

Portrait of the Father

What makes us valuable as a person?

A loving father holds his baby daughter in his arms.

The little baby has no money. She has no athletic ability. She is not famous. She has not accomplished anything, beyond filling her diaper! And yet the father loves the child, simply because she is his daughter.

Here we see a reflection of God's love for us.

Jesus revealed something unexpected about God. He called God his Father, and he shared that God knows and loves each of us in a personal way, too. God does not see us merely as creatures he has created, but as his sons and daughters. The imperfect love that earthly fathers have for their children is just a small taste of the unconditional love that God the Father has for each of us.

Jesus models the love of his Father.

In our broken world, it can be difficult to imagine the love of such a father. Many of us have not been able to experience an earthly father who was present and loving. But as we read about Jesus in the Gospels, our hearts begin to be touched by his words and actions. Like a son who resembles his father, as we come to know Jesus, we start to encounter the love of our Heavenly Father.

The Father's love is for all of his children.

Instead of spending time with those who were seen as important or holy, Jesus was always reaching out to those who society rejected: the poor, the outcasts, the sinners. Jesus shows us that the Father loves every one of his children; the world's labels mean nothing to him. He knows each of us by name and seeks us out, just as Jesus reached out to Zacchaeus the tax collector and called him by name. (Luke 19)

We tend to judge our worth based on earthly qualities.

Someone who is beautiful is valued more than a person with average looks. A wealthy person is more important than someone who is not. But beauty fades; wealth can be lost. It is liberating to recognize that our value is not based on passing qualities such as these.

The Father's love is the source of Christian joy.

Like the baby in our example, we are not loved because of our abilities or accomplishments, but simply because God is our Father. We each have extraordinary value, a worth which flows from the amazing fact that we are personally known and loved by God. What joy to know that the God who created the entire universe, whose beauty is beyond our imagining, loves each of us as a Father!

