

Father's Heart



Kevin and Deborah Martin

New Edition

Father's Heart

KEVIN & DEBORAH MARTIN

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Preface

Beloved,

Every one of us is ordained by God to accomplish a certain set of good works. But Jesus said we can do nothing without Him as He did nothing without the Father. Jesus could face anything and accomplish the impossible because He knew Who He was in His Father. To do the works God has prepared for us to do we need to know who we are in Christ and also who we are in our Father in Heaven. Fear stops us. Yet the Spirit of God leads us as we follow in faith. The one thing that can secure our faith and drive out fear is the love that all of us have needed, the love of our Father in Heaven. There is a divine impartation of His nature of love by which we are secured in relationship to Christ and then to our Father in Heaven.

We all need to know that this love is real and that it will not vanish when we fail. Failure is inevitable. Success is possible. Knowing the Father loves you when you fail is the key to becoming secure enough in His love, you can submit to your Father to train you for success. Let all glory go to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

How will Jesus make the church one so the world can see the church as Father God sees it? He will secure us in the love of our Heavenly Father and give us hearts to honor God, honor our fathers and mothers, honor all men and seek the benefit of all others above ourselves. Only perfect love casting out fear can secure our hearts to that degree. God's love for us is perfect. This is the love that sent Jesus to the cross. This is the love waiting for you in the Heart of your Father in Heaven. Let Jesus introduce you to Him!

Kevin Martin

Dearly Beloved

My prayer is that the revelations in this teaching open your eyes and heart to the loving Father you have. I pray that your relationship with Him grows so your understanding of Him also grows. His love has always been there for you. It never changes. The only thing that changes is how we see it. I want you to walk in the knowledge of how much your Heavenly Father loves you and how much He wants to spend time with you. He is a loving Father who cares deeply for His children. You are His child. As you understand His love and grow in relationship with Him, you can move from being a child to being a son. As a son, you inherit everything He has for you. When you walk in the Father's love, you will be secure in your identity in Him. Nothing will move you or stop you from fulfilling what He has planned for you. The enemy will not be able to stop you. God's love will surround you and keep you through all the problems of this life. When issues come up, you will know that your Heavenly Father loves you and you will run to Him as your source of strength and help. He is your all and all. Life in Him is the best life. Time with Him is all you will desire. My desire is that you know without a doubt that your Father loves and cares for you.

Love,

Deborah Martin

PART

1

HINDRANCES TO RECEIVING THE FATHER'S LOVE

Welcome to the Father's Heart. We believe the material in this package can help you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, experience the love of God the Father. Jesus gave His life out of His loving desire to reconcile each of us to the heart of our Heavenly Father. He did this according to the Father's will to open the way for us to come to our Father as children and enter into His Kingdom. Many people have received Jesus as Savior and enjoy their relationship with Him. Yet they are unable to relate to God the Father and only pray to Him as the God Who is far away in Heaven. He is waiting for you to let Jesus reveal Him to you and to touch your heart with His great love. Will you let Him?

The most beneficial and hopefully enjoyable part of this manual will be Part 2. Yet it will not benefit you at all, if there are hindrances within your heart to being loved by your Father in Heaven. Open your heart to the Spirit of God and begin.

To get started, read through Part 1 of this manual. It is designed to help you yield to the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart to receive the love of the Father which is embedded within your spirit. This is true, if you are a Christian. If you have not received Jesus Christ as savior, you can receive Him right now. Ask Him, in your own words to come into your heart and save you. But be prepared to let Him deal

with your sins. He will, so He can deliver you from their control over your life and make you free. Free to be loved and to love with the love of God.

As a believer, read Part 1 and use the last two pages to pray through the issues that the Holy Spirit reveals to you.

We recommend that you go through this process slowly. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there are more issues He wants you to pray through. Do not rush into Part 2. Wait at least one night after you have finished Part 1. Allow the Spirit of God time to prepare your heart. Ask Him to help you become able to receive into your heart as much of the love God has stored in your spirit as possible. Ask Him to help you become open to the love of God the Father.

Now open your heart and trust the Spirit of God to guide you to the Heart of your Father Who loves you. And ask the Spirit of Truth to help you discern the truth as you read and listen.

CHAPTER 1

FEAR = BONDAGE

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

In the middle of the beloved 23rd Psalm we find the expression of a position of heart the psalmist had come to. He knew that no matter where he was or what was going on around him there was never a need to be afraid, for one reason only. God was with him. No other source of security was necessary. If God is on your side, who can be against you? (Romans 8:31) The Word of God is full of admonitions to take on this confidence from Genesis 15:1 to Revelation 1:17. God is saying, "If you will trust Me enough to do what I tell you, you will be able to walk through the deepest darkest valleys without fear, for the knowledge that I am with you."

Consider the position of heart revealed in Isaiah 24:16-18.

Isaiah 24:16-18

16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously." **17** Fear and the pit and the snare *are* upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. **18** And it shall be *that* he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken.

The picture we have here is of a man who expects to be ruined because of treacherous dealers. "If there is a treacherous dealer out there somewhere, he will find me and I will be ruined." From this position a man sows seeds of fear and expectation of ruin. He does not trust God. He trusts in the certain destruction of all that he has. From those seeds of distrust comes the fruit of fear. He gets what he feared.

Proverbs 10:24a The fear of the wicked will come upon him.

This man fears evil and his fear of evil is the substance that draws evil to him. Evil knows how to detect and find the fear of evil within a person.

As you are reading this, are you reminded of things you fear? If so, write them in the space provided.

Now, as you are able, bring each fear to the Lord, one at a time.

- Ask Him how that fear gained power in your life.
- As you are aware of His answer, ask Him who to forgive and what words to use to forgive. Choose to forgive and say it out of your mouth.
- Tell God you release the harm they caused you by opening the door to fear.
- Tell God you now reject the lie that He would treat you that way.
- Ask Him what truth you need to know to be free of that fear.
- Write His answer.

Now, go back and see if you are still able to feel the same fears as you think about them. If you can still feel the fear as before, seek ministry for it. If the fear is gone, thank the Lord.

Think again about the position of the man in Isaiah 24. Ask God for an answer in the Word of God for a man who lives in this kind of fear? When you are aware of an answer that works for you, write those verses of Scripture below. Meditate on them as often as you need, to get them into your heart.

Isaiah 43:1-7

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; you *are* Mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. 3 For I *am* the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. 4 Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life. 5 Fear not, for I *am* with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; 6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not

keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth—7 Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”

Psalm 91:1-7

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, “*He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.*” 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler *and* from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler. 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, *nor* of the arrow *that* flies by day, 6 *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness, *nor* of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; *but* it shall not come near you.

God is giving us the answer to our fear. We do not have to be controlled and terrorized by fear. We can choose to trust Him and find Him faithful. This is what He offers us and this is what He wants for us; to be free of fear, in Him. When we arrive at this position of heart, in Him, it will not matter what men say or what event happens, we will be secure because we know that He is right here with us. Nothing can terrify you under the shadow of the Almighty. Your task is to cooperate with the Spirit of God to open your eyes and ears to this message so you know it in your heart. Then the position of the man in Psalm 23 will be your position.

THE RESULTS OF FEAR

Fear leads to bondage.

Hebrews 2:15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

If we understand that fear leads to sin and sin leads to more fear, then we will also see that there is bondage in fear and place for unholy spirits to work and expand. They take control of more and more of our souls until we are fixated on fear and sin. This is what John describes in 1 John 4:18 as torment.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

When a person is tormented by their fear, as they hear the noise of their fear they begin to run. Invariably they run right into the thing or man they fear. And if they escape, they are caught in a snare.

Isaiah 24:18 And it shall be *that* he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

This scenario is not merely circumstance; it is unbelief in God's protection, therefore sin (Romans 14:23). In this position before God we fear judgment and lose our confidence to stand before God.

1 John 4:17, 18

17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.**18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

The inevitable result is that we suffer the things we fear.

Proverbs 1:27 When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.

Proverbs 10:24 The fear of the wicked will come upon him, and the desire of the righteous will be granted.

Fears lead to more fear and conviction that they will prevail against us. This becomes a cycle in our lives until we become filled with fear.

Deuteronomy 28:65-67;

65 "And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. **66** "Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. **67** "In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

Job 15:24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid; they overpower him, like a king ready for battle.

Job 18:11 Terrors frighten him on every side, and drive him to his feet.

THE LAW WORKS SIN

Fear is sin and sin is fear. They work together to drive us away from those who love us, especially from God. They put us under the law. In Romans 7:7-11 and verse 21 we are told that the law works sin. How does law work sin?

Romans 7:8, 23, 24

8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

We become fixated on what we are forbidden. In what way? Fear that we will miss out. The enemy tempts us with fears of someone having something that we are denied. He says, “You are missing out. You have not been told about everything available to you. God is holding out on you.” When we give in to this lie we are led to no longer trust God’s word: we miss the mark faith would hit. That’s what sin is, missing the mark. Not trusting God leaves us alone with our own counsel or the counsel of the enemy. Sin then perpetuates and expands error in our thinking and leads us into more sin. Sin leads only to more sin and then to being afraid of judgment, which is torment to us. We hide from God and are unable to hear His voice. This is what living under the law produces.

The Lord showed how this process worked in me as a six-year-old under wounded spiritual authority unable to shield me or bring correction. My parents separated and my fears led me into sin as follows.

“No one will provide for me, so I must provide for myself.” I began to steal toys from a local store to comfort myself in my rejection, confusion and the thoughts that no one would take care of me. The Lord spoke to me recently that I stole to quell the fears of not being able to provide the things I would need. God told me directly, “In your success at stealing the desires of your heart, you comforted yourself with the knowledge that you were able to get things. If you couldn’t have love – you could provide for yourself – therefore, you didn’t need anybody to love you.” As a teenager this reasoning continued. “I can steal pornography because authorities won’t let me buy it. Authorities always have some dumb rule or requirement that I can’t meet anyway.” I felt I would always be unable to satisfy

the authorities in my life, so why try? “Why wait for them or their time limit? They don’t care anyway.”

When you consider the roots and origins of sin, you always find some sort of fear in the mix. Greed, envy, jealousy and covetousness all exist because of fear that someone else will have what you want. Your not having it will mean something negative about you.

The power of rejection, criticism and abandonment is the fear that because there is some hidden fault in you (or obvious flaw) rejection, criticism and abandonment will happen again and again.

