

## Lesson 5 – Dealing with Father and Mother Issues

### The Importance of Our Earthly Fathers

The father is the most important person in a child's life and will strongly affect how they live their lives and how they relate to their heavenly Father.

- ✓ Psychologists say that 80% of our identity is in our father.
- ✓ ***Often the image and remembrances of our earthly father, or a father figure, are how we relate to our heavenly Father.*** Unresolved conflicts, anger, wounds, or unconscious hidden core pain from insults, broken promises, rejection, demeaning looks, abuse, disappointments, grief, and abandonment (death, divorce, or leaving an unwed relationship) will hinder our ability to trust or become intimate with Father God.
- ✓ A distorted image of our father will also hinder us from receiving love, security, acceptance, rest, comfort, provision, and healing from Father God.
- ✓ Even a small flaw in a good earthly father may affect how we receive Father's love.
- ✓ Regardless of how well your earthly father provided for your needs, if you did not feel safe, secure, and comforted by his love and presence, you may feel Father God is far off or unsafe too. You may feel like a spiritual orphan anywhere you are. We can be in the presence of the Father's love during an anointed time of praise and worship and feel nothing.

We all have a strong desire to please our father and feel his acceptance of us.

- ✓ We expect our father to meet our needs for love, praise, and acceptance.
- ✓ Each time our needs are not met or we feel our father's rejection, a wound goes into our heart and pain begins to build inside. The rejection can take many forms from words, "the look," anger (includes punishing in anger), slaps (especially the face), body language, facial expression, placing work or other things above us, too busy to spend time with us, no hugs or kisses, no interest in our needs or our lives, no communication with us, or ignoring us when they are around us.
- ✓ Even ***the attitude with which a father does things*** with their child will affect them either positively or negatively. Children can pick up on whether their father's heart is genuine or if they are doing it out of frustration, anger, fear, conviction, or mere obligation. Children also know if their father is doing it to manipulate, please, or "buy" their affection.

**May Feel God is Mad at Us!** If we have been wounded by our earthly father, we can be in our heavenly Father's presence and still not sense any peace or rest. We may feel God is mad at us or is punishing us for what we have done. We may feel rejected by God and come under self-condemnation, feeling we are not worthy to receive Father God's love because we never received our earthly father's love. We may even feel anger, fear, or mistrust of God because we could not trust our earthly father.

We must realize that our fathers were once children themselves and probably were wounded by their own fathers (cycle of wounding Ex. 20:5, 34:7)

- ✓ We all have a pain tank, and every time our four basic love needs are not met, we are wounded and a little more pain goes into that tank.
- ✓ Our adult pain is wired to our childhood pain. If our father's pains and wounds were never healed, then we can touch their hidden pain and cause that pain to flow onto us.
- ✓ Our father may have been so wounded that he was unable to give us the love that we needed. He did the best he could and what he thought was right at the time. (**Heb. 12:10**)

- ✓ Our earthly father wanted to love us and meet all of our needs, but was just not able to because of the pain and wounds in his own life.
- ✓ He may have been compensating for the love deficit in his own life through the “false lovers” or living in the strongholds from his response to the wounds he received as a child.
- ✓ He may never have received love when he was growing up, and you cannot give away what you have not received.

### **Father Issues**

The degree and types of wounding from our fathers in our own lives depends upon what type of father we had growing up. Most fathers do not fit into only one of these types, but most are a blend with one being dominant. Each one of these father types can build specific strongholds in your life that may be hindering you from receiving your Father’s love as an adult. These character flaws may become the lens through which we later see our heavenly Father.

### **The Good Father**

- Good fathers are by far the best kind to have, but there is no perfect father other than God. (Matt. 5:48)
- The smallest flaw in our father can be blown out of proportion by a child and become a big issue with them. Broken promises, times the father was unable to attend a game or was not there when you had a crisis in your life, not comforting us when we were afraid, or not being able to provide for all your needs can cause hidden core pain or disappointment.
- Your father may have been a good provider and servant, but lacked intimacy with God or his family.

