



# Sermon Discussion Guide

December 2, 2018  
"Firstborn"  
Pastor Steve DeNeff  
Hosea 11:1-4; 6-8;  
Luke 1:26-28a

## Prayer

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. **Ephesians 3:16-19**

## Discussion Starter

How has your father informed your view of God as father?

## Sermon Summary

There are many Christians who go to church every Sunday - and so they know their mother - but have never met their Father. He is mostly unknown to them, except in Name. But Christmas changes all of that because in the incarnation humanity is brought into union with the Divine. In Jesus, we see not only who God is but who we may become. Through a miraculous conception, the life of God is born in us and this life is the very child of God. Like Jesus, we can know God as God knows Himself. We can know God as God wants to be known. And we can know him like this in the most remarkable way: within our humanity. Now the God that we believe in is not always the One who exists, but something less. The God who exists is the God that Jesus knew, the Father of the Son, and the way that Jesus knew Him is the way He wants to be known. That is how we can know him. It may not happen all at once but, praise God, it can happen. Now, to know God as Father we must start with the Son for Jesus said, "No one knows the Father but the Son..." (Matt 11:27). In fact, to know the Son as he is, is to know the Father as He is. There is no other way. Make it your ambition to know Him (Jesus and the Father) more.

## Sermon Review Questions

1. With what concept of God did I become a Christian? How has this concept shaped me? How has it limited me? How has it helped me?
2. What concept of God emerges as I read the Christmas story? How is this different from the one I had at first?
3. Start with Jesus: What about Jesus most surprises me about God?

## Transformation Questions

1. What do you think God is saying to you?
2. What is keeping you from doing this?
3. If you were to do it, what might be a good first step?
4. Who will you tell? Or who will you ask to help you?

## Habit

During the season of advent read from one of the Gospels each day. As you read, think about what Jesus is like and then remember that this what the Father is like. Remember this attribute of God throughout the day, letting it form your picture of God.

## Quote

"Man's maker was made man that He, Ruler of the stars, might nurse at His mother's breast; that the Bread might hunger, the Fountain thirst, the Light sleep, the Way be tired on its journey; that Truth might be accused of false witnesses, the Teacher be beaten with whips, the Foundation be suspended on wood; that Strength might grow weak; that the Healer might be wounded; that Life might die."

Augustine of Hippo - Sermons 191.1