

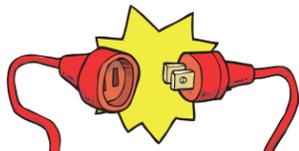
# Abba, Father!

Happy Father's Day! Hopefully it is happy for you. Hopefully you have, or had, a good or great father. Hopefully you were as favored (blessed) by God as I was, with one of the best fathers you could have.

My dad was a great Every-man. He was intelligent, educated, articulate; capable of doing, fixing, managing, designing, preaching, teaching; and no one was more sincere than he was in living up to his own teachings and following God with his whole heart. (Ya think I might have admired him? Duh!)

And then there were those times when he messed up just like the rest of us. A classic story came from our time at the Hitchin Post Market, where he and an assistant did auto repair for customers. In the mid-70's, we bought a used engine analyzer so they could more easily diagnose a troubled engine. They were excited and ready to go as they hooked it up to the car's engine and then turned it on. Nothing happened.

After checking and re-checking connections, re-reading the instructions, and trying everything they knew to get it going, they finally called the manufacturer (or the guy that sold it to us?). The first thing the guy asked was, "Did you plug it in?" Plug it in?!?!? Ohh-h-h-h. You gotta plug it in???



Well, dang. When they plugged it in, it worked. What a surprise! That little incident was one of the classics that gave us many laughs over the years! Fortunately my dad was willing to laugh at himself at times like that.

What would it have been like to be Joseph, "father" of Jesus, during his engagement to Mary, when she told him she was pregnant. Talk about a dilemma! In a society where chastity and virginity were highly valued, and in which a woman who had broken the rules likely would be stoned to death, Joseph had to decide what to do. He was informed by an angel that yes, Mary was pregnant, but by the Holy Spirit, not by a man, and that her Son was the promised Redeemer of mankind! How would you like that burden laid on your back?

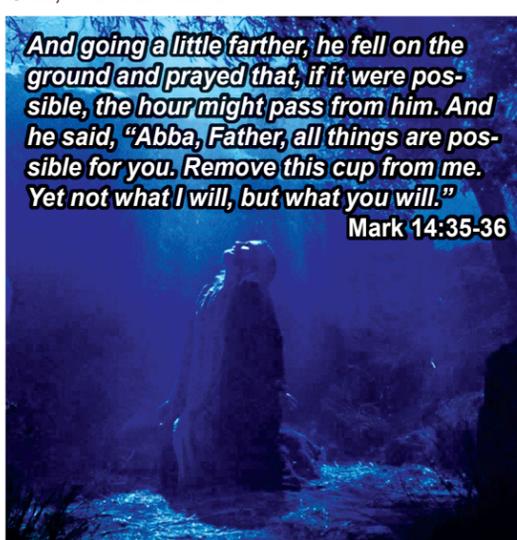
What kind of a father do you suppose Joseph was? Imagine having to decide whether to discipline this little kid, training Him in the ways of God, while knowing who He was! Would you send Him to His room for a time-out, or would you fall on your knees before Him? We are told that Jesus was fully human and fully God. How was poor old Joseph supposed to deal with that?

Think about what Abraham (of the Old Testament) faced when God told him he was to sacrifice his son Isaac to prove his loyalty and obedience to God? What kind of father did he look like to Isaac as he tied him up, placed him on the altar, and raised the knife to kill



him? I don't suppose Isaac felt like wishing his father "Happy Father's Day, Dad."

Jesus, when in the Garden of Gethsemane, as He was struggling with the reality that He was to suffer in the worst possible way when they would nail Him to the cross, right through His hands and feet, appealed to God, His real Father:



**And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."**  
Mark 14:35-36

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Abba, Father"? I looked up the meaning of "Abba", having been told that it means Dad or Daddy or Papa, the same as we use for our earthly fathers. One commentator said that it means more than just "Dad" or "Daddy":

*The true meaning of Abba is "Father, I will obey you." Both elements must be present: Intimacy. Jesus is in a trying time in the Garden of Gethsemane, so he withdraws to be alone with God in prayer. This is an intimate experience with the Father.*

*An obedient heart. The substance of Jesus' prayer that begins with Abba expresses a willingness to obey. . . . So, praying "Abba" means "Father, I will obey you."*

Fortunately, no matter what kind of father we had in this life, we are promised that we will have an eternal Father, God Himself, if we choose to obey Him and to be His children in an intimate relationship with Him.

