

The Grace of God - Pt. 3
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Intro/Pt. 1

My hope and prayer, and ultimately the goal of this lesson in the book, is that we would have a restored Image of God as Father.

Throughout this Chapter on the Grace of God, in A Discipleship Journey, we see glimpses and attributes of the heart of our Heavenly Father.
This lesson specifically focuses on the Image of God as Father.

This may come as a surprise to you.... But our earthly fathers aren't perfect.

No matter if our earthly fathers were amazing, great, just ok, bad, or ugly. None of them were perfect.

The guy in the video that links to lesson 2, says something that has stuck with me. **"Father God is not a big one of our dads"** for dads in the room, God is not a big one of us! Thank the Lord!

THAT IS SO FREEING! – He is our Father before anyone of us had a dad, He should be our definition of what a father should be like, and here on earth our parents, at best, are just a type and shadow of our True and Perfect Father.

(Tell personal story of my dad, and how I grew up.)

"The Image of God you carry around in your heart and mind affects the way you live your daily life." – Dave Buehring

(Personal testimony of asking God, "Will you Father me? Will you make up for any area that I am lacking?... **This invitation I gave our Father, radically changed my life.**)

I tell you this story to encourage you, because it doesn't matter what life has thrown you, (and I realize I haven't had it as hard as others have) **No circumstance is too difficult for the Father to come and restore.**

"Our Heavenly Father desires 'to re-parent' us in His Love and in His Ways. He alone can restore the losses that have impacted our sense of love, acceptance, and worth as well as our sense of belonging and purpose" – Dave Buehring

So much, if not all, of what we have been reading in A Discipleship Journey has helped us re-shape, re-define, renew, and affirm what we know about God and how we perceive Him.

- Before we go any farther I want us to go to the Father in prayer, and give him the “Glasses” if you will that we see Him through.

All the things we have been taught, all the experiences that have helped us define Him as Father.

Invite Stephanie up to play the keys

Take a few minutes or so, in your own way, to give the Father, the image that you carry around of Him. Good/Bad, Right/Wrong, And as 1 Peter 5:10 says “The God of All Grace (you could say Father of All Grace) will **restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us.**

Invite Him to **restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish** the true image of the Father.

PRAY

After: This shouldn’t stop here guys, this honestly should have just opened the door for Him to come and move on your heart. Allow Him space to do this work in you, and honestly this should be taking place for the rest of our lives, **an ongoing building**

Pt. 2

As we are allowing our Father to do this work in us. I want to talk about some areas that can help guide you. Points of reference.

The first two points, that are linked, have broken Images of God as Father.

The orphan heart & the spirit of slavery

The last two points, are promises that are to be attained and lived out.

Sons (Daughters) & Heirs

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There are different degrees as to which we struggle with this (**For Example:** If we have never made the decision to give our lives to Jesus, we are full on living a life as an orphan & a slave. If we have made the choice to follow Jesus, we can still be struggling with these two areas even after we have been brought into our Father’s house.)

*At first, I thought these were two separate camps all together, but actually, **the orphan heart leads into a spirit of slavery.** *

The word “Orphan” in Hebrew is “*Yathom*” to no surprise- it means fatherless, but the root meaning is: **to be lonely; a bereaved person**

That explains the orphan heart so well.

Orphans strive to be self-reliant and independent. They often don’t even know they are in need.

An orphan is already suffering from rejection; therefore, rejects others and rejects help. They even reject being parented because they believe that “they are good”.

(Possible personal story)

They don’t know how to love because they don’t know that they are loved.

The orphan heart longs to belong, but because of its distorted image of the Father, it looks for safety elsewhere, ultimately taking on the spirit of slavery.

We might think we are enjoying ourselves for a time, living it up in this culture, “Living our best life”, but inside we find ourselves **lonely and bereaved**. We will end up enslaved to the culture, because of all the shackles and chains we willingly accepted in the name of wanting to fit in, to belong, finding safety, and finding comfort ... all apart from the Father, Trapped in the decisions we have made. Our own proverbial pig pen.

Living with an orphan heart leads you into the spirit of slavery (accepting life as a slave) Knowing you need the Father to survive, but living as if you don’t have access to Him, fearful of Him, and as if you don’t belong... unworthy of relationship.... Living life without promise or inheritance. And ultimately believing that the scraps are enough.

To help us grasp this a little better, lets look at what scripture says.

Luke 15- Story of the Prodigal Son & Romans 8:14-17 (looking side by side)

Romans 8:14-17 (ESV)

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons^[a] of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

These verses have marked me. This is absolutely amazing. That we get to call our creator Abba.

This is true the moment you receive salvation. You are born again and adopted into the Family of God, and the Spirit of God fills you, and you now have access to Abba, (that means Daddy, an intimate word for Father God.) and if you are now a child of God then, you are an heir of God and fellow heirs with Christ!

This is our promise. This is our inheritance.

However scripture shows us that even though we are Children of God we are also still being sanctified. We all need a revelation of what our adoption truly means, how close we really are to the Father, and how much He loves us.

This brings us to Luke 15

Luke 15

This story so clearly shows what I am talking about, showing that even as the two sons in the story are living at the father's house, they are operating out of an orphan heart that brings them in to the spirit of slavery.

The orphan heart right off the bat presents itself when the first son asks for his inheritance early and then goes and blows it all away in a far-off country. And ends up in a pig pen trying to get food.

Luke 15:17-19 (ESV)

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

Here it is, orphan heart leading into the spirit of slavery... It all looks pretty bleak up to this point.

Then the light comes... The Father runs to him (he had been waiting for his son), the father embraces his boy, holds him, kisses him.

The Love of the Father breaks through the orphan heart and the spirit of slavery, renews our mind, transforms us, so we can live as loved sons and daughters, not as slaves or orphans!; As His Children! who are destined to rule and reign with Him. To be Heirs, Co-Heirs with Christ!

The Everlasting Love of the Father moves us out of slavery and into Sonship. And there for can respond to the question "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Romans 8:37-39 (ESV)

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things

to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Note: The second son in the story is operating out of the orphan heart as well, he has been performing to earn love, and when everything goes down with the younger son, the older son complains about never even having a goat to share with his friends. The Father responds, ***“Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours,”***

THE WHOLE FARM WAS HIS! HE HAD ACCESS THE ENTIRE TIME! But because of an orphan heart he never realized it... he was too busy complaining and comparing himself to his brother, trying to earn love by performing well.

Note: You may already understand that you are a son & heir, and you might already have a really good and accurate Image of the Father; However, we all need to be aware that the enemy desperately wants you to live as a slave. The enemy will do anything to distort the Image of the Father in your life. So be diligent, be watchful, and ask the Father to search you out to reveal areas that need to be strengthened.

Sons & Heirs

No matter where we find ourselves, **the most important thing is to come to Him.**

He doesn't say to the slave, "oh, first you need to clean up before I break your chains"
He doesn't say to the orphan "oh, first you need to clean up before I bring you home"

The Father just wants you to come as you are **right now.**

It is by coming to Him and opening our hearts to Him that our broken images of the Father become restored.

Application:

"Invite God's presence, even now, into those closed-off places of your life, to touch those areas of rejection and to heal the tender places of hurts and wounds. He loves you and longs to take your hurting heart into His embrace." – Dave Buehring

Close out and Pray