

CONNECTING WITH THE

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Adapted from “The Father Ladder” developed by Dawna DeSilva for Bethel Sozo

When you feel something is blocking your ability to connect or hear from God, remember this: We have a very real enemy who wants to steal, kill, and destroy. Our enemy does **not** want us to connect with God. But God **does** want us to connect with Him. And God is more powerful than the enemy, so it’s possible to overcome any “block” that keeps us from connecting with God and hearing Him.

How we view God is shaped at least in part by the way we see our primary caregivers during childhood. As children, we all long to have an intimate relationship with our earthly mom and dad and to be heard and seen by siblings and/or close friends. No family is perfect, and even very loving parents can miss things. That’s why early experiences in our own family of origin can create a barrier or block when we are trying to hear from God and live in an intimate relationship with Him.

Trauma therapist Adam Young (AdamYoungCounseling.com) said it this way: “If we let ourselves feel our longing to hear God’s voice, that automatically connects us to very deep longings in our heart for attunement, responsiveness, and engagement from our parents. So if you didn’t have an attuned, responsive, and engaged parent, what do you think happens in your brain when you sit down to be with your **heavenly** Parent and you are needing responsiveness and engagement from Him?”

In trying to understand why something is getting in the way or “blocking” their ability to connect and hear from God, some people find it helpful to think through how each part of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – meets their deepest needs. *This is reflected in our closest human relationships.* Looking at our human relationships can help us understand where we may have internalized a view of God that is not consistent with the truth of who God is.

The chart on the following page describes each member of the Godhead (Trinity), the primary needs they fill, and the earthly relationships that parallel with each member.

Godhead	Meets These Needs	Relationship Parallels
Father God	Identity (value) Protection (security/safety) Provision	Father Male teachers and pastors Male coaches/activity leaders Grandfathers/Uncles Other male authority figures
Jesus	Companionship Communication	Siblings/ Friends
Holy Spirit	Comfort Nurture Teaching	Mother Female teachers and pastors Female coaches/activity leaders Grandmothers/Aunts Other female authority figures

GOD, OUR FATHER

Think about your relationship with your earthly father and/or other father figures in your life. Here are some things we typically look to our fathers to do and provide:

- Impart identity.
- Teach us our value.
- Provide protection, safety, and security.
- Prepare us for the future.
- Provide affection, kindness, and emotional safety.
- Be present, reliable, and approachable.
- Be affirming and empowering.
- Be responsible for provision.
- Take personal interest in us.
- Model proper authority.

Every family is unique, and no earthly father is perfect. But if your earthly father (or a significant father figure) was not loving and/or did not meet these basic needs, it is quite common to feel as though there is a wall or “block” that keeps you from hearing God and connecting with Him as a loving Father. The exercises on the following page may help with taking a closer look.

Personal Reflection Exercise:

As you consider your earthly father and/or father figures (grandfathers, uncles, male teachers, pastors, coaches, etc.), ask yourself: Did I experience any hurt in relationship to the presence (or absence) of my earthly father? Did I make certain judgments about my earthly father as a result? Did these experiences turn into beliefs about myself that are not true? Write down anything that comes to mind.

Now ask yourself: Did I assign judgments about my earthly father to my Heavenly Father in some way? (For example, if your earthly father was gone a lot or seemed too busy to spend time with you, did you develop a belief that your Heavenly Father is also too busy to spend time with you? If your earthly father was critical, have you assumed God is also criticizing you? If your earthly father was unsafe or abusive, did you begin to think God is not safe and will in some way abuse you?) Write down anything that comes to mind.

Scripture provides an accurate picture of who Father God is and what He thinks about us. Read the following scriptures and use the space below to write down what you learn about Father God in these verses.