We hang onto anger, resentment, hatred and judgment and refuse to forgive for fear that the person who hurt us will be allowed to hurt us again or will not be required to pay.

The power of sin is the law. The power of the law is fear that you will be found in violation or that you will not be able to keep it. This is bondage to fear.

Galatians 3:12, 21-25

12 Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

No longer under a tutor means no longer under the law.

Galatians 4:1-10, 21-26, 30, 31

1 Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. 8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. 9 But now after you

have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

SATISFACTION

Satisfaction and contentment in wonderful moments can lead to continual satisfaction and contentment, if they are experienced in a state of rest and peace in Christ.

But, if the satisfaction is experienced by a heart that is not at rest and in peace in Christ, then the satisfaction will be fleeting. Dissatisfaction will arise and send the person searching for a greater experience. Satisfaction cannot remain for the heart is still in turmoil in fear that it will not be able to stay at this place of satisfaction (“All good things are taken from me.”). Or the fear is that there must be something greater and I must strive to attain to it or I will be left out.

A heart at rest in Christ, knowing the love of God, knows that no good thing will be withheld from it – and that no peace, joy, satisfaction, rest or wonderful experience in God’s presence will be taken away.

Psalm 84:11, 12 Amplified

11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield; The LORD bestows [present] grace and favor and [future] glory (honor, splendor, and heavenly bliss)! No good *thing* will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) *is* the man who trusts in You [leaning and believing on You, committing all and confidently looking to You, and that without fear or misgiving]!

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

John 14:14 “If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.”

CHAPTER 2

The Truth About Judgment

The Release of Judgment is very important to successful ministry. Most do not understand how destructive judgment is in their personal lives. They misunderstand how judgment works so they cannot recognize its pattern in their lives and they are unable to help others. When you have a log in your eye, how can you remove a splinter from another's eye?

Judgment is evident in our lives by the bad fruit it produces. Judgment is a seed of anger towards another's sin that is not forgiven. It takes root in our soul and grows into a thorny bush that sticks us and others when it is touched. Hebrews 12:15 calls it defilement that grows up, causes trouble and defiles many.

What is judgment? First, it is not discernment of sin. Sin needs to be recognized, confronted and overcome with love. Judgment is sin in and of itself. It is looking past the sin to try to answer the question, "Why did that person do that?" Sometimes there was no sin, but an action which the receiver interpreted in a painful way. Judgment feels the pain and condemns the offender. It says, "You hurt me, so I will punish you somehow." In judgment we judge the motive of the offender's heart and close our heart to the offender concerning that issue.

Judgments work against us in two ways.

1. According to Matthew 7:1, 2, when we judge another in a specific way, other people come along and do the same thing to us. We reap the same thing over and over again.
2. In Romans 2:1-5, we become just like the one we judge.

It is important that we recognize that our first judgments are usually against our parents. Parents are not perfect. They all fail, and when their flaws hurt in a patterned way, the child gives up forgiving at a certain point and judges. This is particularly harmful because God instructs us to honor our parents. More harm occurs, as other important people in our lives take on significance in ways similar to our parents, but we cannot receive their help.

Most importantly, judgment separates us from God. God has told us that we cannot know the motives of others, so we are not allowed to judge them. God

requires us to leave judgment of the heart to Him. In judging anyone, we place ourselves above God Himself and negate our ability to trust God in relation to these specific people. Though Christ was rejected by His own, He kept His heart open to all. Yet if God were to ask us to keep our hearts open to one we have judged, we could not. Judgment cancels the ability to hear God and closes ones heart to God Himself. We know He wants us to love our enemies. How can we when we want their destruction?

RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1, 2 "Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you."

John 7:24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Unrighteous judgment is condemnation. The point of Matthew 7:1, 2 is that we are not allowed to pass sentence upon each other. The word "condemnation" is an accurate word to describe what we do in unrighteous judgment. We condemn and demand that the offender be punished. God warns against this because He alone knows the heart. He alone knows the harvest our seed will harvest.

Righteous judgment is merely discernment of the truth **without condemnation**. The difference is most clearly understood as a matter of the heart. Unrighteous judgment closes the heart to some degree. It may be a small amount, yet it will have its affects and negative fruit will grow until a day of harvest. Righteous judgment does perceive wrong morality of an attitude of the heart or it may observe sin in action. However, it does so by the Spirit of God and responds by the leading of the Spirit. It sees the truth and responds by the Spirit of Truth. Love is the motivation and the heart stays open even as Jesus never closed His heart to us in our worst sin.

John 5:30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

The Amplified Bible expands the phrase “*you who are spiritual*” in Galatians 6:1 to read “*you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit]*”. In our flesh we are not able to “*be angry and sin not*” (Ephesians 4:26). We will be angry and it will become sin to us. We need to let the Spirit of God reveal our motives and lead us to repentance and forgiveness moment by moment, day after day.

When the heart judges we sin. By contrast, when the Spirit of God reveals truth to us, we discern sin or wrong motives and we are able let Him direct our response. The question is, are we demanding justice or are we trusting the wisdom of God regardless of how He leads at the moment? Only by the Spirit of God can we judge righteous judgment. And that is how God wants it. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:15).

It is not wrong to recognize that someone is in sin or that they are headed in the wrong direction. Then the Spirit of God can use you to bring correction or rebuke, if necessary (2 Timothy 4:2-4). Paul had to rebuke Peter to the face in Galatians 2. But Paul was not judging in the sense of condemning Peter. His heart was not closing to Peter. By Paul’s words Peter was restored to righteousness (Galatians 6:1).

In Matthew 7:1, 2 we read God’s warning not to condemn. Yet look at verses 3-5.

Matthew 7:3-5

³“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵“Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Clearly we see the problem is not so much the speck in our brother’s eye, but the planks in our own eyes. Still this example uses a situation where our brother has a moral fault, a speck in his eye. There is a need to help our brother while his problem is small so it does not become big. We need the guidance of Galatians 6:1 so we can restore our brother, but it must be done in meekness, less we are tempted. And it must be done by the Spirit so it accomplishes God’s purpose, not our purpose.

Learn how to let the Spirit of God guide you in righteous judgment. But first, let Him release you of unrighteous judgment.

RELEASE OF JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1, 2 "Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you."

What is this judgment? What is this measure? Whatever it is, it will come back upon me somehow. Normally, when we think of a measure we equate that to an amount, a degree, or a distance. A half-cup of flour, a pound of beef, a yard of cloth, or a mile traveled. This would seem to be what is meant, especially when we see the phrase "standard of measure." That would imply that if I measure out a cup of flour I should get back a cup of flour. But actually what is being referred to is not amount but kind, the kind or standard of judgment. The way I judge. If I measure out flour, I will get back flour. It is beef, not pork. It is cloth, not carpet. It is miles, not kilometers. Also, this verse is not talking about material things or distance, **it is talking about relationships**. So the judgments, the measures, will be of a relationship nature. **Judgments of the heart** are in view. Not flour, but affection. Not beef, but abuse. Not cloth, but deception. Not miles, but hatred. If I judge you to be deceptive, I may be right, but now I will reap deception for my judgment of you. Love always trusts (1 Corinthians 13:7). Love believes the best, not the worst. Faith, working by love sees the best in an individual, and believes God to enhance the good, making it the best. Doubt sees the worst, fears (believes) the worst, and gets the worst.

The moment of judgment occurs as we ask the motive probing question, "Why did you do that?" We have been trained to ask this question since childhood as people asked us, "Why did you do that?" The question triggers an automatic probing into our motives and we try to answer the question for ourselves and also the people who ask. However, we are unable to reliably figure out the real motive, for we do not really know our own hearts.

Jeremiah 17:9, 10

9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? 10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

We do not know that we do not know our own hearts. We have been trained to search our own motives by the "Why?" question. We hear the question and whether we want to answer it or not, we do answer it, at least for ourselves. The answer we get may come to our conscious mind or it may appear in our subconscious mind. But we get an answer.

Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Now we can talk about measures. In this verse God is showing us that in relationships the seeds we plant will come back to us in greater measure than what we give out. When you plant a kernel of corn in the ground for a period of time nothing comes back to you. But if you are patient, eventually you will see a stock grow up out of the ground. When the corn stock is finished growing you may be able to reap several ears of corn. All that springs from one kernel of corn. When we plant seeds of bitterness, we eventually reap a stock full of bitterness. A mustard seed is so small, but the plant is so large. The deceptions may have been so insignificant to us. But, oh, how great a mess comes from it. Some lives have been completely destroyed because one person's fear of discovery led him to lie about others.

But here is the part Christians do not understand.

Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God: that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."

We are talking about relationships still, but we still use a growing plant for illustration. When I first bought my house I cut down three trees that I did not want in my yard. I cut them right off at ground level. Several years later all three had grown back. When we get saved the blood of Jesus cleanses us of all sin. He has dealt with our sins. Now He wants to heal our emotions, renew our minds and transform our souls. If we allow Him to do this complete work, He will reveal to us many roots still hidden in our hearts that need to be rooted out. If they are not, given the right conditions, they will grow back up. When they do they cause trouble, and have the potential of defiling many.

Most of the bitter-root judgments and expectancies that cause Christians trouble, defiling many, come out of childhood judgments that are not remembered or given much credence. *"Oh, that. I was only a kid when I thought that."*

ⁱOne woman married a man who had been raised in an English family with Indian traces in the bloodline. He was by blood and by family heritage a man who always protected women, especially the wife. She however, was raised by a traveling salesman who was never there when her brothers were picking on her or when she needed a dad to protect her in other ways. She judged her father as a man who was never there when she needed protection. After she married, her very protective husband always found himself stuck in traffic, in some business meeting or

somehow, one way or another, never there when she needed his protection. She would have to handle it herself. When he got there it was too late. He was frustrated because he wanted to protect her and would if he could be there. After she asked the Lord to forgive her for judging her father, her husband was always able to get there for her.

When she forgave her father she asked the Lord to receive the weight of her judgments against her father. That is what Jesus did for us when the weight of all our sins was laid upon Him as He hung upon the cross. Now the full brunt of her grown-up-judgment against her father was falling on Jesus instead of upon her. She was free now.

