



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

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No more fear.

If you are led by God's spirit, then there is no more fear.



For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!" (Romans 8:15)

Are you being led by God's spirit? Then you are His. How do you know that you are led by God's spirit? Because you understand truth and reject lies. This is the spirit of wisdom and revelation. I know that you used to think you understood truth and rejected lies, but back then you reversed the lies and the truth. You called lies truth, and vice-versa. Then the light

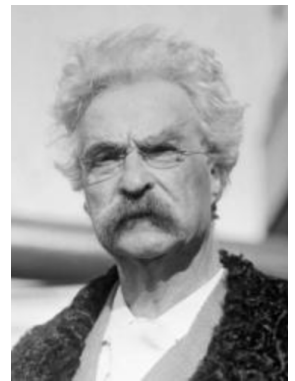
dawned and now you appreciate the depth of the deception you once lived in. People ask me, "How can I be sure that I'm currently correct and that I was wrong before?" My simple answer is: *Which of your viewpoints takes glory away from humanity and gives it to God? Which viewpoint makes God more and you less? Which viewpoint makes/made you afraid?*

YOUR DAYS OF RELIGION

Your days of religion brought fear. Fear is slavery. To fear god is to suffer perpetual anxiety. Many religionists profess confidence in God and in their own salvation, but if the many trips to the altar or to the riverbanks for baptism speak of anything, it is a complete lack of assuredness in this department. The god of the altar call expects you to mind details: pray right, walk right, talk right. He has said that he won't torment those who do everything right, but what if he changes his mind? He is the capricious sort.

Mark Twain has written of how, as a child, thunderstorms terrified him—especially those that rolled into Hannibal, Missouri at night. Young Sam Clemens quaked beneath his bed sheets at what he perceived to be God's anger—probably aimed at him. The boy knew nothing of the conciliation of the world to God, through Christ. He only knew the "turn and burn" threats of his breeding, and he considered it far too easy to run afoul of these.

According to his religious instructors, there were hundreds of ways to offend this god whose "bad side" was wider than the Mississippi at Cape Girardeau. The next



lightning bolt could be for poor Sam; the thunder surely spoke of this god's irritation. Twain eventually shrugged off this fear by rejecting the god of his forebears. Good for him. To my knowledge, he never did find truth. He may have suspected it, but never found it. I wish he could have read, *How to Quit Church Without Quitting God*. I think he would have liked it. I would have traded him one of those for an early copy of *Huckleberry Finn*—or at least a good cigar.

A CALM, SATISFIED DEITY

The nations to whom Paul wrote worshiped many false and terrifying gods. These gods were uber-powerful, but sulky. Fearing these gods was a full-time job and a 24-hour-a-day phobia. The chains of such slavery didn't come off a forge but were no less debilitating. Worry has killed more people than war. This is why Paul said to the nations, "You did not get slavery's spirit to fear *again*." The nations had already known fear; their false gods inspired it. There were hundreds of ways to offend



whatever celestial tyrant these nations took up with. So who was this new God and what could possibly have inspired His agreeable mood? Paul spends the first eight chapters of Romans assuring the nations that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is a calm, satisfied Deity. Nothing can ruffle Him. This was weird, because nothing could shock the ex-heathens more than hearing about a God bent on peace instead of war. This new Deity wanted to calm them, not kill them; how strange. Paul made sure they knew that such divine stability

could only be founded upon the perfect performance of God's own Son, Jesus Christ.

THE WORST GOD OF THE BUNCH

What could be more contrastive to the Romans' previous experience than the shocking phrase, "You got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, 'Abba, Father!'"? No other god in the pantheon—from beginning to end, near or far—advertised even the possibility of such a paternal bond. These gods were too mean and power-hungry to invite their devotees onto their laps. They no doubt imagined that such familiarity would eventually breed contempt—not to mention a coup. Thus, the small "g" gods used fear to keep their disciples at a distance and in dread. They flexed their muscles, demanded sacrifices, hurled threats, hid themselves behind spooky curtains, and worked holidays. They never seemed satisfied, and they weren't.

The Christian god is no different. He's another false deity except he's worse because he's *so* false that he takes the name of the true God. Talk about cheating. No other false god is so audacious. Whoever this god is, I can't stand him. He has a name, and one day we will know it. One day he will be unmasked and those who spent the whole of their lives worshipping him will weep and gnash their teeth at the grand mistake. Because really, what mistake could be grander?

