

## Session 16

### EXPERIENCING THE FATHER'S LOVE—LIVING AS SONS AND DAUGHTERS, PART ONE

#### When God thinks of you, love swells in His heart.

What comes to your mind when you hear that statement said about you?

*The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. —Zephaniah 3:17*

*For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. —Isaiah 62:5*

*How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! —Psalm 139:17-18*

#### Perception vs Reality

Not all perception is reality

#### Why God created man?

- To worship God.
- To evangelize the whole world.
- To work on His behalf.
- To have relationship.

*Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord. —Jeremiah 9:23-24*

#### Our view of our earthly father affects how we view our Heavenly Father.

#### Our Heavenly Father has a PR Problem

*Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing? —Mark 4:38*

#### Which father did you grow up with?

- Absent
- Alcoholic
- Drill Sergeant
- Abusive

*My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear... —David, Psalm 22:1, 2*

*“I command the assignment of death to be canceled. Come out of him!” —Moravian Falls*

Sometimes we draw conclusions about the nature of God based on early childhood wounds or life's storms.

- He refused to *require* His children to love Him. Free will. Blamed for evil.
- Many people wrongfully imply motive behind God's actions or lack of action.
- We impugn the nature of God.

### **Arrows of the Heart**

- Abuse
- Harmful words
- Shame/abandonment
- No physical affection
- No emotional intimacy

### **Jesus modeled the nature of the Father**

- He represented a personal, up close encounter with the Father.
- Came to destroy the works of the devil.
- We see the Father's nature in Jesus.

### **Rejection, Cain and Abel**

*And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. —Genesis 4:4-7*

### **Many of us believe we are simply unlovable**

*...for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. —Revelation 12:10-11*

Refusing to believe we are loved by God is a sin against God (just like Cain). We are choosing to believe a lie from Satan.

Repentance is needed.

### **Both Satan and God want you dead, but each for different reasons.**

#### **God**

*For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. —2 Corinthians 4:11-12*

#### **Satan**

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. —1 Peter 5:8-9*

## **Satan's strategy is to kill**

*And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. —Revelation 12:4-5*

## **Satan's Strategy?**

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. —1 Peter 5:8-9*

There is a war between two kingdoms vying for a valuable prize—your heart.

## **Believing we are not loved can lead to addictions**

### **All addictions represent a counterfeit desire for genuine love & intimacy.**

*“All of us are trapped by addiction to a desire for something less than God. For many women, that something less is relational control. ‘I will not be hurt again and I will not let people I love be hurt. I’ll see to it that what I fear never happens again.’ They therefore live in terror of vulnerably presenting themselves to anyone and instead become determined managers of people. Their true femininity remains safely tucked away behind the walls of relational control.*

*“More common in men is an addiction to non-relational control. ‘I will experience deep and consuming satisfaction without ever having to relate meaningfully with anyone.’ They keep things shallow and safe with family and friends and feel driven to experience a joy they never feel, a joy that only deep relating can provide. Their commitment is twofold: to never risk revealing inadequacy by drawing close to people and, without breaking that commitment, to feel powerful and alive. Power in business and illicit sex are favorite strategies for reaching that goal.” —Larry Crabb, Shattered Dreams*

## **Living the Poser/Slave to Life Message**

*“We need to let soul-pain do its work by experiencing it fully. If we deny how badly we hurt, we remain unaware of our desire for God and aware only of lesser desires.” —Larry Crabb, Shattered Dreams*

So many of us are chained to disappointments we have experienced related to God and even our earthly fathers.

## **“I love you?” How many of you heard these words from your earthly father growing up?**

### **Audible Voices - Two Occasions**

Moses, John the Baptist, the Ascension

*“...this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”*

Without this validation we will seek to validate our own being through performance, drugs, sex – you name it – all imposters.

## **Father to the Fatherless**

*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me. —Psalm 27:10*

*The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart. —Psalm 34: 18*

## God has a heart

*...And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart — Genesis 6:5-7*

### “God is letting you feel the Father’s heart.”

- Crying
- Rejection
- Faithful in face of unfaithfulness

## Small Group Discussion

**1.** When God thinks of you, love swells in his heart. What feelings do you have when you hear those words? Do you believe them? Why or why not?

**2.** *Why do you think so many people have a difficult time believing God loves them?*

**2.** *Describe the type of father you grew up with. What was his impact on your life?*

**My action steps from this session:**

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**Notes:**

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