When we judge people for what they do or fail to do, as we go along in life, we discover that **other people do the same thing to us**. Everywhere we go someone treats us this way. Sometimes, like this protective husband, it is not in their nature to treat us this way, but our bitter-root has sprung up to cause trouble and defile this person.

ⁱⁱOne Christian businessman could not believe the things he was doing to a certain business partner. He would try not to and yet find he had done it again. He found out that all his business partner's other associates treated the man the same way. They had all been defiled by the man's bitter-root judgment of his father who was a dishonest businessman. Once this man repented of his judgment of his father, the Christian business partner was free to be himself. This is how the many are defiled. They all become the people through whom we reap the full weight of judgment we made against someone else. Our judgment may be right. It does not matter, because, except for the grace of God, there we go also.

When you are the channel for someone's negative harvest you can release yourself by forgiveness. If you find yourself doing things to someone that you would not normally do to anyone, it may be you have a judgment to repent of. Yet if this is very unlike you, it may be that this person has judged someone else and now he is reaping his judgment through you.

John 20:23 "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

This is a helpful secret. When someone has judged another person and you are the channel of the negative harvest, you can end your part in this negative cycle by forgiving them for the negative effect of their judgment upon you. Forgive the one

who is reaping by you for the defiling effect of their judgment of another upon you. You can return to normal, even if they do not repent of their judgment. They will continue to reap, but now it will come through another person. Ask God to open a door for this person to see the truth and be set free. In addition I would ask the Lord why was I able to be defiled by that person's judgment? Jesus was never defiled by darkness in others. What darkness is in me that another person's darkness can touch?

Why do the examples most often refer to parents? The scriptures tell us (Deuteronomy 5:16) that if we honor our parents it will go well with us. If we dishonor our parents, life will not go well nor can we expect to live long. In the areas where we honor our parents, life goes well for us. In the areas we have dishonored our parents life fails in us. Jesus said that every word He spoke was Spirit and life (John 6:63). Why? His words honored His Father, every one. Satan's words dishonor God the Father and they produce death. Our judgments against our parents are more destructive when they come back upon us than judgments we make against anyone else. The problem is; we see our parents at their worst and at their best. It is very difficult to live without judging and **nearly impossible to live with** or apart from **one's parents without judging them** negatively in one way or another. Therefore, it is very common for us to find that the people we counsel have made many judgments against their parents, some of which have brought devastating results to their lives.

The rare child, who sees the best in her parents and escapes the tendency to judge them critically, lives a blessed life, even if her parents were scoundrels, and she knew it.

When I was a little boy my father drank too much. He spent the money to pay the electric bill on alcohol. That happened once too often and my mother packed us smaller children up and left. I never lived with my father again. I did not know why we were leaving or that my father drank too much. I only knew he was no longer there for me. I decided never to depend upon him or any other adult man again. I would figure out how to take care of myself. When I was called to preach the gospel I obeyed the call. But when I rose to speak I could not rely solely upon my Heavenly Father. I had to have the message all laid out. I could not trust Him to really be there to speak through me. He was merciful and used me and anointed me here a little and there a little, but the ease of letting Him do it all was not mine. Then I repented of that judgment against my father. Finally, it all came together and I am learning to trust Him. He is there for me in ever increasing capacities.

Usually, these judgments are reciprocal in a husband and wife. If she judged her father in a certain way, he has judged his mother in an opposite way. The judgments then produce balancing reactions as both reap through the other and a rift occurs between them. The more they reap what they have sown the further apart they become.

ⁱⁱⁱOne man's mother was heavy and not very good at housework. He judged her to be a fat slovenly woman. He found a slim wife who was good at keeping house. However, she was raised by a father who was very critical of her. She told herself she would never marry a man who would not encourage and praise her. Her husband was very complimentary. After their first child was born she took a little too long to lose the extra weight. He began to criticize her. She reacted by starting to gain weight instead of losing it. He became more critical as she reminded him of his mother. She became heavier. The extra weight robbed her of energy and the housework suffered. He became very critical. He was no longer the encouraging husband who praised his wife. She turned out to be fat and slovenly. When both were shown their bitter-root judgments against their parents, they repented, asked Jesus to receive their judgments upon the cross, and returned to normal. He stopped criticizing and she lost the weight.

Two Peculiar Points. You do not have to remember the judgment or whom it was against. You only need to see the fruit. The cycle of reaping will be obvious. You can repent by faith alone. Second, the judgment does not even have to be accurate.

^{iv}One woman's husband was always coming home late no matter how strongly he felt his commitment to make it home in time for dinner. The wife could remember no one who had ever done this to her before. She decided this was evidence of fruit from a judgment. She repented before the Lord for possibly judging her father or mother in this way. Then she remembered sitting at the window waiting for her father weekend after weekend wondering when he would finally get home. She was too young at that time to know that he always came in right when he said he would. She did not know anything about time. But here was the forgotten judgment.

After she repented her husband no longer had any trouble getting home on time as a general rule. And when it did happen it no longer touched anything within her. The judgment was gone from her heart. Jesus took the full weight of it upon Himself. That is what Jesus is ready to do for each one of us right now. If only we will let go.

If you do not remember judging someone, can you just assume that there is no judgment? If you pray and the Spirit of God reveals nothing can you just forget about it? **Only if there is no fruit.** If you continue to reap fruit, there is still a plant somewhere. If you cut it off but it grows back, there is still a root somewhere. You may have to repent by faith.

I've got two hands. If I get a sliver of wood or metal in the back of my right hand, that hand will be painfully sensitive to touch. If I accidentally smack my left hand against a solid object, for a moment it will smart, but quickly it will cease to bother me. If I accidentally smack the sensitive spot on my right hand in the same way the pain may send me into a much more dramatic reaction, and the back of my hand may throb for a while.

God has given me the ability to feel pain there to remind me the sliver is still there. As long as it remains I am vulnerable to this painful reaction when that spot is touched. Once the sliver is removed or comes out, for a period of time that spot will still be a little sensitive, but it will never hurt as much. Eventually, it will heal and stop being sensitive altogether. I may even forget about that particular sliver completely.

The pain is a gift from God to tell me something is wrong in my body. In the same way God uses painful experiences in relation to other people to let you know **something is wrong** in your soul. In your soul! If it was in the other person's soul then it would be painful for them, but it would only bother you for a second, then you would be over it; like water off a duck's back. But when someone's behavior stirs up something that throbs in your heart, there is a wound there. Forgiveness and repentance will get it out. The blood of Jesus and the comforting love of the Father will heal the remaining wound. Bring it before the Lord and let Him show you.

ⁱ Sandford, John & Paula, The Transformation of the Inner Man, Ch 14, Victory House, Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

RESTORING HONOR

Ephesians 6:2 *“Honor your father and mother,”* which is the first commandment with promise:

Deuteronomy 5:16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

God declares two promises to those who honor their parents. Your days will be longer and it will go well in the land that God gives you. In the Old Covenant, by contrast, if you dishonored your parents you would come under a curse from God. In the New Covenant, there is no curse. Jesus became a curse on the tree to release complete forgiveness by faith in His name. However, there is still the principle of sowing and reaping. You reap what you sow.

Galatians 6:7, 8

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

To dishonor any person, no matter how vile that person may be, is an attitude of the flesh and will result in corruption to your own life, until you repent. Every life is a creation of God. And God would have all men to be saved (). Honor is an attitude of the Spirit and releases life and God’s blessings into your life.

Honor is in the heart and mind; how we feel and how we think about them based on the position God had placed them in, not on their performance; whether good or bad.

If you have forgiven and repented from judging your parent but negative thoughts and emotions are still in your heart against your parents, then honor needs to be restored. God is the only one that can change our view of our parents. We must ask Him to purify our thoughts according to His word and restore honor in our hearts toward our parents. Our parents were created by God to impart treasures into our lives. The enemy knows the blessings that flow through parents and he wants to destroy your relationship with your parents. Once you have repented from

judging your parents and asked God to restore honor, He may require you to go to your parents. Allow God to show you if something is to be said or done.

Grace functions through honor. If you fail to honor those in authority over you, and those around you, then you cut off the blessings God put within them for you. Favor is cut off.

Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

God wants us to submit to all authority (church leaders, teachers, parents, city and country government) whether they are right or wrong. Our blessings flow through honor. Even when they are wrong, the blessing still flows to us because we take the right attitude in faith. This means that we trust God to bless us, even if the authority over us is not able to be blessed because they do not likewise honor us or others.

If we must disobey the authority over us because they are directing us to sin against God, our disobedience to them is not dishonor. Now we honor them, by honoring the God who placed them over us while obeying God and asking Him to have mercy on them.

You must honor authority before you can be in authority!

Here are some more scriptures on honoring authority:

Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13 & 14, Ephesians 6:1-3

CHAPTER 4

Preparing the Heart

There are various thoughts and attitudes, alliances and positions of the heart which can hinder us, as believers, from experiencing the love that Father God has poured into our spirits. All His love we will ever need is in our spirits. The problem is getting the love from our spirits to our hearts, where we experience it in a way that is real to us.

Romans 5:5

5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

His love has been poured out to us by the Spirit of God. Yet there are hindrances that block the flow of love such as:

Pride - resulting in an unteachable spirit.

False Altars - such as occult involvement or other ungodly covenants Rebellion - or separation from the body of Christ

Unconfessed sin

Darkness – loving darkness more than God

Judgments - from wounds of the heart resulting in bitterness

Fear - anxiety, stress, panic, etc., etc.

To prepare your heart to experience God's love does not require perfect preparation. God loves you perfectly right now. Put yourself before God. Ask Him to reveal what actually does hinder you from receiving His love.

The fact that believers do not walk in His perfect love reveals to us that there are hindrances we cannot see or do not understand. Thus God has prepared a body of believers and gifts of the Spirit so that we may join with Him to minister to one another. By the Spirit hindrances are revealed. By the Spirit they are removed. By the Spirit the love of the Father is poured in. The Holy Spirit joins to our spirits to anoint us for this ministry to one another. The body of Christ is essential in this work.

Chapters one and two explain the most troublesome hindrances of fear and judgments. These two are now, or have been in the past, at work in each of our

lives and may be undetected by you. These two form foundations for other hindrances to stand upon and camouflage to conceal them.

Though we need others in the body of Christ to minister to us by the Spirit, there are some things you may be able to see by the Spirit of God now. Cooperate with Him and you can be prepared to more fully experience what God has in store for you when you come to the conference.

