

### **Eph 3:14-15 Our Heavenly Father**

**For this reason**--Since the mystery of the new relationship with God made possible by Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross, and facilitated by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit has been revealed to Paul, he can now approach God based in the sonship he now enjoys on behalf of the Ephesian church.

**I bow my knees** -This word for bow the knee or bend the knee means worship or submission to a supernatural power. They can't see him, since he's writing a letter, so he wants to convey the attitude toward God that he has in prayer for them.

**the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**-The term "Father," with reference to God, is used frequently in Ephesians. In chapter 1:2 we learned **2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. So, grace and peace come from God our Father and Jesus, in 1:3 **that God is Jesus' God too, as our example, and that every spiritual blessing comes from God through Jesus, saying 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**, in 1:17 **17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him**. That God is the Father of glory, and that He gives us a spirit of wisdom and reveals His Nature to us Himself. In 2:18 that the way that we reach the Father is through Jesus by way of the Holy Spirit **18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father** That there is 4:6 **6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all**. That we should always be giving thanks to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus in 5:20 **20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father**; and lastly, in 6:23 that peace, love and faith come from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ saying **23 Peace be to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. This is why Paul bows the knee to God; because of who He is! How He Loves! And His Many Gifts! This type of personal relationship with God is made possible by Jesus' forgiveness of our sins, so that we can approach God.

**Adopted as sons and daughters**-The only way that we can be brought into God's family is by being born again, by understanding that there is no way that we can come to God on our own merits, by our own works, and accepting God's free offer of Grace to do what we cannot. Admitting that we have fallen short, sinned against a Holy God, and repenting, turning away from our sins, accepting Jesus' payment for them.

**Abba, Father**-I'm sure you've heard it taught that the word Abba is term of intimacy who's closest English equivalent is "daddy". As Christians, we emphasize the intimacy of God's love, He loves us so much, and wants what is best for us, and He is someone that we can come to in petition, like a little child asks their father for a drink of water. It does mean Daddy or Father, and especially in modern use, be used by children asking something of their father, but along with the term of closeness and familiarity is a certain respect. Basically, it's biblical "equivalent" in English is probably closer to "My Father" than Daddy. The word Abba first comes into the Bible in the story of Isaac and Abraham (see Gen 22:7-8. There is intimate relationship here between Isaac and Abraham, but there's also obedience. We see this combination of intimacy and respect again when David is praying for a blessing for the collection that he has taken up to build the Temple in 1 Chron 29:19 **10 So David blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever**. And again, a term of intimacy, and respect, in Isaiah 63:16b **You, Lord, are our Father, Our Redeemer from ancient times is Your name**. And submission and respect, as in Isaiah 64:8 **But now, Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter, And all of us are the work of Your hand**. And, in many places, God describes Himself as a loving Father to Israel, but one that demands obedience (see Jer 3:19). Jesus' use of the word at the Garden of Gethsemene in Mark 14:35-36 **35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began praying that if it were possible, the hour might [t]pass Him by. 36 And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."** This shows intimacy and obedience.

We see Abba Father mentioned twice more in Paul's letters. The Apostle Paul went through a tremendous spiritual transformation from being the pharisee of the pharisees into the greatest evangelist among the apostles. It is his personal experience with Jesus that brings out this expression of love, intimacy and respect. Paul uses this phrase exactly as Jesus did in Gal 4:4-7 **4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba! Father!"** Paul uses Abba for a specific purpose, which is to express both intimacy and an obedient heart. In his letter to the Romans, Paul instructs the Christians to trust and obey God, our Father. For He loves us and we need to be committed to Him. He wants us to leave sinfulness and honor Him with righteousness. Abba ultimately means our personal, wholehearted commitment to God. To trust in Him is to live with respect and responsibility to His fatherhood. Romans 8:15 **"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' "** **7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.** Intimacy. Notice what motivates this prayer: It's the "Spirit of sonship" which stands in opposition to "the spirit of bondage to fear,". It's the heart of an obedient child that cries out Abba. The context of this verse makes it clear: In the immediately preceding verses—Romans 8:12–13—we see that our cry of "Abba, Father" is an act of submission of our will: **"Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"** Paul's point here, is not merely the intimacy of being God's child; but also obedience and walking in the Spirit which gives us the impetus and ability to truly cry out Abba! Father! With sincerity. It is those "cries of the heart" that get God's attention, not just words with our mouths. The one who confesses the Son is the one who has a personal relationship with the Father also, the only way to have this relationship with God, because **Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, No One Comes to the Father, except by Him.** Confession or denial of who Jesus is, as revealed in scripture, is directly related to one's relationship with God. To confess Jesus as Lord and Savior is necessary to have this relationship with the Father, so having the Father is contingent on confessing the Son. **3:15. from whom every family in heaven and on the earth is named,"**-As Paul looks at the Fatherhood of God, it is in the sense of a family headed by a father. This word had the idea of lineage or descent from the father and the idea of a clan or tribe which had the original father or patriarch as the head. Just like we think of when we say "Father Abraham. The thought is that the nation is composed of many families, all of which have originated from one father. Paul seems to be saying that God the Father gives his name to all families in heaven and on earth in the sense that He created all of them. This began when God named Adam the son of God (Luke 3:38). And this creative action still continues—this verb is present tense. So, every family, whether in heaven or on the earth, has its origin in God as creator. This applies to the angelic beings too, since God is called the Father of spirits (Heb 12:9) and Father of lights (Jas 1:17). And, of course, we read in Eph 1:10 that Christ will one day head up all things in heaven and on earth. In the present context the heavenly families are linked to the earthly families in their common dependence on the Father. God's ability to create and name every family in heaven and on earth stresses his sovereignty and his fatherhood. It is to this sovereign God that Paul prays the prayer that we're going to look at next week.