

STAND FIRM & ACT LIKE MEN

Week 7: God Is My Father

Men's Group Reading Summary | Church For The ONE

| *"Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"* — **Luke 2:49**

Overview

Week 7 is the final session of Stand Firm & Act Like Men — and it pulls back the curtain on the source of everything the series has been calling men to. All seven imperatives — be watchful, stand firm, act like men, be strong, be a godly husband, love well — are impossible to sustain without this foundation: knowing God not just as Creator or Judge or King, but as Abba. Father.

The message is built around one of the most scandalous words Jesus ever spoke. From the age of 12 in the temple to the final hours before the cross, Jesus used a word that made religious leaders want to kill Him and that changed the entire landscape of how human beings could relate to God. That word is Abba. And the argument of this week is simple and staggering: you will never stand firm and act like a man until you become an obedient son.

Part 1: Two Words That Shook the Stratosphere

The scene opens in 12 AD. Jerusalem. The Passover feast has ended and long caravans of families are making the journey home. Mary and Joseph are a full day's journey out of the city before they realize Jesus is not with them. They turn back and find Him in the temple — not lost, not afraid, but sitting among the teachers, listening and asking questions. And when Mary confronts Him, Jesus gives an answer that stops everyone cold:

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Two words. My Father. In first-century Jewish culture, those two words were not just unusual — they were world-rocking and paradigm-shattering. Rabbis did not call God Father. According to Leviticus, it bordered on blasphemy. Good, observant Jews like Mary and Joseph had no category for it. And yet Jesus says it at age 12 as if it is the most natural thing in the world — because for Him, it is.

This is just the beginning. By the time Jesus delivers the Sermon on the Mount, He will use the word Father 17 times — and every single one is connected to a personal pronoun: my, your, our. He is not speaking about a distant deity. He is speaking about His Abba. And He is inviting His followers into the same relationship.

Part 2: Abba — Father in 4K

The word Jesus used — the word He used more than any other to refer to God — is Abba. It is not simply the Greek or Hebrew word for father. It is richer and more intimate than any single-language translation can capture. Etched into the word itself is identity, security, purpose, and ownership.

Abba is Father in 4K ultra HD.

The word carries inside its own letters a deep expression of intimacy and knowingness. It is not a formal title — it is the cry of a child who knows exactly whose they are and exactly who will come when they call.

Throughout His three-year public ministry, Jesus is recorded using the word Abba 165 times. But here is what makes it even more striking: in just the last 18 hours of His life — from the moment He washes the disciples' feet to the moment He cries out from the cross — He packs in 51 of those 165 uses. As the pressure mounts, as the suffering closes in, the word Jesus returns to most is Abba.

This raises an honest and haunting question. Why would God the Father command Jesus to speak the very word that was going to get Him killed? If salvation hangs in the balance, is this really the best strategy? The answer is yes — because the entire mission of Jesus was not just to pay for sin. It was to make God knowable as Father. He used the word that would cost Him His life precisely because that word was worth dying for.

Part 3: Abba Is Rooted in Obedience

Here is where the message gets clarifying and convicting at the same time. The word Abba does not simply mean "daddy" in a sentimental sense. Jesus used it in a way that was always connected to obedience. When He said Abba, what He was really saying was: Father, I will obey you.

The distinction matters. Some people call God daddy with no intention of obeying Him — they are simply trying to work their way into His favor or blessings on their own terms. But Abba carries a different weight. The cozy tenderness of abiding with the Father — the security, the belonging, the identity — all of it flows through the narrow gate of obedience.

There is no abiding with the Father without unreserved, unequivocal, uncompromising obedience.

All of us want the comfort and nearness of the Father. But do we want the discomfort of obedience? Because the only way to truly know the love of the Father is to obey Him.

This is why Paul could write "I die daily" and "I have been crucified with Christ." The path into the Father's embrace runs directly through the cross — through self-denial, through surrender, through saying yes to what God asks even when everything in you wants to say no.