Ask the Lord to show you the hindrances that are blocking the flow of His love. As He reveals certain things to you, ask Him if there are certain people you need to forgive. Say, "I choose to forgive this (these) person for how he/she hurt me. I choose to release him/her for the harm done to me. I renounce the lie that you, Father God, would treat me that way. What is the truth about You that you want me to know?" Listen to what He says and write it down for meditation. If He reveals some sin, confess it before God and receive His forgiveness. If a sin has strength within you, turn away from it (repent), renounce agreement with it and turn toward God and declare that you trust Him to meet all your needs according to His riches in glory (physical and spiritual resources).

Ask God if the things He reveals have roots in past generations. If you sense at all that this is the case, ask God to forgive the sin, forgive its effects on you and then you forgive the sin and its cost in your life.

Write down each area, each sin and ask God for His Word. What does His Word say about these things? Ask God to renew your mind with His ways of thinking. Write down what He shows you. Even if you think it is silly, write it down. Though it seems silly, if it came from God, it will help you.

Read and meditate on these verses of scripture:
John 14:10, 23; John 16:23, 27; John 17:21, 23, 26
Gal 4:4-7
1 John 3:1-2; 4:16-19

In the areas of fear and judgment confess to God that you have not trusted Him. Ask Him to forgive you and to give you grace to trust Him. Ask Him to give you an open heart, like His; open to Him and to all those who have hurt you. Then ask Him to pour His love into your heart. Rest in His arms for as long as you can. Ask God to reveal Himself to you as a loving Heavenly Father.

PART

2

THE FATHER'S HEART

As we deal with and let go of hindrances to receiving the love of God the Father, we become prepared to be introduced to Him at the level Jesus longs for you to experience and enjoy. We become prepared to know Him the way Jesus has always known Him. Jesus paid the price of reconciliation between us and Father God. And Jesus is the One who longs to introduce you to His Father. When you know Jesus, you will trust Him to do this for you.

Matthew 11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

As you read Part 2, ask the Father to help you experience His love in the way He knows you need it. Tell your heart to open to your Father in Heaven to receive His love. Finally, ask the Spirit of Truth to help you open your heart to what He will reveal as you read and listen. Tell Jesus you are ready to know Father God as He knows Him. God bless you.

CHAPTER 5

FATHER'S TENDER LOVE

John 16:27 For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.

The Greek word for love in this verse is Phileo. The Greek word most commonly used for God's love in the New Testament is Agape (ex. Galatians 2:20). In this word Phileo there is the expression of tenderness. Jesus demonstrated this tenderness with children and with sinners receiving mercy and grace and most obviously with John laying his head on His bosom (John 13:23).

In John 16:27 Jesus tells us the Father tenderly loves us because we have loved Jesus and believed that He came from the Father. This tender love has been revealed and expressed to me by both Jesus and Father God. I understand it. I have seen it most clearly in the Father's loving smile.

Though Jesus has this kind of love for us in His heart, agape love is the highest expression of love. This is the kind of love that gives its life for another. This is self-sacrificial love. Jesus died to save us.

All forms of love come from God and are necessary for our total well-being. Agape love is necessary for our salvation and physical healing. Phileo love is necessary for healing of our emotional pain and setting straight our thoughts about God's acceptance of us and His personal love and care for each one of us. We need Phileo love. We need it most surely from God. Yet He designed us to receive it first from our parents.

Jesus told me that although He has this tender affectionate love in His heart for each of us, He constantly referred me to the Father as the source of this love. Jesus gives us this love to prepare us to trust Him when He introduces us to our Father in Heaven. God chose to call Him Father specifically because of what that means to us. How important is a father to a child? How many children never become secure in the love of their natural father? How many people develop coping skills and self defense apart from God because they never felt safe and secure in the homes of their fathers?

When Jesus introduces us to our Father in Heaven there are all kinds of heart issues that come up. Emotions and thoughts that are good and some that are bad. Hurts and wounds of the heart, bad memories and wrong thoughts. Blessings received and positive events help us to come to God as Father. But for most the fear of God that makes us afraid to come to Him outweighs the good. We learned that fear as children. One Christian psychologist says it takes 40 positive expressions of love to outweigh one negative word from a parent.

Because of these things the word “father” brings up all the positive and all the negative. God the Father, knowing the nature of these relationships uses the word “father” for Himself so when we think of “God the Father” all the positive and negative come to the surface. He knows what it will take to comfort and heal our hearts. Because emotional issues are so strong, Jesus carefully shows us we can trust Him. Then when we are finally ready to open our hearts to our Father in Heaven, Jesus introduces us to Him. It is then He reveals the tenderness of His love and draws us close enough so we can see, “This is what I’ve always wanted. This is what I have looked for and it was always denied. Is it really for me now?”

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

It is the Father’s will to heal you of every dark pain that grips your heart because of your parents’ failures. Few or many, great or small, all parents fail their children in ways they cannot estimate the effects of. Their failures hurt more than those of others’ because they communicate rejection and the lie that we are flawed somehow. As we came forth from them, we expect they should be the ones to train us in tender love so it is normal to us; weeding out the weird thoughts and behaviors which spring from feelings of rejection. It’s time to trust Father God and forgive them. Ask God to give you a heart open to them and a mind to honor them, so you can see them through His eyes. You can become open to receive the tender warm love of your Father in Heaven. The love you have been waiting for is real and is here now in the Heart of Your Father in Heaven. Come and receive freely.

The Father is the person in the Godhead Who comforts the loss and/or lack of tender affectionate love and fully meets this need for those who love Jesus and trust the love of the Father by choice.

CHAPTER 6

FATHER'S PERFECT LOVE

Because perfect love casts out fear, receiving the love of God the Father enables us to pour that love out to all those who have failed us and hurt us. It enables us to freely and fully give the love that He has so freely and richly given us.

As we examine some attributes of the love of God the Father, let the word of God prepare your heart to receive His love. Only in God's love can you find the security to trust God enough to let Him raise you up to be who He has made you to be. Yes, sometimes receiving love hurts. It hurts as it touches places in your heart where pain and sorrow have never been comforted by the love of another caring heart. God's love is able to come into those places and comfort and heal the wounds completely. But this process hurts. While His love is coming in, the pain rises to the surface where you feel it again. You remember again. Listen to the Spirit of God. He will direct you to forgive the sin and repent of holding onto the demand that the other person pay. He will help you let go of the judgment in your heart against the people and the judgment against God Himself. Then as you let the Spirit of God teach you, He will give you new ways of thinking to renew your mind and restore your soul to righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Decide now. The pain has spiritually crippled you long enough. It may hurt. Yet the freedom that awaits you in the love of God is worth it. Decide, "I will go on this journey with You, God."

Your Destination.

John 14:2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

In the Father's house there is a place for you. If you received Jesus into your heart, Jesus has prepared a place (home) for you in our Father's house. This means our Father in Heaven has a room for you in His home. His home is really your home now and forever. There is always a place for you in His house.

Some people have never really felt like they had a home. Picture a child growing up on the streets. If he were brought into a house and told, "This is your home now," he would probably have a difficult time believing it. Picture an orphan child

always living in an orphanage or in one foster home after another, never knowing when he might have to leave. This is a weary life. No rest for the soul. Always on guard. No security.

Some of us grew up in nice houses with a father and mother. Yet because our parents were fearful or angry people, we never felt that we had a home in their hearts. We had a home, but we felt homeless, like orphans. We received an orphan spirit.

In the verse above and verse 6 below, Jesus is saying, “I have prepared a place for you in My Father’s home and the way for you to get there.”

Psalm 68:5, 6

5 A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation.

6 God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

Matthew 11:28, 29

28 “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

He is saying, “Come to me all you who are weary and I will bring you to My Father and into His home and you will find rest for your souls. You are no longer orphans. You have a real home. I will take you there.”

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus is our way to the Father. We cannot get to the Father without accepting Jesus as the way to Him. Have you accepted Jesus? What would prevent you from coming to the Father through Jesus?

Do you struggle with the idea of having a real home or having a loving Father? Maybe you struggle with the idea of not being an orphan anymore. People who have never felt welcome and secure in their homes have a hard time believing they can really have such a home and such a relationship with their Father in Heaven.

Yet this is why Jesus gave His life. He defeated sin, hell and the grave to make it possible for you to be received into your new home by your Heavenly Father (2

Corinthians 5:18-21). God the Father gave the life of Jesus so you could have a home forever.

If you are struggling with this idea, what is the cause of your struggle?

Is it that you have never had a home? Or that you have never had a father?

Galatians 4:4-7

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Through the finished work of Christ let God the Father now adopt you as sons and daughters. Come, let Jesus present you to your Father and let the Spirit within you cry out, “Abba, Father.”

This is the will of God concerning you. God the Father loves you with a perfect love. There are three attributes of God’s love. His perfect love (is):

1. Unconditional
2. Everlasting
3. Never fails

Do you have a hard time believing one or more of these three? If you can believe all three, is there one you have a hard time receiving?

Unconditional.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes. . .

John 17:23, 26

23 “I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

26 “And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

This is God's will for every man, woman and child ever born. God opens the door of His heart of love to everyone. Because no one could live up to the law and earn his way in, God made Jesus the doorway in. His death paid the price for everyone.

Faith that God has opened the way to Him through the sacrificial death of Jesus is required. Yet it is God's love for every one which moved Him to pay the price for all. His love places no conditions upon who comes. Anyone can come at anytime they choose to believe.

The condition of faith exists to enter in to and remain in God's love. Faith is required to grow in love. However, there are no conditions upon who may come. There is no behavior that disqualifies a person. Anyone can choose to believe and thereby enter in.

The same is true for all believers who want a real experience of the Father's love. All who will come are invited. Just come!

The fact that God's love is unconditional is seen in the fact that anyone who chooses to believe God can come.

What does God's unconditional love mean in terms of practical experience? It means when you fail, God still loves you as much as before you fail. It means that your success in obeying God, even perfect obedience does not gain you more of God's love. It is full to you and in you before you obey.

God is the father we all wish we had. He is the father we all need. He is the Father with perfect love available to us right now.

Hebrews 4:15, 16

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Look again at John 14:2. Jesus says He prepares a place for you in the Father's house. The King James Version reads He goes to prepare a "mansion" for us in the Father's house. This word indicates that the place prepared for us is large and furnished with the finest furniture and decorations. This indicates the love of the Father for us. Jesus does this because it is the will of the Father. It shows us what is in God's heart concerning us.