HENDRIX GOD

The one true God is unique in the annals of celestial and human history; why shouldn't He be—He created both realms. He relies neither on intimidation nor imitation. He is Jimi Hendrix. (This is a metaphor.) This Seattle-born electric guitar virtuoso never copied anyone; other guitarists copied him. Musicians heard him play and gave up. Hendrix was a one-off; a prodigy. At the coming of Jimi, all molds before him went by the wayside. In the face of the true God, we're to behave likewise. We're to quit trying to be small "g" gods and let Him do His virtuoso thing. The true God inspires this right kind of awe. The false gods don't know any better. They demand imitators, both human and divine. They know they are inimitable, but this just proves how mean they are. They make their devotees jump through flaming hoops of futility. Everyone dumb enough to obey these demands eventually dies of fear—or at least joins a church.

For even if so be that there are those being termed gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many

gods and many lords, nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him. —1 Corinthians 8:5-6

LAY YOUR WEARY HEAD TO REST

One of the most touching scenes in the Greek Scriptures is when the disciple John rests his head on Jesus' bosom at the last supper. Jesus had told Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). If Jesus wants His chest rested upon, then God wants His chest rested upon. Jesus did exactly what God wanted and acted the way God truly was. What other god has thought of getting his bosom rested upon? (It's a rhetorical question.) All other gods want power and fear. They may crush you with their bosom, but they sure don't want it rested upon. They want power *based* on fear. Not so the true God. He wants a relationship. This is how secure He is. And not just any relationship, but a familial tie such as that enjoyed by fathers and sons. Talk about a secure Being—my God.



"Abba" is a nice little Aramaic word used by children of their gentle daddies. It is the equivalent of our "Papa," or "Daddy." No false god would ever tolerate such a title; it would be way too familiar. It's not even a title, really—it's a term of endearment. The false gods refuse to fraternize. They want us all quaking, crying, and jumping out windows like the Cowardly Lion of Oz. This is how we know that ours is the true God: He doesn't scare us. No cookie-cutter duplicate from the god factory, this One, otherwise we'd be scared to death. When we cry, He wants us to cry out, "Daddy!"

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

On some days, this "Abba" thing is too intimate for me. I can't work it up. It's not that I don't share intimacies

with God, it's just that I can't always unburden myself of the hardness of life. I can easily call him "God" at such times, but not so easily "Papa," even less so, "Daddy" or "Dad." I must admit that when I hear Him called "Dad," or "Daddy" in everyday discussion, it rubs me the wrong way. To me, He's too almighty for this title in the midst of common discourse. I'm speaking now of my average day, when I'm whistling along in an average state of mere unhappiness. I'm not saying I'm correct in this. I have my own brand of intimacy that has me venting everything to Him, but again, as "God." During these times, I refer to Him as God because I feel His subjection. ("God" means "Subjector.") This is my favorite title for Him. I don't really mind His subjection; it's better than anything the world offers. I can only call him "Daddy" when I am nearly completely broken. I have to get "down there" to do it. I'm glad it's there when I need it, but I can't do it when I'm "in myself," sorry. I've pretty much got to be destroyed to cry out the Abba title.

I think there may be something to Paul saying, "... in which we are *crying* 'Abba, Father.'" I take this crying literally. I think that a person ought to be crying before they can properly exercise this endearment. In my opinion, it's too familiar for anything but tears. I may be wrong. I may be missing something. This is my instinct talking, perhaps even my personal preference.

No one can even cry "Abba" until they have come up through the previous chapters of Romans. One has to have come up through the justification of chapters three and four and the conciliation of chapters five through eight before one can call the Almighty God—even while broken in bed—"Abba." This is why Paul waits until the end of chapter 8 to unveil it. So here are two more things that no false, wannabe god ever dreamed of: justification and conciliation. What false god wants his devotees thinking of themselves as right and beyond sight of condemnation? That would be the consummation of the false god ego trip, and they're *all* on ego trips, especially the monster that I call the Christian god.

The true God is different. He says, "I'll make it so that my children can't sin their way out of My favor, and then I'll make it so that they become My best friends." Only when we realize that we're justified and conciliated can we "take the chance" of jumping into this God's lap and rubbing cheeks with Him. Only then can we cry out, "Papa!" —MZ