It's in this place that the broken, the hurting, and the overlooked souls can come and receive a greater understanding of God's true nature—not rumors, myths or misunderstandings. It's in this place, as we pour out our lives as living epistles, that others will see the small glints of light of the Father's nature and goodness as they glimpse the changes He's made within us.

The moments in which we choose to walk out the Sermon on the Mount we can be certain that our family heritage is evident. When we choose to love, forgive and bless, or when we hold our hands open in surrender, silencing the rising accusations from the costly reality of being in God's family, we too are able to say, "Not my will, Father, but Yours be done" and know He is being glorified.

It's in these often inconvenient moments, both harrowing and grating, scary and thrilling that something amazing happens—that family resemblance becomes even more obvious, and others in this generation look, and they, too, see the Father.
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