

CHAPTER 3: THE ABBA OF THE JESUS CREED

GOSPEL READINGS: Matthew 6:9–15; Luke 15:11–32

Section summary from the part one prologue:
“The first principle of spiritual formation is this:
A spiritually formed person loves God and others.”

1. Jesus taught his disciples that *his father was their father too*. Why do you think Jesus’ hearers were astonished by this declaration?
2. Why does Jesus give us the name “*Abba*” as a name for God?
3. McKnight mentions that the understanding of God’s love for us is like oil on rusty heart chambers:
Some of our heart openings are rusted shut because of the way our parents loved (or didn’t love) us. Those of us with this past need the reeducation of our hearts and a new vision of the beauty of God’s love taught by Jesus.
 - a. In light of your experience with human love - how have you perceived God’s love?
 - b. Have those experiences made you “rusty” when it comes to *receiving* God’s love?
4. Have you ever experienced a moment when God’s love overwhelmed you? What happened?
5. **GROUPS: Read “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” in Luke 15:11-32.**
 - a. From Jesus’ telling of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where does Jesus find justification for his love of and fellowship with sinners? (context from 15:1-2)
 - b. What makes the love of the father in this parable so radical?
6. How does the *daily “gift”* of the *Lord’s Prayer* help us *experience God’s love as Abba*?
7. How can our *daily* trust in God’s loves for us lead us to believe and execute the *Jesus Creed*?

Next week: Chapter 4, The Jesus Creed as Table