

## ELEMENTAL – Week 3: Father: (Fa)

We are excited to take this journey with you into God's Word. We began two weeks ago (09/25) and will continue for 7 more weeks in hopes that this devotional study will reinforce in *your* life what Christians have been hearing from Him for the past 2,000 years. We live in a day of second-hand information: Teachers, pundits, reporters, preachers, authors, etc. Most of us have little more than a vicarious understanding of the Elemental beliefs that define who we are as the church... that define who we are as Christians. We pray this next 7 weeks will be an opportunity for you to hear from God 1<sup>st</sup> hand as you draw near to Him through His revealed Word – the Bible.

**What we believe is what makes us.** Each week will have 5 readings related to the sermon that was preached at the beginning of the week. Think of the sermon as an introduction, and the 5 readings and thought-provoking questions as your further exploration and opportunity to hear from God.

### Day 1: Luke 10:21–22

1. What is the Father's "gracious will?"
2. What do you think it means that we are in relationship to the Father as "little children?" What is the relationship between what a little child knows (i.e. wisdom) and a father's love for that little child?
3. The bible says that knowledge can have the effect of "puffing up" (1Cor. 8:1) and instructs us that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Thinking about a little child, what does it mean for him or her to *know* their father vs. *knowing about* their father?
4. Can you think of an example in Scripture where Jesus contrasts knowing His Father with religious leaders who knew about His Father?

### Day 2: John 5:17–23

1. Notice the connection between the Father's work and the Son's work. As a child of God, would you say that your work is in sync with the Father?
2. In what ways have you seen God showing you the work He is doing? Where is He at work in and around your life? How can you join God in His work?
3. Pray today that God would show you how He is working and ask Him for the "knowledge" (see Day 1) to join Him in what He is doing.

### Day 3: John 16:25–28

1. Jesus is saying that He is going to the Father, going to give to us His Spirit, and we will be given the privilege to carry on the Father's will. How does this text say we will know the Father's will?
2. Jesus says the Father loves you because He has loved Him (Jesus). Why is it hard for us to fully believe and embrace that the Father loves us as He loves the Son?

### Day 4: Romans 8:14–17

1. Thinking about the imagery of adoption in this passage, how can we approach God the Father in our own lives?
2. What do you think it means to be "led by the Spirit of God?" (it might be helpful to read the chapter of Romans 8 for a wider context).
3. What do you think it means for us to "suffer with [Christ]"? How have you suffered for Christ in your life? Can you think of believers you know that have suffered for Christ?

### Day 5: 1 John 2:28–3:3

1. What kind of love does this passage say the Father has for believers?
2. What are three things this passage says about His coming?
3. How does thinking about Jesus' coming change your perspective today? How do your priorities need to change to align you with your identity as the Father's child, a brother or sister of the Son, in the family of God?

## Life Group Questions For Discussion

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- Discuss anything you heard today that made a particular impact on you, and why.
- If thoughts of your own father generate positive emotions, what are they and why?
- If it elicits a negative reaction, what is it and why? Have you dealt with that, and if so, how? If not, why not?
- In what ways do you *still* seek approval in your day-to-day life?
- What does the “Fatherness” of God mean for us? Which element (Defender, Provider, Discipliner) most resonates with you?
- What are some of the competing world-driven images of God that still persist in our understanding of God? How do they affect our relating to Him? How do we address & correct them?
- What would it *really* look like in your life if you fully realized and applied the truth that God is *for* you? What would change?
- If you are a parent, and *especially* if you are a father, how has this role affected your understanding of God?
- Read as much of Ezekiel 16 as you can tolerate aloud. It will make you uncomfortable. What does this text reveal about our behavior / condition before God? About His dealing with us?
- What are the immediate ways you can honor your heavenly Father (reference Luke 22:39-44)?
- Have you ever felt or sensed God’s approval? What was it like? If not, why do you suppose that is?

### Memory Verses (Fighter Verses)

Last Week: 1 John 4:16

This Week: Hebrews 12:9

### Prayer Focus

#### For the Vision and Direction of Bethel – Both Campuses:

Bethel Bible Church will be a people that experience life-change together. May God turn the hearts of fathers back to their sons (Malachi 4:6).

#### Missionary Support

Sierra Leone West Africa has been on the 10 Poorest Countries in the World list since the end of the civil war in 2002 up until today. As Blood Diamond showed the diamond trade has only perpetuated the corruption. In this Muslim dominated country, Bethel has partnered with Grace Evangelical Ministries to take the gospel into the rural areas outside of the capital of Freetown. Peter Conteh is our key man who has helped start 4 churches and 2 schools. Please pray for the Bethel team of 5 who are there currently working with training pastors and leaders in these rural areas.

#### In Response to the Text:

- Praising God for His model of perfect fatherhood.
- Praising God for His gracious defense, provision, and discipline.

### Further Resources for Study and Preparation

*The Father Heart of God: Experiencing the Depths of His Love For You* – Floyd McClung

*Your Father Loves You: Daily Insights For Knowing God* - J.I. Packer

*Prodigal God* - Timothy Keller

### Next Week’s Text: 2 Corinthians 4

