

Our Intimacy with God—Father, Son, Spirit **Edited, expanded and posted by Bob Young**

The members of the Godhead share supreme intimacy. They cannot get any closer to one another than they are. They are one in nature, thought, and purpose. This “oneness” we describe as unity. (The New Testament Greek generally uses “be one” instead of “unity.”) Unity and intimacy go together. God is so much one that it is hard to separate and distinguish the divine persons. The members of the Godhead can be distinguished on the basis of their actions.

Consider two related truths. (1) The unity of the church depends on our intimacy. As long as we do not share close relationships, we will struggle with unity. (2) Our intimacy with God cannot be separated from our relationship with the Son and the Spirit.

What does it mean that we have intimacy with God? How do we experience intimacy? How do the Father, Son, and Spirit work together to enhance our intimacy with God? Tim Chester has noted three evidences of our intimacy with God, based on Gal. 3:26-4:7. In each case, the Father, Son, and Spirit work together to make close relationship possible.

We talk to God like a child talks to a father.

We pray through Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in our hearts lets us cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit gives us confidence to address God as our Father. We are privileged address God as Father in the name of Jesus.

God is infinite, holy, majestic; a consuming fire. Can you imagine a close relationship, even calling him “Father?” Yes! We Christians do it every day when we pray—most of the time without even thinking about it. We pray to God through Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is how John Calvin puts it:

With what confidence would anyone address God as ‘Father’? Who would break forth into such rashness as to claim for himself the honor of a son of God unless we had been adopted as children of grace in Christ? . . . But because the narrowness of our hearts cannot comprehend God’s boundless favor, not only is Christ the pledge and guarantee of our adoption, but he moves the Spirit as witness to us of the same adoption, through whom with free and full voice we may cry, ‘Abba, Father’.

We cry out to God because the Spirit assures us that God is our Father and we know that the Father cares what happens to his children.

We think about God like a child thinks about a father.

We are children, not slaves. “You are no longer a slave, but God’s child.” Slaves fear the disapproval of their master. Children do not share the same fear. Children may be disciplined for their good.

The cry “Abba, Father” is not just for moments of intimacy; it was also the cry a child shouted when in need. When we are in need, we cry out to God. Jesus assures us of access to God and the Spirit assures us that God is our Father.

We depend on God like a child depends on a father.

“Since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.” When Paul talks about being sons, he is not being sexist. He is making a theological point. In the Roman world, only male children could inherit. When Paul says we (male and female, 3:28) are sons, he’s saying that in God’s family, men and women inherit equally. When Paul says no one is a slave and all are sons, he is including everyone. We are heirs and sons through Christ. The Holy Spirit assures us that it is true. We may focus on inheriting heaven, but even more impressive is that we inherit God himself. In life’s uncertainties we depend on him.