*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. . . . you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*  
Romans 8:14-17, portions

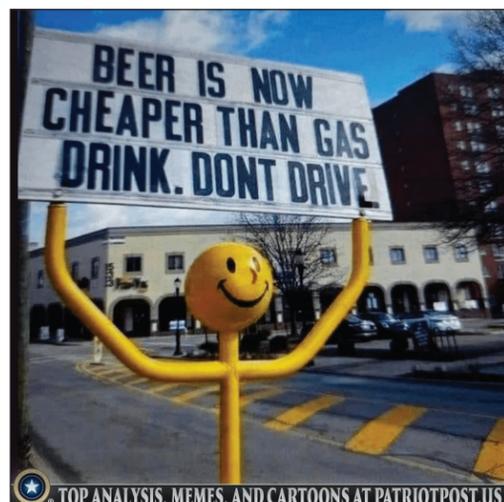
The tragedy of this day and age is how fatherhood has been mocked, scorned, distorted, and corrupted. Families have been destroyed. Weddings are almost rare. So many enter adulthood having had no father at all, or multiple fathers or hookups for the mother. We even use the term "baby daddy" since there is no way a particular person is a father!

How many "families" have siblings, step-siblings, half-siblings, 3 or 4 sets of grandparents, and family members scattered all over the place? What kind of an image can so many have of God the Father, Who also is Creator of the Universe and Who desires that close and loving relationship with us, but Who also demands our obedience to Him? Do we moderns even know what a father should be?

Let's at least be sure that we ourselves and others of our families are in intimate relationship with our heavenly Father, living in obedience to Him, so that we, too, can call Him "Abba, Father!"

*Linda Gammel*

On The Lighter Side . . . Contributed from the Web



## How Despair Becomes Victory

Ray Bentley Ministries

*FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS*  
We honor Pastor Ray's life by continuing to share the daily devotions he prepared for you, his precious readers.

*"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."*  
Ecclesiastes 1:2

How did Solomon, once the richest, wisest, and perhaps most powerful king in the world, fall into such despair that his whole life seemed vain and empty?

How does one who knows, sees, and receives so much from God end up in despair?

How do strong believers who once tasted the goodness of the Lord end up bitter, cynical, and despairing of life?

I've seen it over and over again.

OK, you might be thinking. You've got me. I'm jaded. I'm cynical. Solomon was right. It is all vanity and there's not a lot I can do about it. So eat, drink and be merry...for tomorrow we really will die.

A friend said that to me one day. He quit pretending to be spiritually healthy. He admitted his weaknesses openly and confessed that his soul was in despair.

I appreciated his honesty and told him what I have told many people: look up!

I know that sounds like a cliché, but I've learned that there's a spiritual, emotional, mental, and even physical discipline involved. Turning our eyes, hearts, and minds—even our faces—upward toward the Lord is an act we have to ask the Lord for the strength to predetermine to do.

"Despair is a greater sin than all the sins which provoke it," C.S. Lewis said, making a strong point.

While we cannot control the circumstances of our lives, we can choose how we respond.

"Oh yeah?" my friend countered. "What if you're so depressed you can't choose?"

What if your despair is so heavy that you cannot even think of looking up mentally or physically?

Cling to and recite out loud so you can hear the words of the Bible: "O Lord, you have lifted me up...You, O Lord, are the lifter of my head..."(Psalm 30:1; 3:3).

Read the Psalms over and over, and learn how to go from despair to victory.

A cry to God, one move toward Him, and He will answer.

The answer may be in the form of family, friends, counselors, or other help, but He will provide whatever it takes.

God will give you strength to look up, see again the person of Jesus, and pray for a fresh vision of God, who He is, and how much He loves you!



## OPERATION HAMMER STRIKE NEWS



### STILL HAMMERING

Sheriff Dicus reported on the last nine months' Hammer Strike campaign against the illegal pot farms to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors:

- 875 total search warrants for
- 652 outdoor and 223 indoor locations.
- 1,016 suspects arrested,
- 627 felony arrests,
- 389 misdemeanors,
- 1,151,879 cannabis plants seized,
- 139,763.6 LBS of processed marijuana,
- 290 firearms seized,
- \$3,138,487.00 cash seized,
- 5,833 greenhouse eradications,
- 41 mitigated electrical bypasses
- 24 THC extraction labs.
- Lowball total wholesale value of cannabis seized: over \$787 million.

Lucerne Valley Residents:

## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

Saturday, June 25, 2022  
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Behind Lucerne Valley Fire Station  
33269 Old Womans Spring Rd  
(Enter through gate on Ladera Rd)

### We Accept...

- All Electric Wastes (E-Waste)
- Antifreeze
- Batteries
- Oil and Filters
- Fluorescents
- Latex (only) Paint
- Medical Needles



**NO TRASH NOTHING ELSE!**