Psalm 119:68

1 Chronicles 16:34

Psalm 18:30

2 Peter 3:9

Psalm 136:1

Jeremiah 29:11

Nahum 1:7

Psalm 86:5

James 1:17

Isaiah 41:13

1 Corinthians 1:9

John 3:16

Matthew 10:29-31

Deuteronomy 33:12

Psalm 147:5

Micah 7:18-19

Psalm 18:2

Psalm 145:13

1 John 4:8

Exodus 34:6

Talk with Father God about anything you may have wrongly believed about Him. When you are ready, tell God you are sorry for viewing Him in this way. Then ask God to show you who He really is and what He feels about you. Sit and listen to what Father God has to say. Write down what you hear, see, or sense Him saying.

If you need help focusing, simply ask God a question and listen for His answer. Here are some examples of questions you might ask God:

- **Father, what is one of Your favorite things about me?**
- **Father God, would You tell me what You are like?**
- **The Bible says You sing over me, Father. What are You singing over me today?**

As you release judgments and wrong beliefs, ask Father God what He wants to give you in exchange for them. Journal your thoughts, feelings, impressions, or any pictures you see.

NOTE: You may need to spend some time working through what it means to forgive your earthly father for things he did - intentionally or unintentionally - that wounded you in some way. This is a process that may take time. Tools found in the [Keys to Freedom](#) discipleship study may be helpful. You may also benefit from the guidance of a professional counselor.

JESUS, OUR BROTHER

Think about your relationships with your sibling(s) and/or close friends. Here are some things we typically look to these relationships to do and provide:

- Pay attention to us.
- Listen to us.
- Provide companionship.
- Provide inclusion.
- Show interest in our connection.
- Have a desire to be with us.
- Be trusting, caring, and forgiving.

In these relationships we also develop communication skills and learn to work things out. If we do not have siblings or close friends during these years, we may miss opportunities to develop some interpersonal skills and as a result, may not feel confident about communication or how to give and receive in relationship with God.

As we grow into adolescence, our sibling and close friend relationships take on a great deal of importance in our lives. However, we may experience deep disappointment, betrayal, loss, or trauma in one or more of these relationships. When people hurt us, exclude us, abandon us – intentionally or not – we may decide to never let anyone get close enough to hurt us like that again, even Jesus.

In Scripture, Jesus is referred to as our brother, our friend, and the bridegroom of the Church. He called his disciples friends and modeled healthy relationships for them, and for us. Our souls need companionship and communication; this was modeled by Jesus, and those needs are ultimately met in Him.

When we feel something “blocking” our relationship with Jesus, it may be rooted in what we have experienced (or not experienced) in relationships with our sibling(s) and close friends.

Personal Reflection Exercise:

As you consider your sibling(s) and close friends throughout your life, ask yourself: Did I experience any deep hurts or disappointments in these relationships? Did I make certain judgments about my sibling(s) or close friends as a result? Did these experiences turn into beliefs about myself that are not true? Write down anything that comes to mind.

Now ask yourself: Did I assign judgments about my sibling(s) or close friends to Jesus in some way? (For example, if your sibling paid no attention to you, did you develop a belief that Jesus isn't interested in connection with you? If a close friend betrayed you, did you begin to think Jesus would betray you?) Write down anything that comes to mind.

Scripture provides an accurate picture of who Jesus is and what He thinks about us. Read the following scriptures and use the space below to write down what you learn about Jesus in these verses.

Mark 3:34-35

John 1:14

Philippians 2:5-11

Hebrews 2:11

John 15:9-17

Ephesians 5:25-27

Matthew 11:29

John 8:12

Matthew 20:28

Isaiah 9:6

John 10:11

1 John 3:16

Hebrews 13:8

1 Peter 2:24

Colossians 2:10

Talk with Jesus about anything you may have wrongly believed about Him. When you are ready, tell Jesus you are sorry for viewing Him in this way. Then ask Jesus to show you who He really is and what He feels about you. Sit and listen to what He has to say. Write down what you hear, see, or sense Him saying.

If you need help focusing, simply ask Jesus a question and listen for His answer. Here are some examples of questions you might ask Him:

- Jesus, why do You want to spend time with me?
- Jesus, would You tell me what You are like?
- What do You like about me, Jesus?

