

# First Love: The Fathers Heart pt. 4

Intro: Stefan Duerksen

June 26, 2022

## Announcements or celebrations

- **Camp Volunteers** – how many signed up this past week?
  - <https://mysouthland.com/camps>
- **Prayer Summit on Wednesday**
- **BIG congratulations to all our Grads! PRAY BLESSING ON THEM!**
- **HOT DIGGITY DOGS AFTER THE SERVICE!!**

## Church-wide Requests: PRAY TOGETHER. Pray for CAMP & GRADS

- Praise God for the campers and volunteers who have signed up! ☺
- Pray for 2 more cabin leaders for MS & 35 more for HS & 6 more for YA
- Pray for campers & volunteers to have personal encounters with Jesus and FUN at camp
- Pray for our Grads! Holy Spirit filling, protection, for hearts to be open to the Call of God, for direction as they venture out into the next chapter of their lives!

## Why is it that so many of us desire to LOVE GOD PASSIONATELY, but feel stuck.

- We want to KNOW HIM, but can't seem to get ourselves to seek him regularly.
- We want Him to be our source of LIFE as we claim He is – yet we find ourselves searching for life in this world... and stuck in addictions... or bad habits... always searching for something to make us feel “alive”
- We stay busy to try and find our value... so we anxiously run from one thing to the next..
- We only feel loved by God when we are doing “good things” Bible reading, praying, not falling into major sins, etc. But any failure? And His love is far from us.
- Anxiety feels more real than peace
- Boredom and emptiness feel more real than “pleasures forever more in your Presence”
- We try to move forward but almost feel paralyzed. It's like the worries and stresses of the day douse the little flame we have and we feel extinguished.

**Stefan's Salvation Story.** Because I was raised in a good, Christian home, I KNEW just enough about the Bible & God to be dangerous, but not enough to be FREE. I knew that deliberate sin was the WORST. I thought it was unforgiveable. So, when my mom got sick, and I was hurting and became angry... I began to deliberately sin -why? To spurn God. Years later, when I wanted to return to Jesus – I KNEW (lie) that God would not accept me back because I had sin intentionally. This false belief kept me from returning to the Lord. It wasn't until he spoke to my heart and said, “Stefan, I know you. I know what you have done. I love you anyways! Come, just as you are!” that I was able to break free from that lie and walk in truth.

## A. What we believe about God and how He sees us impacts our response to God

1 John 4:19 we love, because he first loved.

This truth is the CATALYST for people coming to Christ AND living out the Great Commission and Great Command!

**What we believe about God's heart towards us, is the largest determining factor, on how we will respond to his invitation to Know Him INTIMATELY.**

**1 John 4:** 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.

- John says v.15, those who believe in Jesus are saved. If they still fear standing before him, it is because they are trapped in the fear of being rejected by God (lie) and have not yet been perfected by LOVE (truth).

**Matthew 25:24-27** He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'

- The third servant "knew" things about his master. But they were false! He believed lies about who the master was.

**There is a process to being PERFECTED in LOVE...**

- Pursuing God! Responding to what we have received!
- Confronting the lies by renewing our minds!
- Loving and forgiving others! The enemy knows this!

**1 Peter 5:6-11** Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (TRUTH ALERT – GOD CARES ABOUT YOUR ANXIETIES!!!) Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith,

**TRUTH ALERT:** Some of you need to memorize and meditate on this Passage... God wants to LIFT YOU UP? YES! He wants to CARRY your anxiety because HE CARES FOR YOU!!!!

**Who is this enemy? Peter is speaking of Satan – which literally translates, "slanderer"**

**He makes accusations.** Accusations about God's character – who He is. Accusations about us – how God see us. He does this to DECEIVE US.

**Romans 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

## **B. God the Father – the Fathers Heart**

One of the main pictures used in Scripture to depict God's LOVE for us is God being our FATHER.

**Stefan's Story:** I'm in the delivery room, seeing Austin for the first time, he looked like me (my image) and I was overwhelmed... the Lord said to me, "the feeling you are feeling is love and it pales in comparison with the love that I have for you..." I melted.. I wasn't ready to receive God's love yet... BUT.. the picture of the FATHERS HEART was imprinted on me... it was unexplainable! I loved this boy who hadn't done anything! In fact, he was going to cost me everything! Yet, I loved him! Just as he was! I was

fiercely protective of him, I wanted his best – even for him to have a relationship with Jesus when I still thought he would NOT accept me! My wife felt the same!

**Romans 8:32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

#### **The Fathers Heart:**

- **God designed YOU** – saw ALL of your character traits – quirks – weaknesses – strengths – success & FAILURES – and still made YOU! ONE OF A KIND – He only made ONE OF YOU! And He thinks you are so VALUABLE & PRECIOUS that He was WILLING to do EVERYTHING it TOOK to make a way for you to KNOW HIM AND FIND YOUR LIFE IN HIM!

The enemy seeks to distort this picture! He doesn't want us to draw near to God as a Father who loves us as we are, who protects us, who cares for us, who values us, who wants us to know him and be fully known in him...

**Luke 15:11-32** And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

"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! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

So the enemy seeks to destroy this picture through lies and distortions on God the Father is like...