The Lord showed me that this place prepared for us in the Father's home reveals that we already have this place in the Father's heart. His heart is big for us. He wants the best for us. There is a special place for you in your Heavenly Father's heart.

Did you long for a special place in your father or mother's heart? In someone's heart? Anyone? Yet, it seemed you never found such a place in the hearts of those you longed for.

The Father is declaring, "Long for Me. I have such a place in My heart for you. I want to show it to you. And I want a place like that in your heart. I love you and I long to be loved by you."

Until you receive God's love, you have none to give Him. Yet, even while you hate Him, He loves you. He waits with longsuffering for you to turn to Him and let Him pour His love in, so you can turn and give it back to Him.

Study the parable in Luke 15. Do not view it as the story of the prodigal son. See it as the story of the father waiting for two sons to receive his love without condition. Let it speak to you of the love of your Father in Heaven. Your Father's love is perfect, with no conditions except faith to come to the Father and let Him love you to wholeness and security so that anger and fear no longer torment you.

Everlasting.

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

God's love will never cease. It cannot end because it is the very essence of Who God is. God is love!

1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

For God to stop loving would be for Him to deny His very being. You are a human being. Though you do not like yourself or you do not like being a human being, it will not alter the fact that you are one. Neither can God alter Himself. He is God and therefore He is love. However, God likes Himself. He is secure in His identity as God and as Love.

As He is love, He loves us. He created us as an act of love and cannot change Himself. Therefore He will never stop loving us. Our behavior is not relevant to this equation.

Even if we reject God's love and the salvation He offers through Jesus and we end up in hell, our choice will not change nor lessen God's love. Every soul in hell chose that despite the ever present love of God. Perhaps the greatest source of suffering for those separated from God for eternity will be to remember the day they came before His throne and saw the love in His heart for them.

Because God is love, He forces no one to choose Him. Yet God's love does not negate God's justice. He needed a way to forgive sin. The sacrificial death of Jesus was God's ransom payment to satisfy the Old Covenant law, bring it to an end and provide a New Covenant of grace to forgive all sin so we do not have to suffer the punishment. Rejecting Jesus means we choose to pay ourselves. However, we have no righteousness. We have no way to redeem ourselves. We need Jesus.

Never Fails.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

8 Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

God's love never fails because it is perfect (vs. 10) and everlasting. It is perfect in every situation every time you need it. When you begin to know this and trust the love of God for you, fear begins to lose its grip. When God's love is perfected in you, fear no longer has any power to control you.

Prophecy can fail, tongues can cease and knowledge can be flawed or slip away. But God's love never fails. It is perfect and everlasting. It is your greatest weapon against fear and torment.

Men can fail you. Your parents have failed you. The people you trust the most can fail you, though they love you. The love of man is flawed at best and fails us much too often. God continues to love us when the love of all men fades away as a painful memory.

The problem with the love of men is that when we cease to be the person they love, their love grows cold. However ugly, moody or weak we become God's love remains strong and warm. It does not fail though we do.

Have you ever felt that God's love had failed you? What was happening then? Were people failing you then? Were circumstances turning from bad to worse? At that moment God's arms were open to you. He wanted to comfort you. He wanted you to trust Him, let go of fear and anger and let Him direct your steps. Did you do that then? No, or it would not trouble you now. Take that painful time to Him now, repent of holding onto the pain and judgment and turn to Him.

Only in God's love can you find the security to trust God enough to let Him raise you up to be who He has made you to be. Receiving his love will hurt. It will hurt as it touches those places in your heart where pain and sorrow have never been comforted by His love. God's love will come into those places and comfort and heal. But it will hurt. While His love is coming in, the pain will rise to the surface. You will remember and feel it again. Listen to the Spirit of God. He will direct you to forgive the sin and repent of holding onto the demand that the other person pay. He will help you let go of the judgment in your heart against the people who hurt you and even God Himself. Then let the Spirit of God teach you. He will give you new ways of thinking to renew your mind and restore your soul to righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The pain has spiritually crippled you long enough. It still hurts. Yet the freedom that awaits you in the love of God is worth it. Decide, "I will go on this journey with You, God." His love is perfect. It will cast out the torment of fear. Let His love also help you forgive and repent of holding onto the anger of judgment. As the torment of unforgiveness ends, the righteousness of Christ will prepare your heart to walk in the peace of God's love and the joy of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER 7

LOVING FATHER

Three Sons

(Younger Son, Older Son, and Jesus)

In this study we will look at Luke 15:11-32 and examine the story commonly known as “The Prodigal Son.” But we will consider it the story of the “Loving Father.” This story wonderfully demonstrates the reality of the unconditional love of God the Father. We will also look at three sons in this story; the younger son, the older son and the Son of God, who is telling the story.

Ephesians 1:4, 5 (NIV)

4. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5. he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

God created us for his pleasure. His pleasure is having fellowship with us. What may surprise you is that He made us so He could have fun together with us. What a thought. I have experienced laughter and fun with God. He made us in His image. That means He can have fun and joy. We are made able to have fun and experience the joy that He feels when we spend time with Him.

Proverbs 17:22 A merry heart does good, *like* medicine

Ezra 6:22 And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, . . .

There is a time to weep (Ecclesiastes 3:4) and God weeps with us. But there is also a time to laugh and God loves to laugh with us.

Genesis 21:6 And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, *and* all who hear will laugh with me.”

Luke 6:21 . . . Blessed *are you* who weep now, For you shall laugh.

The God who made this universe and put us in it made me so that He could have fun with me. Wow! He loves me and wants to spend time with me. He enjoys me. He enjoys you. God chose you to be with Him! He wants an intimate

relationship with you. Though the enemy separated us from Him, He gave His Son to bring us back to Him. That's my God.

Psalm 126:1, 2

¹ When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream. ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

Psalms 139:13 (ESV – English Standard Version) For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

The fact He made us in His image means we have His DNA in us. There is no other creature that God breathed His Spirit into but MAN! (Genesis 1:26 and 2:7)

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

You are God's masterpiece. A masterpiece is something very valuable. It's hung on a wall with a bright light to illuminate the master's creative genius. Everyone who comes in will be drawn to its beauty. It's something you value greatly with exact care. God sees you that way; like an outstanding work of art. Though you wandered from Him, He gave up His most precious possession, His only Son, to gain you back.

Psalms 56:8 (NIV) You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?

Every time you've cried, He has collected your tears. And He has put them in a bottle. Whenever you were sad and cried, God collected those tears. I picture my bottle as nice and shiny, sitting next His throne with my name on it. God sees all the tears you have shed and loves you so much that He has collected them in His bottle! You are that important to Him.

THE FATHER

A) Luke 15:11 (NIV) Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. **12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.**

1) Gave freely

Here were two sons. The younger son demanded his inheritance immediately. He had plans for that money. And you notice that the Father freely gave it to him.

James 1:17 (NIV) Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

John 15:16 (NIV) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

All good things come from God. Sickness does not come from God. It comes from the enemy. There is no sickness in Heaven. Everything in Heaven is good. The Father loves to give to His children. His gifts are stored in Heaven waiting for the children of God to ask in faith for His wonderful blessings. He chose us before the foundations of the world to give good things to us. But then He allows us to choose Him freely as our source of good things, instead of the world. We can choose God or we can choose our own way. He wants us to freely choose Him. He will never force us, for He wants our relationship with Him to be based on love freely chosen.

2) Each received equal

Romans 10:12 (NIV) For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.

Before God there is no difference between any of us. He loves us all the same. When this father gave the inheritance to his sons, he divided to them equally. There is no difference in God's love for His people but there is a difference in our relationship with Him. We determine how close that relationship is! David was called a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22). John was called the disciple the Lord loved (John 21:20). Why? Because they chose to run after God! They chose to pursue that close relationship with their maker. You too can have that kind of relationship. Or you can choose only a little of what's available to you with Him. It's up to you.

3) Inheritance

1 Peter 1:3, 4 (NIV)

3. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4. and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you.

Psalms 33:12 (NIV) Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.

We have an inheritance waiting for us in Heaven. At the same time we are God's inheritance. We are of great value to the Father. Therefore, He has made every good thing available to us through His Son Jesus. There are so many gifts our Heavenly Father has stored up for us. He waits for us to ask, and then He bestows. The greatest gift is His love. Seeing us receive the love He yearns to give is the joy of His heart. His continual joy in fellowship with us is the substance of His inheritance.

4) Gave his life's worth

1 John 3:1, 2 (NIV)

1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 4:15-19 (NIV)

15. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. 16. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19. We love because he first loved us.

As I said above, the Father gave the most valuable thing He had. He gave His son, Jesus, that you might join Him in His house. Now He calls you SONS, so that all that he has comes to you. His Love is great and never ends. It does not matter what you have done, He will never stop loving you. To experience that love you must, like the younger son, turn to Him. He will welcome you home. The Father's love is deeper than any love you could ever experience and it never changes.

B) Luke 15:13 (NIV) And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, **19** and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' **20** And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

1) Looked for his son's return

Psalms 33:18 (NIV) But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.

The Father is looking for the return of His children. He will not force us but waits patiently for us to come home. When we choose to return, He welcomes us with open arms.

Zephaniah 3:17 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 says that God sings over you. I imagine He sings of His love for you. He sings of how much He wants to be with us. I bet He has a wonderful voice. When we get to Heaven, we will be able to hear it, though He could open our ears here. Don't put God in a box. We don't know what He might do. God loves to surprise us.

2) Moved with compassion, pity, and tenderness - he runs to his son

John 14:16 (NIV) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

See how the father had compassion for his son. He fell on him and kissed his neck. When Lazarus died and Jesus saw Mary weeping, He was moved in His spirit. John reports that Jesus wept. In the heart of Christ you see the Father's heart. The end of that story was that God raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:32-35, 43, 44).

John 14:18 (NIV) I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

When you are hurting and feel alone, He will comfort you. His love will surround you and fill you to overflowing. There is nothing like the love of your Heavenly Father.

3) Falls on him/kisses him fervently

Song of Solomon 1:2 (NIV) Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth-- for your love is more delightful than wine.

C) Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

Sees the repentant heart of his son.