As you release judgments and wrong beliefs, ask Jesus what He wants to give you in exchange for them. Journal your thoughts, feelings, impressions, or any pictures you see.

NOTE: You may need to spend some time working through what it means to forgive your sibling(s) or close friends for things they did – intentionally or unintentionally – that wounded you in some way. This is a process that may take time. Tools found in the [Keys to Freedom](#) discipleship study may be helpful. You may also benefit from the guidance of a professional counselor.

HOLY SPIRIT, OUR COMFORT

We tend to think of God as male, so connecting “mother” with Holy Spirit can seem strange. But according to Scripture, “God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27 NIV) Male and female both clearly reflect the image of God. The Holy Spirit is described in Scripture with the kinds of nurturing terms historically assigned to mothers. The Holy Spirit is a gift to us from God the Father through Jesus the Son, and provides comfort, help, encouragement, and teaching, among other things.

Think about your relationship with your earthly mother and/or other mother figures in your life. Here are some things we typically look to our mothers to do and provide:

- Offer unconditional love and affection.
- Provide comfort and nurture.
- Provide teaching.
- Be emotionally safe and available.
- Show interest in our hearts.
- Guide our growth and character.
- Be present, reliable, and approachable.

As we have acknowledged, even good parents are not perfect. Our needs may not always be met, and as children we don’t have the capacity to understand why. Without knowing it, we may assign judgments that turn into beliefs about our mothers and other significant women in our lives we looked to for nurture and comfort, and these may “block” our ability to connect with the Holy Spirit.

Personal Reflection Exercise:

As you consider your earthly mother and/or mother figures (grandmothers, aunts, female teachers, pastors, coaches, etc.), ask yourself: Did I experience any hurt in relationship to the presence (or absence) of my earthly mother? Did I make certain judgments about my earthly mother as a result? Did these experiences turn into beliefs about myself that are not true? Write down anything that comes to mind.

Now ask yourself: Did I assign judgments about my earthly mother to the Holy Spirit in some way? (For example, if your earthly mother withheld comfort and affection, did you develop the belief that the Holy Spirit would not be a source of comfort and affection for you? If your earthly mother wasn't present – physically or mentally/emotionally – did you begin to think that the Holy Spirit isn't present with you?) Write down anything that comes to mind.

Scripture provides an accurate picture of who the Holy Spirit is and how the Spirit works in us and through us. Read the following scriptures and use the space below to write down what you learn about the Holy Spirit in these verses.

Galatians 5:22-23

John 14:26

1 Corinthians 2:10-11

John 14:16

Luke 12:12

John 16:13

Romans 8:26-27

2 Corinthians 3:17

Romans 5:5

Isaiah 11:2

2 Corinthians 3:6

Talk with the Holy Spirit about anything you may have wrongly believed and ask the Spirit to guide you into all truth about the Spirit's nature and character. Sit and listen to what the Holy Spirit has to say. Write down what you hear, see, or sense.

If you need help focusing, simply ask the Holy Spirit a question and listen for an answer. Here are some examples of questions you might ask:

- Who am I to You, Holy Spirit?
- Holy Spirit, would you tell me what You are like?
- Holy Spirit, do you have a gift for me today?

As you release judgments and wrong beliefs, ask what the Holy Spirit wants to give you in exchange for them. Invite the Spirit to fill you and meet your needs for comfort, nurture, and teaching. Thank the Holy Spirit for fulfilling the promise of God's continuous presence with you. Journal your thoughts, feelings, impressions, or any pictures you see.

NOTE: You may need to spend some time working through what it means to forgive your earthly mother for things she did – intentionally or unintentionally – that wounded you in some way. This is a process that may take time. Tools found in the [Keys to Freedom](#) discipleship study may be helpful. You may also benefit from the guidance of a professional counselor.

References for the content in this resource include The Father Ladder, developed by Dawna DeSilva for Bethel Sozo and shelemah.com/how-we-see-god/#.

Other Recommended Resources:

Finding Father by A.J. Jones (alynandaj.com/store)

MercyTalk Podcast Episode #285 – “Attachment and the Father Ladder”