



Sunday November 04, 2018
The Father's Love
Part-1 : Infinite God, Our Heavenly Father

Introduction

Your revelation of God affects your relationship with God. Your relationship with God also affects your relationship with others. Our understanding of God's love for us affects how we love God, how we love our own selves and how we love others.

The first commandment is to love God with all we have. The second is to love others as we love ourselves. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:). Our love for God deepens as we understand how much He has first loved us. As we understand how much He loved us, we learn to love our own selves. When we love our own selves we are able to love others well. When we see our own value in God's eyes, we value our own selves. When we value our own selves, we are able to value others as well.

Typically we relate to others in the same way we relate to our own selves. If we are critical of our selves, condemning of our own selves, we tend to do that to others.

Our objective in this series on "The Father's Love" is to know and experience the Father's Love. This will change the way we relate to God, to ourselves and to others as well.

Our Father In Heaven

Matthew 6:9

..Our Father in heaven,...

The Lord Jesus used the term "heavenly Father" to refer to God the Father, quite a few times.

1 John 4:8

....God is Love.....

God's love is unlimited. His love is infinite.
God's love is unconditional.

God is Relational

John 17:24

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.



There was love in the Trinity - even in the dateless past - eternity past.
God is relational.
He loves and can be loved.
We are created in His image. We are relational. We can love, and can be loved.

Mark 12:29-31

29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.

30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' This is the first commandment.

31 And the second, like it, is this: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

We were created to love God and to love people.

Part of our being relational is that we are children and long for the love, affection, nurture, encouragement and affirmation of a parent - a father or mother.

God Has Made Us The Focus of His Unlimited, Unconditional Love

This infinite God is our heavenly Father.
We are His sons and daughters.

Ephesians 1:3-6

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:4-5 (Message Bible)

4 Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.

5 Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!)

There was love even before Creation, and there was Creation because of love.

This actually reveals God's heart to have sons and daughters.



God's desire is to have relationship and intimate fellowship with us as sons and daughters, with Him as our Heavenly Father. This has been His heart's desire, even before the foundation of the world. This is the reason for our creation.

Am I responding as a son or daughter, to God my Heavenly Father?

Restoring Our Capacity To Be Loved

But we are broken.
Our capacity to be loved is broken.
Our capacity to love others is broken.

Because our capacity to love and be loved is broken, we do many things unconsciously that actually become walls around our own emotional selves. We tell ourselves that we can live without love. We distance ourselves from people. We shut people out. We do not get too close to anyone. We emotionally isolate ourselves from others. And when this carries over into marriage we are unable to get emotionally close to our spouse. Emotional intimacy is a very difficult thing because we have our walls or defenses up. Then as a parent (father) we may give the best we can in terms of material things to our children, but we are unable to express the affection and the warmth of a loving parent (father). Our children grow up deprived of genuine unconditional love and affection.

Mark 12:31

And the second, like it, is this: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

The strange thing is that with our broken capacity to love and to be loved, we "bond" or "emotionally connect" with all the wrong things in life. We get emotionally attached to our work, career, success, fame, reputation, applause, affirmation, attention, money, things, etc.

When we receive love, we can give love.
We look for true love and acceptance.

Wrong Postures

A few of the wrong postures (thought patterns) that keep us from understanding God's unlimited and unconditional love. These are mindsets we carry inside of us, and these affect how we relate to God. We tend to relate to God out of these wrong thinking patterns.



A) The Prodigal

In this mind-set or thought pattern people always see themselves as unworthy, unfit, never good enough for any one, and surely not good enough to be loved by God. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as a loving and forgiving Father.

They always think like the prodigal son who went to his father saying:

Luke 15:19

"...I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." '

While it is good and important to repent when we have done wrong....this is not the mindset in which God always wants us to remain. The father celebrated the son upon his return clothing him with fine robes, putting a ring on his finger and having a feast and wanted his son to be his son!

Luke 7:47

Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

Having been forgiven much we must pour out our love toward our heavenly Father. That is what He deserves and desires.

B) The Slave

In this thought pattern, people always have a slave mentality. They feel they have to earn everything, feel unfit for bigger things, they feel disqualified for things. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as Someone who adopts us as sons and daughters, qualifies us to enjoy an inheritance and calls us His heirs and join-heirs with Christ.

However the Bible teaches us clearly that God does not want us to behave like slaves:

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."

Romans 8:15 (Contemporary English Version)

God's Spirit doesn't make us slaves who are afraid of him. Instead, we become his children and call him our Father.