#### **C. Identifying the Enemies Lies about God the Father**

**The enemy uses the examples we are given by our earthly fathers (and mothers, teachers, caregivers, coaches – other people of influence) to distort the image of God the Father in our hearts.**

**Mike Bickel gives some really helpful categories in his book “Passion for Jesus” that I will use to highlight the key strategies the enemy uses to deceive us regarding God the Father. (*highly recommend reading!*)**

[https://read.amazon.ca/kp/embed?asin=B00DYON4BA&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_kb\\_dp\\_412GZDY8Q60ZFYNP66SM](https://read.amazon.ca/kp/embed?asin=B00DYON4BA&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref=cm_sw_r_kb_dp_412GZDY8Q60ZFYNP66SM)

**IMPORTANT:** I had a wonderful father! And still went off the deep end! God the Father walked with Adam and Eve and they still sinned – Jesus walked with his 12 disciples and still had a Judas and Peter who betrayed him. We are not perfect and will make MANY mistakes as parents!

**This isn't about blaming our parents for where we are at in life! It's about recognizing where THE ENEMY HAS BEEN LYING TO US ABOUT THE NATURE OF GOD!**

**The Passive Father:** this is the dad who is there. But he is quiet. Unemotional. He does not get into your life, or give you emotional support. He may have provided your basic physical needs, clothes, shelter, food, but beyond that you were left on your own.

- **Common Lies: God doesn't care about my heart. God provides for me but isn't near to me.**
- **Truth: God cares about every part of my life & heart. God is near to me.**

**The Authoritarian Father:** this is the dad who lives by the “my way or the highway” motto. He cuts you off when you are speaking, or sharing your heart and makes sure you know the “DO's & DON'T's” according to his values AND possibly even the Bible. The primary concern with this dad is OBEDIENCE NOT RELATIONSHIP.

- **Common Lies: God is a task master. He just wants my obedience. He doesn't care about my heart.**
- **Truth: God wants my HEART over my PERFORMANCE**

**The Abusive Father:** this dad is scary. He deliberately hurts his kids. He physically, emotionally, sexually, or spiritually abuses his children. This leaves the child scarred and broken! Unable to reconcile that they could have any value... they grow to believe they are completely worthless. As though something is inherently wrong with them to have caused their caregiver to treat them in this way.

- **Common Lies: God is scary. God is untrustworthy. God will hurt me. God will ask me to give more than I have.**
- **Truth: God only asks me to give what he gives me first. God passionately loves me. God is trustworthy. God is my protector. God wants to care for my heart.**

**The Absent Father:** unlike the passive father, who is there, but not available. This absent dad is the one who is never around. There could be good cause for this! He could be working... you may not have had a dad! Or he passed away. This may be for good or bad reasons. Regardless of reasons, you were unable to receive affirmation and love from your dad. He wasn't present when you needed him.

- **Common Lies: God is not with me. I am alone. God is distant.**
- **Truth: God will never forsake or abandon me. God me to walk with Him through life. God wants to be near to me, when I draw near to God, he draws near to me.**

**The Accusing Father:** this is the father that loves his kids – tells them he loves them and is even involved in their lives – BUT – he also feels the need to point out every failure. You feel judged. He believes that by pointing out all your flaws, it will motivate you to do better and improve.

- **Common Lies: I don't measure up. God only loves me when I am doing good actions.**
- **Truth: I am more than my "to do" list. God values my heart more than my actions.**

It may seem UNFAIR that some had better fathers than others! I had a WONDERFUL earthly father that helped me understand a lot of what God was actually like!

**REMEMBER:** God only expects us to respond to the revelation of His love that we have experienced! He is willing to WALK WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY as you overcome faulty beliefs, break free of sin and grow in your PASSION for Him.

**2 Corinthians 10:4-5** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

I want to leave you with a picture the Lord gave me...

**PICTURE:** God the mechanic – why don't you just fix it all right now? Why not make it all perfect and remove our brokenness?

- God loves RESTORATION! He loves to CREATE and he loves to RESTORE!
- Think about this... when Jesus returns... the first 1000 years, the millennial Kingdom... we will be doing what? Partnering with him in restoring the earth for the arrival of the New Jerusalem and New Earth!

**Galatians 4:6-7** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

#### **D. Perfected in LOVE – overcoming lies with truth**

- a. Pursuing God! Responding to what we have received!
- b. Identify and confront lies by renewing our minds in the Word & prayer
- c. Loving and forgiving others! The enemy knows this!
- d. Prayer Summit this Wednesday – we are going to work on this!

**MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!**

**PRAY & Worship - CLOSING PRAYER**

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## SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2022

Cruise Ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Great Command** (Mt 22:37-40): Love God – Love people: hospitality, generosity, serving & empathy
2. **Great Commission** (Mt 28:18-20): Disciple family, friends, neighbors & beyond
3. **Word & Truth** (1Pet 3:15): Know the Gospel, grow in discernment, speak the truth in love
4. **Persecuted Church** (2 Cor 4:7-10): Religious freedom, freedom of speech, spiritual fortitude, wisdom
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India & the Chinese worldwide, make many global disciple makers  
(The Way)
6. **Leadership:** Wisdom and direction in the search for Lead Pastor and Executive Pastor