

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

A FATHER CHILD RELATIONSHIP

1 John 3:21-22 "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him."

In today's verses John continues to keep your focus upon God's love for you and your response to His love. In other words, John is concerned about the relationship of God's children ("beloved) with their heavenly Father.

The key to a healthy, wholesome, good relationship between a father and his children is trust. Think of the young father tossing his toddler into the air. The toddler has no fear, but giggles and laughs trusting, knowing, believing dad will catch him and not let him fall or become injured. Such confidence John points toward in verse 21. The only barrier to this confidence is sin. "If your heart does not condemn you," and the only reason it would is if your heart is filled with sin and rebellion against God, "if your heart does not condemn you" then you know that you can take to your heavenly Father any need, care, concern, trouble and sin trusting you will receive from Him His ministry of love and forgiveness.

In turn, your response to God's compassionate, forgiving fatherly love toward you is to respond back to Him with your love, devotion, worship, obedience and honor. We call this response worship and that is what it is. Again, it is similar to the way a toddler responds to the full and complete love of their earthly father, waiting at the door for him to return home from work. The child begs to sit on his lap and cuddle. The toddler, snuggles up close to their father in their bed while he reads to them and says their nightly prayers. As this toddler has an unconditional trust in their father so you have in your heavenly Father.

Yes, it is your goal to "keep His commandments and do what pleases Him." His love for you brings about your response of obedience. And, you are not on your own in doing this. He sends His Holy Spirit to work through His word and the Sacraments to lead and guide you in this response. The Spirit connects you to Jesus so that through Him you come to your heavenly Father boldly and confidently in your love for Him and in turn receive His love for you.

Prayer: Grant me, Heavenly Father, that through Jesus and the Holy Spirit we have a trusting relationship whereby all I do in my life pleases you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In God, my faithful God, I trust when dark my road;
Great woes may overtake me, Yet He will not forsake me.
My troubles He can alter; His hand lets nothing falter.

My sins fill me with care, Yet I will not despair.
I build on Christ, who loves me; From this rock nothing moves me.
To Him I will surrender, To Him, my soul's defender.

If death my portion be, It brings great gain to me;
It speeds my life's endeavor To live with Christ forever.
He gives me joy in sorrow, Come death now or tomorrow.

O Jesus Christ, my Lord, So meek in deed and word,
You suffered death to save us Because Your love would have us
Be heirs of heav'nly gladness When ends this life of sadness.

"So be it," then, I say With all my heart each day.
Dear Lord, we all adore You, We sing for joy before You.
Guide us while here we wander Until we praise You yonder.
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