Romans 8:15 (Good News Bible)

For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, "Father! my Father!"

C) The Orphan

Those who have this mindset feel fatherless, abandoned, never have been and never will be loved, never felt that they belonged, feel that no one really cares for them. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as a loving, caring Father.

Romans 8:15 we saw this Scripture earlier.

Galatians 4:4-5

**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.**

God does not want us to feel or live as "spiritual orphans", but as sons and daughters of His.

D) The Outcast

In this mindset people have a deep seated sense of rejection, always stand far off, feel excluded, left out, outcast and so on. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as Some One who welcomes us into His presence, encourages us to come boldly and freely to Him.

Ephesians 2:12-13,18

**12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.**

Hebrews 4:16 teaches us to come boldly to God's throne of grace.

E) The Proud Elder Brother

Those with this thought pattern have a sense of pride. They tend to think "I never felt loved, I don't need love". They take pride in what they do "I'm faithful, I do my work", etc. Everything is based on work and tasks. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as Some One who calls us to rest in His love, just enjoy Him and know that He also enjoys us.



Luke 15:29-30

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.'

They also tend to be judgmental and critical of others, often, like the Pharisees.

F) The Wounded

These are people who have been hurt, perhaps more than one and hence carry pain and wounds inside. They therefore will never let anyone love them and will never try to love anyone else. They are just afraid to, out of fear of being hurt again. Sometimes, they may even carry unforgiveness, hatred and anger towards people, especially towards those who in anyway resemble those who have hurt them. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as Some One who love people genuinely, without malice and who will never do anything hurtful or harmful. They find it difficult to trust in the love of our Heavenly Father.

But God declares His unfailing love for His people, even in spite of their constant failures.

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 wants us to know that His love is all surpassing and nothing can separate us from His love.

G) The Self Critical

The self critical are those who are very critical of themselves and of others. "I am not good, never good enough for myself, for others, for God.." is how they think. They therefore push themselves to perform, compete to find acceptance, recognition, etc. Sometimes this is motivated by fear, and people even end up controlling, manipulating others in order to get ahead. They may consequently have bitter roots of judgments (being critical) of themselves and others. So when they relate to God it is very difficult for them to comprehend God as Some One who is abundant in grace because of His great love. They find it difficult to understand that God loves us as we are and give us what we do not deserve out of love. This does not compute for them!

Yet this is what the Scriptures point us to:



Ephesians 2:4-5

**4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),**

What Is Stopping You From Receiving God's Love?

- A) The Prodigal : *to the prodigal He says while you were still a sinner, I loved you*
- B) The Slave : *to the slave He says, even before the foundation of the world I planned to have you as my son or daughter*
- C) The Orphan : *to the orphan He says, even before I created you, even before you were born I planned to adopt you into my family*
- D) The Outcast : *to the outcast, He says I love you so much and want you so near me, I have brought you to sit right next to me*
- E) The Proud Elder Brother : *to the proud elder brother, the self-righteous, He says, just receive my love, it is always there.*
- F) The Wounded : *to the wounded He says, others have hurt you, but I am too good to do you wrong, too gentle to harm you,*
- G) The Self Critical : *to the self-critical He says, I love you because I am love. Don't condemn yourself, because I am not condemning you.*

Would you ask Him to heal you and restore your capacity to receive His unlimited and unconditional love and to be loved by Him?

God has made us the focus of His unlimited and unconditional love.

His love has brought us in to being His sons and daughters.

God is your Father, you are His.

Imagine you are a son or a daughter of the heavenly Father whose love is unlimited and unconditional!

1 John 3:1-2

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

...

1 John 3:1 (Message Bible)

"What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it--we're called children of God! That's who we really are..."

Write down your thoughts/feelings as you look at yourself as a son or daughter of God, someone who is the focus of His unlimited and unconditional love



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday November 04, 2018

The Father's Love

Part-1 : Infinite God, Our Heavenly Father

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *Ephesians 1:3-6; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 John 3:1-2*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1) Discuss the truth about God being a relational God - there was love even before Creation, and there was Creation because of love.

2) Review the seven wrong postures (mindsets) that people carry, which eventually affects how they relate to God.

3) Do any of the seven wrong postures resonate with you (you identify with)? Take some time during prayer to invite God to dislodge these and replace them with the truth of His Word, so that you can relate to God as your heavenly Father, freely.



If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

- 1, families to be protected and strengthened*
- 2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.*
- 3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.*

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>