

Fathered by God Part 3: Learning to Love (9-15-2019)

Last Week: God is a **Loving Father** – who gives **Freedom**, runs to **Redeem** us, & pursues us with His **Presence**. He does this so that we can learn first hand what love is, and can enjoy giving & receiving it!

Introduction: The Foundation of being “Fathered by God” is Love, because it is also his objective for us!

John 15:9-13 (ESV)

(9) As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. (10) If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (11) These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (12) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (13) Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Note: Sacrificial Love - Love that is worth anything is sacrificial. **Examples . . .**

- **Marriage** – saying yes to my wife, is saying no to all other women
- **Parenting** – saying yes to having kids is saying no to ever getting a good night's sleep again

It's clearly something we need to learn as Jesus equates this love with following the Father's commands.

Proverbs 21:2 (ESV)

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.

Note: This is why we need the Father's loving direction, more than we really know!

Now this brings us to the first children ever born . . .

Genesis 4:1-2 (ESV)

(1) Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." (2) And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

Note: New life brings hope! Notice who Eve is placing her hope in – Cain!

Genesis 4:3-5 (ESV)

(3) In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, (4) and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, (5) but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

Note: Notice how quickly the concept of sacrifice begins – relationship with God is connected to sacrifice. Any love worth experiencing will come with a sacrifice, because real love is inherently sacrificial. Why? I prefer someone above myself. I'm “willing the good of another” as the late great Dallas Willard would say.

This is a critical moment for Cain – There is a problem arising, something about his sacrifice falls short . . .

Genesis 4:6-7 (ESV)

(6) The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? (7) If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Note: God is warning & correcting Cain. He is pointing out a problem, communicating the potential danger, and offering a real solution.

Sin is described as “Crouching” at your door, and “desiring” you. This is an important description, given to help us understand the nature of sin . . . These 2 words are used to describe:

- A beast that wants to attack and eat you
- The desire of a man for a woman (sexual in nature)

***Sin wants to eat you alive, and have its way with you – which will in turn give birth to things that should not be!**

God is trying to get Cain’s eyes off of . . .

Himself - “Whoa is me I’ve been rejected”

His brother – “It’s all his fault making me look bad”

*Comparison & Envy – I don’t measure up & I want what he has (in fact I deserve it)

This is an extreme story, but it illustrates where sin ultimately leads . . .

Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25 (ESV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

- **Real Love** – sacrifices self for the sake of others
- **False Love** – sacrifices others for the sake of self (this includes “using” others to satisfy yourself)

Our biggest problem . . .

- We minimize our potential for destruction, and we think sin isn’t as big of an issue as it actually is.

But God loves us enough to invite us to a better way – and so He offers warning, instruction, and discipline . . .

Hebrews 12:1-4 (ESV)

(1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (4) In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

- **Cain** – sacrificed his brother for the sake of arranging for his own satisfaction.
- **Jesus** – sacrificed himself for the sake of our ultimate satisfaction, and the by-product for him was joy!

Hebrews 12:5-6 (ESV)

(5) And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. (6) For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

Note: We don't like hearing about: Sacrifice, Obedience, Discipline, because we don't realize that those are really words of Love!

The Father's Discipline in our lives is always:

- Motivated by Love
- Done in Love
- For the Purpose of growing us in Love

1 Corinthians 13:11-12 (ESV)

(11) When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Note: Relationship with God is the path to growing up – learning to know by being known!

Remember: Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart. (Proverbs 21:2)

Conclusion: God is inviting us on a journey – learning the way of love. It's a road of obedience, discipline, sacrifice, but it's the best road to walk . . .

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (ESV)

(4) Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (6) it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (7) Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never ends.