Part 4: Your Abba Is Not Your Earthly Dad

The message pauses here to speak directly to one of the most common and most painful barriers between men and God: a broken experience with an earthly father. The word Abba carries everything a perfect father should be — present, strong, safe, pursuing, delighting in his child. For many men, that description bears no resemblance to the man who raised them.

The message tells a personal story. A moment of sitting alone on a dorm room bed with a broken vertebra in his back, a football career ending, everything uncertain. Finally limping down the hall to the payphone and calling his father. The father's response, without a pause, without a breath: "Son, if I leave right now, I can be there by supper."

That is a picture of what every man's soul is longing for. And here is the truth the message delivers without softening it:

Most of you are walking around with a broken back and you are not on the phone with your Father.

Most of you have an "I got this" attitude. But you don't got this. He does. That's your pride talking. The gospel is not that you have what it takes. The gospel is that He does — and He is available to every man who will pick up the phone.

Your Abba Father is not your earthly dad. He is not limited by your dad's failures, his absence, his anger, or his indifference. The question for every man carrying a wound from his father is this: how long are you going to allow the enemy to use your experience with your earthly dad to rob you of the love of your heavenly Father? You are worth the Son of God. That is not a feeling — it is a fact written in blood.

Part 5: The Will of the Father — Where the Series Lands

The closing movement of Week 7 is also the closing movement of the entire series. Jesus said the one who enters the kingdom of heaven is the one who does the will of His Father. So what is the will of the Father? The message answers with every imperative the series has covered — and suddenly the whole arc clicks into place:

The will of the Father is that husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. The will of the Father is that we love one another as He has loved us. The will of the Father is that we forgive —

because a man who will not forgive cannot receive forgiveness. The will of the Father is that we deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus.

"You will never stand firm and act like a man until you become an obedient son." — The message's closing declaration

Be watchful. Stand firm in the faith. Act like men. Be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. These are not motivational slogans for self-improvement. They are the will of a Father who loves His sons, who sent His Son to make that love accessible, and who is calling every man in this room to stop trying to carry his broken back alone and pick up the phone.

The series ends exactly where it was always heading: not with a stronger man standing on his own — but with an obedient son standing in the strength of his Father.

Discussion Questions

Opening Up

1. When you hear the word "Abba" — intimate, close, the cry of a child who knows exactly whose they are — what feeling does that stir in you? Does it feel accessible, distant, foreign, or something else? Where does that reaction come from?
2. The message says Jesus used the word Father 17 times in the Sermon on the Mount and 51 times in the final 18 hours of His life. What does it say about Jesus that the closer He got to suffering and the cross, the more He leaned into calling God Father?

Going Deeper

3. Abba is rooted in obedience. The message draws a sharp line between people who call God "daddy" as a way of working Him and those who say Abba as an act of surrender. Where do you honestly land? Is your relationship with the Father characterized more by trying to get things from Him or by trusting and obeying Him?
4. The message asks: how long are you going to let the enemy use your experience with your earthly father to rob you of the love of your heavenly Father? For men who carry a wound from their dad — absence, anger, indifference, abuse — what is the specific lie the enemy has attached to that wound about who God is?
5. The broken-back story lands with this line: most of you are walking around with a broken back and you are not on the phone with your Father. What is the "broken back" you are currently carrying — the thing you have been handling with an "I got this" posture instead of bringing to God?

Getting Honest

6. The entire series — be watchful, stand firm, be strong, be a godly husband, love well — all of it flows from being an obedient son. Looking back over the seven weeks, where has that foundation of sonship felt solid for you, and where has it been missing? What has this series revealed about the gap?
7. The will of the Father is not a mystery — it is everything the series has covered. As you close this study, what is the one specific thing God is asking you to obey that you have been resisting, delaying, or negotiating? What would it mean to say yes to that this week?

Series Closing Challenge

Pick up the phone. Whatever your broken back is — name it, bring it to the Father, and ask Him to show you the one step of obedience He is waiting for. You will never stand firm and act like a man until you become an obedient son. That is where it starts. That is where it has always started.

Be watchful. Stand firm in the faith. Act like men. Be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.