Here we see the son repenting. He thinks he cannot be called a son anymore. He reasons that a servant in his father's house has it better than he does. But he doesn't really know his father. God sees the broken heart and is moved with compassion for His child (Psalms 51:17).

Jeremiah 17:9, 10 (NIV)

9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? 10. I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

The Word says you do not know your own heart. You must allow God to search it and see if there is any wicked thing in it. Open your heart to Him. Allow Him to show you the areas in your life where darkness still rules. God will work on this together with you. When He is done, light will dominate those places. He loves you and wants you to walk in freedom in all areas of your life.

Jesus reveals Father God's heart through the response of the father in this story. The father surprises the son by his instruction to his servants.

D) Luke 15:22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.'

1) Robe of righteousness

The father calls him 'Son.' This reestablishes the father – son relationship. A clean robe is placed on his shoulders. In Revelation we see how clean and bright

the Robe of righteousness appears. Returning to our Father in Heaven by faith in the righteousness of Jesus is the repentance of the heart that's needed. It results in the Father clothing us in the righteousness of Christ.

Revelation 19:7, 8 (NIV)

7. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

2) Ring of authority

Song of Solomon 8:6 (NIV) Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.

The ring signifies authority. The father restores the authority of his house to his son. When you returned to God, you were sealed by the Father; set apart for Him alone. He wants all of you. And He gives all He has to you.

3) Shoes to walk in the father's path

Proverbs 3:6 (NIV) In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

If you seek the Lord, He will show you the path for your life. He knows your heart and the things you enjoy. He made you to desire them naturally. His best for your life will include those things and be fulfilled, if you will surrender your life to Him.

4) Servant brings the son the robe, ring, and shoes

Matthew 18:10 (NIV) "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

Hebrews 1:14 (NIV) Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

God has angels that watch over and minister to you the very day you enter this world. These angels then rejoice over you the very day you enter into the kingdom of God.

E) Luke 15:23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry

Father prepares a banquet

Song of Solomon 2:4 (NIV) He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

Revelation 19:7 (NIV) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

F) Luke 15:24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

Father declares to all, "This is My son"

Revelation 3:5 (NIV) He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

As the father declared to all, 'This is my son', one day Jesus will declare your name will be declared to all Heaven. You are a child of the Most High God. As you walk into the heavenly gates, you will be introduced to your Father by the Son. All Heaven will wait to hear who YOU ARE!

G) Luke 15:25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. **27** And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' **28** But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

1) Father goes to the older son

The father did not wait for his offended son to come to him. He went to see what was on his son's heart, and he did so right away.

2) Pleads with him to come into his house

The older son could not see the goodness in his father's heart for him was demonstrated by mercy to his brother. All he could see was that he had never

sinned with his portion of the inheritance and the younger son was being treated like he had never sinned. Was all his work to be approved a waste of his time? What God has prepared for us can only be received in faith that Christ's sacrifice alone meets the need. All our works have the wrong motive seen in the older son, unless they are motivated by the love God pours into our hearts after we receive His saving grace.

John 14:1-4 (NIV)

1. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Jesus has a room prepared just for you in His Father's house. What a thought; to know that we have a room waiting for us in Heaven in the house of the Creator of the universe. Jesus, Himself has made it ready for us!

H) Luke 15:29 So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. **30** But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

Father shares everything with the son

The older son could have enjoyed a fatted calf at any time. But, in his heart, he saw himself as a slave, not a son. He did not know his father's heart. He tried to work to earn his father's love. You can hear it in his words, "I worked many years for you and never failed one time. But you never killed a calf for me." His heart was crying out, "Don't you love me, father? Haven't I shown how much I love you?" Do we think we have to do all the right things to show God we love Him?

Maybe if I pray. Maybe if I read the word. If I fast, maybe He will do something for me. Maybe then He will talk to me. We try everything we can think of to make God love us. The truth is He loves us already. That's why He sent His Son to bring us back to Him. He gives His love freely. If it was based on what we could do, He would never have needed to send His Son.

D) Luke 15:31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. **32** It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'

Always with the son

The father tells the son, "Son, you are always with me and all that I have is yours. But you need to be excited. Your brother was gone. Now he is home. We need to rejoice that he has come back to us." The angels rejoice when one of us turns to the Father. The angels have a celebration when we get saved. Angels may not understand salvation the way we can, but they celebrate because they do understand the joy they see on the face of Father God.

Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV) Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Revelation 5:10 (NIV) "And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

Galatians 4:3-7 (NIV)

3. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. **4.** But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, **5.** to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. **6.** Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." **7.** So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

From these scriptures, we see that we are Sons of God with all the rights of inheritance that a Son of the Most High God receives. As a son, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you everything.

YOUNGER SON

1) Made his own choice

The son chose to leave his father, brother, home and all he knew to go far away from his father. He wanted freedom but it only brought him heartache in the end.

2) Asked and received

When he asked, the father gave the inheritance to his son, even if it would cost him his son. He allowed him to choose whether to stay or go. But his heart was in turmoil over that son. Just as our Heavenly Father allows us to make the choice to accept Him and His Son, it grieves the Father, if we walk away.

3) Wrong choice

He did not know the goodness of his father's heart for him. Judging his father wrongly, he made the choice his judgment led him to.

4) Went far away from the father

Notice how he moved far away so his father would not influence or see what he was doing. Not trusting the love and kindness of his father, he had to hide the choices he might make so he would not see his father's disappointment.

5) Wasted the fortune

He did all the things that he could not do while he was with his father. Forsaking his father's wisdom, he ended up with nothing left of the inheritance his father had freely given. He fell deeply into sin trying to find happiness. But happiness is only found in the God Who made us.

6) Hungry and in need

He had fallen to the lowest point by working for a gentile and feeding pigs. Both of these actions were defilement for a Jewish man.

7) No help

He felt alone, shame, of no value, depressed, no self-worth, not like a son, yet he went back to his loving father. He was willing to be a servant to just be in his father's presence.

Psalms 118:5, 6 (NIV)

5. Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.

6. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

Romans 8:1 (NIV) There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

8) Repents to father and God

The son saw who he had become and returned to his father. He had become a servant to swine. His heart was open and repented toward his father and his God. By these choices, he became humble. Surprise; his father raised him up to his former glory without cost.

OLDER SON

1) Working in the field

He believed himself to be a good son, because he did everything that was expected! He did not realize the freedom available to him as a son. The law controlled his life.

2) Heard the music but would not go into the house

He did not yet know the liberty available to him as a son of his loving father.

3) Talked to the servant

Why not go in and ask the father what this was about? Had he judged the father for giving the younger son equal inheritance, knowing he would leave and squander it?

4) Angry

The older son was angry about his father welcoming his brother home and forgiving him all he had done. There was deep seated wrath and jealousy toward his brother in his heart. He lost sight of his own value to his father.

5) Worked many years

He believed that the father would not love him unless he earned that love. So many of us feel that we must earn God's love, but that is not what the Word says. What could you do to earn the love of the Creator of the Universe? When would it be enough? His love is free to all that accept His Son. Once His Son comes into

our heart, all the love of the Father is poured into us. It is already done. You just need to see and accept this truth!

6) Kept the law

Trying to keep the law will always result in failure at some point and put you into condemnation. But praise God, in Christ you are not under the law but under grace.

JESUS

Jesus always did what He saw the Father do.

John 5:19 (NIV) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."

He led us to the Father.

John 14:28 (NIV) "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."

The Father and the Son are one. If you know Jesus, you know the Father. Open your heart to Him and He will fill it. All the love of your Father has been poured into your spirit. To walk into that reality you stop striving to live up to the law that has passed away when Jesus fulfilled it for us. Let God fill your heart with His love. Then what you say and what you do will arise naturally from within you. For out of the heart the mouth speaks and the issues of life spring forth. At one with Jesus and His Father, you will say what they say. You will do what they do.

Romans 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

John 10:30 (NIV) "I and the Father are one."

John 14:20 At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

1John 5:7 (NIV) For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

CHAPTER 8

FATHER'S HEART

God wants you to know Him as Father. He knows you and He loves you. To help you know Him as Father, He will have to challenge your conception of Him. God is never what we think. Therefore, meeting God always challenges our expectations and changes our perceptions of Him.

We all have an image of God in our imaginations. God cannot conform to our vain imaginations. When you seek God with all your heart, He will reveal Himself to you. Be prepared to be surprised by what you see and hear. Be prepared to be surprised!

God wants you to know Him as He is. So He calls you to Himself. As Jesus was not what the religious minded people thought He would be, so the Father is not what we suppose He is. He is much better, much nicer, much kinder, much more loving, much more fun and yet much more powerful.

Be prepared to be pleasantly surprised!

OUR CONCEPT OF GOD IS TOO LIMITED

Our concept of God is too limited to recognize Him when He appears.

Judges 13:15-23

¹⁵ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You." ¹⁶ And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.) ¹⁷ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What *is* Your name, that when Your words come *to pass* we may honor You?" ¹⁸ And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?" ¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— ²⁰ it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar— the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground. ²¹ When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the LORD. ²² And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" ²³

But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things*, nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time.”

This is the story of Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, as God revealed to them that they would have a son who would deliver the people of Israel from the Philistines. The Angel of the Lord told them how to raise Samson as a Nazarite. He spent time to instruct them. As He prepared to leave they asked to detain Him long enough to prepare a kid (goat) for Him.

In verse 16, the Angel of the Lord tells Manoah, “But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord.” And it goes on to say, “For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.”

Many times God appeared to people in the Old Testament as an Angel of the Lord. Because God knew Manoah thought He was only an angel He made this last statement in verse 16. This was, in fact, God appearing in the flesh. Whenever God appears in the flesh, it is that part of the Godhead we call the Word of God Who became flesh and dwelt among us as Jesus of Nazareth.

Let me write here that your concept of God is not big enough to prepare you for what you will experience when you see Him with your eyes, hear Him with your ears, feel the power of the atmosphere around Him, smell His fragrance and taste the joy of His love.

Look at verse 19. He did marvelous things before Manoah and his wife. We do not know what He did, but it was for good purpose in their lives. In verse 20, we see that He ascended before them in the flames of the altar. In verses 21-23, we have verification that this was indeed God appearing before them, yet they did not die.

Their concept of God was that they must die if they ever saw Him face to face. In Judges chapter 6, Gideon also realizes that he had seen God and had not died.

