



The Abba Prayer for Men A Catholic Vision of Masculinity

LOVE/IDENTITY

Abba (Papa, Dad, Daddy), make me know my true identity as your beloved son¹ so profoundly that I live out my spiritual and/or physical brotherhood, husbandhood, and fatherhood in active service to others. Help me become fully who I am² by always remembering who I am in you.

Drive out the fear³ and senselessness in my life by revealing this love to me, that I may encounter it, experience it, participate deeply in it, and make it my own,⁴ not just in my head, but in my heart, so that my hands will do only your will. Help me to receive this love as a little child⁵ and also to put aside childish things so that I can become a man⁶ and obtain my eternal reward in your kingdom.⁷

AND CHALLENGE

I will then take up the challenge of your “demanding love,”⁸ and following St. Joseph, I will live out the summit of my manhood as a spiritual father, exercising the virtue of chivalry as priest, prophet, and king, to fulfill the prophecy that God will turn “the hearts of [spiritual] fathers toward children.”⁹

Holy Spirit, help me cultivate the virtue of chivalry in myself and in others through a life of sacrifice with extreme meekness off the “battlefield” and extreme valor on the “battlefield.”¹⁰ With my meekness, which is having the power to fight but not using it, help me create safety for women, children, and the vulnerable. And with my valor help me oppose those who are brutal to or dominate others. Jesus, teach me to rid myself of the extremes of domination, brutality, and passivity, and to leave my mother and father¹¹ so that I can lay down my life for my physical and/or spiritual bride.¹²

Because of my baptism, I am the priest who sanctifies my physical and spiritual families by linking the human and divine, the prophet who teaches the faith by speaking the truth in love, and the king who governs through service by ordering the gifts of others for the good of all.¹³

For this reason I kneel before you, the Almighty Father, my Lord, my everlasting King, ... and my Abba,¹⁴ from whom every man is named father; accelerate my being rooted and grounded in your name, knowing the very fullness of your love,¹⁵ so that I remain connected with you and my brothers to be courageous to provide for and protect my physical and spiritual families. I pledge with all my being—my head, my heart, and my hands—to serve you and you alone and to radiate your merciful and challenging fatherhood to everyone in my life.

St. John Paul II and St. Joseph, Pray for us.

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Instructions: This is a very rich and dense prayer, and it is probably too much to handle the whole thing every day. But take a few days to familiarize yourself with the complete prayer. Then pray at least part of it daily; read a little bit and meditate on it. You can read one or two different sections each day, or pick a section that you most need to work on and stick with it for a week or so. Then on occasion read the entire prayer. Also share it with the men and young men in your life.

For more resources: AbbaChallenge.com and for information on RTF meetings and the annual conferences go to: rekindlethefire.net.

¹ Rom. 8:14-15; Gal. 4:3-7, 1 Jn. 3:1; Our identity is based on: "You are chosen" (Jn. 15:16), "a gift" (Jn. 17:24, NAB), "forgiven, delighted in, and given everything God has" (Prodigal Son: Lk. 15:11-35).

² St. John Paul II, "Become who you are."

³ 1 Jn. 4:16-19

⁴ St. John Paul II, "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it." *Redeemer of Man* 10

⁵ Mt. 18:3

⁶ 1 Cor. 13:11

⁷ Mt. 5:12, Lk. 6:23, 1 Pet. 5:4

⁸ JP II, *Letter to Families*, 14

⁹ Lk. 1:17, cf. Mal. 3:24

¹⁰ C.S. Lewis, *Present Concerns*, ed. by Walter Hooper. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1986 (thanks to Rick Cross, Ph.D., for developing this line of thinking).

¹¹ Gen. 2:24, Mt. 19:5, CCC 2779

¹² Eph. 5:25, Jn. 15:13

¹³ Bishop Robert Barron, "Priest, Prophet, King." DVD Series, Word on Fire, 2014.

¹⁴ In our culture God's immanence (his closeness to us) has been emphasized more than his transcendence (his complete separateness from us), which has contributed to the feminization of men. "Almighty Father, Lord, and King" stresses transcendence, and "Abba" stresses immanence—said another way, we are loved by our Abba and challenged by our King.

¹⁵ Eph. 3:14-21