

The Demands of Our Heavenly Father

When you put your faith in Jesus you are born into a spiritual family. God is now your heavenly Father. As our heavenly Father, God makes demands on His children. He expects us to be obedient and to live with an appropriate fear of Him. But here's the deal, these demands are from a Father who loves us and wants what is best for us. They are for our good. As we consider today's passage, may we hear these demands with the knowledge that our Father in heaven is good and always has our best in mind.

Opening Question: Would you say that your relationship with your earthly father tends to help or hinder your ability to trust and obey your heavenly Father?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-21

1. What kind of mindset is Peter advocating in verse 13?
2. Practically, what are things that you can do that would help you live out the commands of verse 13?
3. Read verses 14-16 again. What does our heavenly Father expect of us? What's your gut reaction when you hear these commands?

Steve said:

Do these demands sound good and reasonable or do they sound restrictive and controlling to you? As I mentioned earlier, how you hear these demands depends on lots of things in your life and experience. But consider these demands through the grid of the parable of the prodigal son. When Jesus wanted to explain the type of Father God is and how His children should relate to Him, He told this story (Luke 15). . . . Is it reasonable for that father to tell his son [once he returned back home to the father], "Now that you're living in my household, I never want you running off to a distant land. . . I never want you to return to 'the passions of your former ignorance'. . ." Of course it is! When the boy "came to his senses," he realized that he was ignorant to run away from home; life in his father's house provided abundance and security.

4. How do the truths revealed about our heavenly Father in the parable of the prodigal son help us correctly hear the commands in verses 14-16?

5. In what ways might it be for our good to obey the commands in verse 14-16?
6. What motivating factors does Peter present for living holy lives (vv. 17-19)?
7. What does it mean to conduct yourself in fear (v. 17)?
8. To get practical about applying this passage, apply this grid:
 - Identify an area of obedience in your life (e.g. deceit, lying, drunkenness, greed, sexual sins, etc.)
 - What does the Father specifically want from you in this area?
 - Why are these demands good and reasonable in this area?
 - What specific steps of obedience do you need to take? What's your plan for obeying?