God has revealed Himself to me as so big that His big toe could crush all the nations of the world at once. And yet He has come to me in a form perfect to hold me in His arms as a father holding a son. He talks to me in a way I can understand and expresses acceptance of me and care for me in the way I need.

Whatever you think of God, be prepared to be pleasantly surprised. Be prepared to be received by God the way you need to be received. He is loving, warm and wonderful. But also let God prepare you to see Him the way all nations will see Him; as the Mighty and Majestic God of all creation! The King of kings and Lord of lords; God Most High!

WHEN YOU SEE THE SON, YOU SEE THE FATHER

What do you think of when you hear people talk of God the Father? Let's see what Jesus said about our Father in Heaven.

John 14:9 "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

Jesus said that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. We can learn about the heart of our Heavenly Father by looking at Jesus. In Jesus, we see the actions, attitude and nature of God the Father. To know what the Father is like, look at the Son. Jesus is just like His Dad. What was Jesus like?

Remember the woman caught in adultery? The religious crowd tested Jesus by bringing this woman to Him. They wanted to see what He would say and do. In John 8:11, He told her that He did not condemn her and that she should go and sin no more.

In John 5:22, Jesus said that the Father judges no one, but commits all judgment to Him. Then in John 12:47, Jesus says that He came not to judge us but to save us. Jesus is not looking for an opportunity to find fault with us and cast us into hell. He is looking for every opportunity to speak kindly to us and save us. This is how your Father in Heaven is. Let that sink into your mind and into your heart.

In everything you are about to read, you will see Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. As you read, bear in mind, you are also seeing the Father.

John 10:11 - He would lay down His life for the sheep.

John 6:32 - He promised that if we will come, we will never hunger or thirst and will be raised up to be with the Father forever.

John 14:2, 3 - He had gone to prepare a home for each of us in His Father's house.

In the stories of the woman caught in adultery, the woman who washed His feet in Simon's house, Mary and Martha, Zacchaeus the tax collector, Peter after he

denied Jesus, Judas when Jesus knew he would betray Him and in each story as people came to Him, we see His love, His compassion and His tenderness.

He told the disciples not to forbid the children to come to Him and that we must enter the Kingdom as little children. Then notice that Jesus was teaching and receiving each person who came to Him with the tenderness of a loving parent with a child. Though their sins had harmed others, He forgave them and loved them.

John 14:10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Every word Jesus spoke and every thing He did was a direct manifestation of the nature of our Father in Heaven. In John 3, we see how Jesus treated Nicodemus with care and respect when he came to Jesus at night. Even when He openly rebuked the Pharisees and Priests, He did so out of love to wake them up. Though Jesus flashed with anger toward these men when their hearts were closed to Him, the result was that many repented and became obedient to the faith after he rose from the dead. The Father used Jesus to correct His children so they could become sons.

Isaiah 12:1 And in that day you will say: “O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.

Isaiah 57:16 For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls *which* I have made.

Jesus showed us Himself and the Father. The Father is not angry anymore. He poured out the wrath that was stored up under the Old Covenant on the Old Covenant system of sin and death in AD70. Jesus warned them this would happen in Matthew 24. Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to save the world from that day of wrath by offering Himself as the perfect Lamb of God to fulfill the Law and offer complete forgiveness and declare those who come in faith righteous. (John 3:17) The Father is not judging us anymore. One day in Heaven Jesus will judge. Today, Jesus is not judging nor is the Father. They are loving us and waiting for us to turn to Jesus as the only way to the Father. The Father Who tenderly loves and receives His children.

Read Luke 15. There you find the story of the Father. There you see the heart of the Father. Jesus used the story of the father in Luke 15 to paint a picture of the

Father in Heaven. You have never known a father like the Father Who waits for you in Heaven.

GOD GIVES US WHAT WE WANT

In reading the Bible from beginning to end many times, one thing has recently become increasingly clear to me. God gives us what we want. If we want death and destruction He will protest, but He will let us have it. If we want darkness and despair, He will let us have it. Jesus said, *“According to your faith, be it unto you.”*

These things are not what He wants for us. He wants life and laughter. He wants us to have light and love. If we want these things and ask for them, He will give them to us. Mary said, *“Be it unto me according to your word.”*

In darkness, everything deteriorates into death and destruction. In light, everything springs to life and grows in liberty in His love. We need to be like the cloudberryes of Finland. They need more sun light than other berries to grow. Put yourself in constant spiritual light and see what happens. In the natural, you need darkness for proper rest. However, in the spiritual, we need to be in constant light. Spiritually speaking, we are like the cloudberryes.

When growing alfalfa there is need for periods of darkness in preparing the seeds to sprout. Yet growing alfalfa comes to an end unless you put them in the sunlight. In the sunlight they turn green and become full of the elements of life. In John 8:12, Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*

It is not God’s will for your life to languish in darkness and despair, nor for the light of your life to be extinguished in separation from the source of life – God. The entrance of His word gives light (Psalms 119:130). His word always brings light and His life is the light of men (John 1:4).

The Father lets you have the desire of your heart. However, when that desire is destructive, the answer to that desire will not come from His hand. God is light and in Him is no darkness. God is love and He has not come to judge the world.

If you want death and destruction, you can have it. But you must depart from God for He only gives light and life by His love. You have to turn away from love and go into darkness. There you can enter into death and destruction and receive them

at the hands of those whose delight it is to give them. The devil and his demons dish out these things – not God.

Life flourishes in light. Death is hastened in darkness.

Because of sin all things die. Yet in the process of dying in the light, new life springs forth and there is great increase of life.

In contrast, if the process of dying occurs in darkness, the next generation is cursed; it deteriorates and there comes an end where no more generations arise. Life is totally extinguished and all you have is wilderness.

God is saying, “Choose life. Come into the light. Hear My Word. Come to Jesus! Enter My kingdom as children. Let Me love you and pour My love into you. Let Me nourish you and raise you up as sons of God – heirs of all creation and the kingdom of God in light and life and great love.”

**IT'S TIME TO BE RAISED UP
BY YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER – IN LOVE!**

God tells us to train up a child in the way he should go (Proverbs 22:6). The way a child should go is the way God created him to go.

When a man is free to be the son of God that God created him to be, he can train up his children to be the children God created them to be and he does not try to force them into a mold he creates for them. A father who is free of fear and anger is also able to release his children to become who they really are.

God is a father Who wants us to be exactly who He created us to be. He wants us to discover the full potential built into us. If we could come to God as our Father in Heaven with the same liberty that Jesus came to Him, then God could raise us up to discover and walk in our purpose.

God, as a Father, is not controlled by fear or anger. He knows our purpose and He is most able to teach us how to walk in our purpose and accomplish it.

It is God's delight to raise up His children!

First He has us be:

- children in His lap
- children nurtured and comforted
- children at play
- children free to be children

The Father's heart is one. Yet, in providing expression of His One Heart to us through means natural to us, He provides two parents; a father and a mother. When God the Father expresses His love to us directly, He does so as One Heart. He is Spirit and Truth. In truth, God the Father expresses His love to us by His Spirit. When it touches us, it provides both the component an earthly father would give and also what an earthly mother would give. Both components are in the One Heart of God as Father as He expresses love to us.

Mother Heart

Nurturing
 Comforting
 Heart knit to the child's heart
 Intuitive – knows what the child needs
 Protective – physical and emotional

 Always there

Father Heart

Blessing
 Honoring
 Training – to reveal gifts and callings;
 - correction to remove foolishness
 Protective - of the child and the inheritance

 Always there

Every day I go to my Father God as a child. He receives me as His son and holds me the way I was not held by my father. He gives me liberty to be a child.

However, He is leading us by His Spirit to teach and minister wherever He leads us. Debby and I together are managing the ministry He gave us under His direction. Jesus, as the Head of the church, tells us where we should go and how to minister. There is a work God did in our hearts to bring this about.

FATHER GOD RAISING THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Galatians 4:1-3

¹ Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

Why are children under governors and tutors? Because they are children; unable to do what adults can do. Their world revolves around their own needs. They are not ready to take responsibility for others. And they should not have to. Children should be free to play and be loved and accepted without having to do anything to earn it. They should be free to learn while playing and learn while being self-centered that they are secure in the love of their parents.

Everyone needs to be a child for a while. We all need a time in which we learn that even though we have been selfish and have hurt others while seeking to have our needs met, we have still been loved and cared for. We each need to be able to say, “Now I truly know I am loved, not because I have earned it, but simply because I am.”

The child who is secure in love can be raised up to be called a son.

Some of us have never been allowed to be a child. We have never been able to find security in love as a child. Therefore, we have never matured to the place of sonship.

1 John 2:13 . . . I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.

When we let go of pride and admit we are still children, we can humble ourselves before God and He opens His arms to us. Then we begin to know God as our Father, Who loves us. When we know Him in truth, we will be secure in His love and our faith will become steadfast. The child who is secure in love can be raised up to be called a son or a daughter.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18

¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among *them*. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”

Being a son or a daughter is not the same thing as being a child.

A child remains at home with the mother and is nurtured, nourished and brought to a place of security in love. The child learns in this safe environment that she is valuable and accepted. The child grows in the knowledge that “I am loved and accepted even when I am wrong.”

This child thereby becomes ready to be a son. He is ready to submit himself under the leadership and vision of his father to learn and to do his father’s business. He can be trained and corrected by his father and still honor his father and mother and avoid the trap of rebellion.

Too many parents of children were never loved and accepted when they were selfish and failing to please their parent. They have, therefore, remained stuck at the childhood level, still waiting for someone to love and accept them as they are – self-centered and demanding their own way.

We can never be fathers and mothers until we have first been allowed to be children and to have found our love and security.

God, as a father, knows how important it is for you to be a child learning to trust His love so you learn that you are secure in Him.

Galatians 4:4-7

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The fullness of time is when the child is ready to be a son. When you are ready He will call you a son or daughter.

Hebrews 12:5-11

⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

He calls you sons and begins to train you to submit to instruction and His correction. A son or a daughter not only learns the business of the father, but during this time he or she also learns from the mother and father how to relate properly to another person in a close relationship of honor and faithfulness. A son is prepared to manage a business, but also to be a husband. A daughter is prepared to manage a household, but also to be a wife.

JESUS CLEANSSES HIS BRIDE

Jesus will have the answer to His prayer of John 17:20-23. How? He will bring us to rest in the arms of our Heavenly Father. There is a work Jesus would do for each of us that we need to allow Him to do. If we do not, we can come short of the rest that is promised to us in Hebrews 4:1 and 3.

Hebrews 4:1, 3

¹ Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

³ For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

In Christ, we are pure and holy before God. Yet there is a work Christ does in us through washing us with the water of His Word by the Holy Spirit to make us without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This occurs in several ways. He has revealed one of the ways to me in recent years.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus, as High Priest, deals with us as individuals. He keeps bringing us back to our Father over and over again. Why? He will bring us to rest in the arms of our Father, secure in His love. In this way, He purifies us of our insecurities, fears, judgments, sins of idolatry (depending on other comforts) and frees us to begin to see how wonderfully He has made us for Himself (Ephesians 1:3-6; Isaiah 43:1-7,21).

Matthew 11:27 “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Jesus personally introduced me to the Father. This was a lengthy process because of my fears and wrong thoughts about God as a Father. Jesus worked very patiently with me. He brought me to the Father over and over again until I believed I was accepted by my Father in Heaven; until I became secure in the love of God as Father.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

God is not moved by need. He is moved by faith. However, faith works by love. When we are secure in God’s love for us, faith is a natural result.

1 John 5:1-4

¹ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

We can know when love has become real in us; when we naturally obey God’s word out of love for God and out of love for His children. In a heart full of God’s love and secure in God’s love, faith is normal, easy and victorious. Secure in our Father’s love we will fit easily and comfortably into our positions in the body of Christ. We will be at peace and at home right where we belong.

Outside of Christ, we are alone and capable of nothing of real value. In Jesus, we fit perfectly in the body of Christ. We are marvelous creations capable of powerful things once we are joined properly to Christ in love. There will be no darkness, only light to see ourselves joined to Christ with the millions of other powerful individuals, making the body of Christ unstoppable and wonderful in love, so that all who come are accepted and drawn into the loving arms of our Father. All will get over their fears of failure and fears of rejection because all are so warmly received at every place of failure that their hearts finally open up to believe and feel loved. They learn the truth that they have always been loved.

It is the enemy who hates them, and fears their discovery of who they really are. He does not want a unified church united with Christ. We will be too powerful.

We will no longer listen to his lies and he will be completely banished to darkness. All his attempts to harness the power of the church for his own ends come to an end. Let there be glory in the world by Christ Jesus as He is magnified in His church. Let there be joy in Heaven as the Father rejoices in the pleasure He sees in the hearts of His children secure in His love.

Do you see the Father's Heart? Are you ready to receive His love?

Now is the time to choose a time and place in which you can be undisturbed for at least half an hour. An hour would be better. Recline in a relaxed position. Tell your heart to open to your Father in Heaven to receive His love. Ask the Father to help you experience His love in the way you need to.

Expect pain to rise inside of you. This is normal. When the love of God comes in it touches places that have not been sufficiently comforted. When God's love touches the pain stored in your heart, the pain will feel like it did the first time you felt it. Let this happen. God's love will break it loose and then take its place in your heart. The pain will hurt as it did before. But as God's love comes in, the pain will be forced out and the love of your Father will fill that place and remain. Joy will begin in a place where you had once only felt pain.

Read the material as often as you like. Each time the Father can break more pain free in your heart and replace it with His love. The result will be increased freedom to be who God has made you to be. The goal is to be able to come to your Heavenly Father and be fully loved by Him. You will be free to be loved. You will no longer fear to open your heart to Him nor to the people in your life. Fear will lose its grip on you and you will become prepared to acknowledge and release sin that had been hidden from you and step into new liberties to walk in the call of God upon your life.

It is time to trust the love of your Father in Heaven! Start now!

CHAPTER 9

FACE-TO-FACE WITH GOD

Psalm 23 A Psalm of David.

1 The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

**2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.**

3 He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

**4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for You *are* with me;**

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I
will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.**

David is known as the shepherd king. He learned how to be a shepherd from God. Obviously, he learned as a young boy from his father and brothers. Yet the shepherd we see in David is of a higher degree than man can teach. His family provided a good foundation so God did not need to undo a lot of wrong thinking. He learned how to protect and care for the sheep tenderly. But God teaches us things based on what He knows we will face in our walk with Him.

I remember the months after I was born again. I read the Bible through twice. I bought books and commentaries I thought I needed so I could prepare myself to give an answer to any who would question my faith in God. God spoke to my heart one day. He said, "You don't need to know everything there is to know. I know what you will need to know. I know where you will go and who you will meet. Just study the things I put on your heart to study." Peace came to my heart and I did what God said. I have found that He knew what He was talking about. God has even taught me how to do some things the morning I needed to know them. He is true to his word.

God was the same with David. He showed him how to kill the lion before the lion came. When the lion came, David knew that God was right there with him and he just did what God had shown him. The same thing happened before David met the bear (1 Samuel 17:32-37). David was the shepherd for other shepherds to learn from, because God was a shepherd to David

The sheep under David's care belonged to his father. They were safe, secure and free with David as their shepherd. All their fears were quieted when David was with them. For David, it was the same when he saw Goliath. He had no need to fear. God was his shepherd.

From this heart at rest with God, David became a shepherd king over the nation of Israel. He could kill tens of thousands while defending Israel because he knew God was with him. He led the nation through the time of war into a time of peace. The marvelous thing is that David enjoyed this relationship with God though he was not perfect before God.

Psalm 32:5-8

5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"

And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You

In a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters

They shall not come near him.

7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble;

You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will guide you with My eye.

There were times when David sinned greatly against both man and God. But he had such confidence in God's goodness and mercy that when it came to a choice of suffering at the hands of man or at the hands of God, David chose God. He knew what it meant to be forgiven of not only his transgressions, which are the outward sins; but also the iniquities of his heart, from where the sin sprung. He was restored to the relationship with God in which he knew what it meant to be guided by what he saw in God's eye.

This is what God wants with each of us, just as He walked with Adam in the cool of each evening. Just as He walked with Enoch, with Abraham, Moses and David in close fellowship. They could look Him in the eye and ask difficult questions and God would answer.

Psalm 31:19-24

19 Oh, how great is Your goodness,

Which You have laid up for those who fear You,

Which You have prepared for those who trust in You

In the presence of the sons of men!

20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence

**From the plots of man;
You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.
21 Blessed be the LORD,
For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!
22 For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes";
Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications
When I cried out to You.
23 Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!
For the LORD preserves the faithful, and fully repays the proud person.
24 Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the LORD.**

Jesus showed us this relationship in His own walk with the Father. And demonstrated what it was to be like for us as He related to His close followers. Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, sat at Jesus feet and heard Jesus tell Martha that she, Mary, had chosen well and He would not deny her that choice merely to have her serve tables (Luke 10:38-42). She had been sitting at His feet looking into His eyes. She knew this is where He wanted her to be.

John lay his head on Jesus' bosom after their last meal together (John 13:23). This shows a special relationship between Jesus and John. When all the others ran and hid while Jesus was being tried and crucified, John stayed close by. He was standing with the mother of Jesus at the foot of the cross when Jesus released His Spirit and breathed His last breath. And John outlived all the other disciples. Even when they tried to boil him in oil, God protected him and he died years later of natural causes. He was the one who wrote, "There is no fear in love" (1 John 4:18). He knew because he experienced that kind of love from the One who is love.

God is inviting us into this kind of relationship.

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

Jesus is asking us to invite Him into our hearts. I see a picture here of sitting across the table and talking with Jesus as we dine. When you sit across the table from Jesus you can look Him in the eye. This is wonderful. I have experiences in prayer in which Jesus appeared to me (John 14:21) so close that He put his forehead against my forehead and looked me in the eye. I was not afraid of Him then, but neither was I afraid of anything else at that moment. I knew He loved me (1 John 4:18).

Yet Jesus did not pay the high price of His life's blood so we could look He alone in the eye. He was sent by God the Father to eliminate every hindrance, to pay for all our sin and defeat all fear so the Father could have His desire.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

Because Jesus has reconciled us back to the Father (2 Corinthians 5:19) now our Father in Heaven can make His home in us. We can look across the table at Jesus and at God our Father as well. This is His desire. God wants us to have a face-to-face relationship with Him.

Psalm 27:8 When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."

Psalm 105:4 Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face evermore!

One day Jesus told me to look toward the Father. It took me two weeks to get the courage. But when I did I saw His wonderful smiling eyes. He wants us to see His smiling eyes. There is a great treasure of peace and joy in His eyes for us. But you will never know the joy of His smiling eyes until you see them smiling at you.

In His eyes there is no judgment, no anger, no punishment, no need to perform; just loving, smiling, fun-filled eyes; loving you and really, really glad you are there. No rush for you to leave. You can take as much time as you like. He enjoys you!

The real you was created by God in His image to relate to Him face-to-face, eye-to-eye so that you really know God and thereby you really know yourself. You were created by Him for Him. He made you for Himself. That is why all attempts to know who you are, are futile until you look into the eyes of your loving Creator, Father God.

You can see in the writings of Smith Wigglesworth that he had this kind of relationship with God. He said in one message, *"If you know that men have gone in and have seen the face of God, who have had the vision revealed, have had the whole of the Scriptures made life in their lives, never rest till you come to it. You say, "Have you a Scripture to prove it?" Yes, the Scripture says, "That ye may apprehend with all saints what is the depth, length, breadth and height of the love of God." (Ephesians 3:18, 19)."*

Ephesians 3:18, 19

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul could write this to the Ephesians because he understood the truth he wrote to the Romans.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

To understand this is to open the door into the liberty of the relationship God is inviting us to enter with Him. A relationship that is open, with lots of smiling and talking heart-to-heart. No fear. No performance. Free. The way two young children who like each other talk and play and have no fears. Neither one controls the other. Both are free to express their hearts to each other (Luke 18:16, 17). There is no fear of death to those who are in Christ, as He has fully paid all the consequences of all our failures under the law. In Christ we are free to come to the Father and discover that His love has no strings attached.

Coming into this place, this relationship of love and security with the Father, prepares us to receive anointing, authority and responsibility to set the captive free.

Knowing how great God's love for you is will make you courageous like a lion in the face of fear. Fear will become terrified of you as it sees Christ in you; the Lion of the Tribe of Judah! He is a terror to all His enemies and the lover of your soul.

Sleep well, Child of God.