### **Affects of the Good Father**

- You may be unable to let go of your earthly father to embrace the love and security of your heavenly Father.
- You may have difficulty resting in His love and practicing His presence all day long.
- You may allow “good works” to be a substitute for true intimacy and passion for Father God.
- You may not be able to fully trust God to meet all your financial needs if your earthly father could not.
- You may not believe that Father God will heal you, or provide rest, comfort, forgiveness, compassion, affection, etc. if your earthly father let you down in any of those areas.
- You may struggle with fears if your earthly father was unable to comfort you and provide a safe secure home situation.

### **The Performance-Oriented Father**

- The performance father is the most common type.
- He may say, “I love you.” But he is quick to show his displeasure for every failure. You need to perform in order to receive his “love.” It is love with a hook!
- He is ridged, setting high standards and demanding certain behavior with little affection and affirmation. These standards may be in sports, school, homework, religion, or obedience.
- He tries to motivate you by pointing out your failures and never gives any praise. High standards with no room for failure and no praise leave wounds in a child.

### **Affects of the Performance-Oriented Father**

- The child may have an ungodly belief that “the only way I belong, am loved, and feel accepted is when I do things right or perfectly.”
- Christian homes can become performance-oriented, believing that we must perform for God’s love and acceptance.
- They are driven to do everything according to the letter of the law – act right, dress right, and do right. They do not realize that there is nothing we can do to make God love us any more and there is nothing we can do to make Him love us any less.
- You may become an aggressive striver trying to please God by praying enough, reading your Bible enough, or doing all the right religious things.
- Your relationship with God may be based on hyper-religious activities and spiritual ambitions, striving to become more spiritual or in the “select” group at church.
- You may have the ungodly belief that performance is required for intimacy with God. You may be driven to have a deeper relationship with God because you always feel like you fall short of measuring up.
- You may feel God is always accusing you or finding fault with you which causes self condemnation and self-imposed guilt.
- It is easier to hear Satan’s voice of judgment, condemnation, and accusation rather than the Father’s voice of love, compassion, and comfort.
- You may battle fears of rejection or fear of what other people think. You cannot find peace and rest within His love.
- Your Bible study is focused on scriptures that talk about truth, righteousness, and judgment rather than on love, forgiveness, compassion, and grace.
- You tend to be critical of others who are not as disciplined as you are.
- You harden your heart towards other who do not think like you do or come up to your expectations.

### **The Passive Father**

- The passive father is not actively involved in your life. He is not home even when he is home.
- He may not be able to think of your needs or even recognize that you have needs.
- He was not there to rejoice in your victories or grieve in your losses.
- He is very guarded with his feelings and emotions (or not even in touch with them), and therefore, unable to have any intimacy (in-to-me-see) with you. You never felt close to him.
- He is non-emotional, stoic, and unable to weep, laugh, or play with you. There is no expressed love or passion in his life.
- He may say, “I love you.” But it comes across hollow because there is a lack of quality time, affection, affirmation, and emotional intimacy with him.
- He may be caught up in his own world becoming a workaholic, alcoholic, or minister, or be in the military.
- He may have no interest in your feelings or emotions either.

### **Affects of a Passive Father**

- A passive father may make it difficult for you to believe God is interested in the everyday affairs of your life. God seems far off and impersonal.
- You know God loves you, but you have a difficult time believing that He will demonstrate His love to you.

- It may be difficult for you to experience His presence during anointed worship, ministry time, or personal time with Him.
- You may have a difficult time hearing that still small voice of the Holy Spirit or the conviction of sin.
- You may not be motivated to change or even be aware of the need for healing or transformation.
- Your relationship with God may be built on duty or power and not on His love. You may get discouraged trying to maintain the Christian walk.
- You find it difficult to move from your head to your heart.

### **The Absentee Father**

- This father is not involved or was not there because of divorce, death, abandonment, or outright rejection.

#### **Affects of an Absentee Father**

- You may have forgiven him for not being there, but there still is a big void of fatherlessness which you may not even be aware is there.
- There is an emptiness of feeling like a spiritual orphan.
- You never had a safe place, a protector, someone you could go to for comfort, affection, security, and affirmation.
- You may experience many of the same problems as those with a passive father which was basically not there either.
- You may become stoic, non-emotional, and have difficulty with intimacy.
- Life may be very serious and intense.
- You may fear drawing close to God thinking that He may abandon you too.
- You may feel neglected by God thinking that He spends more time with others than you. It is difficult to sense the loving presence of God.
- You may find it hard to believe that God will provide for your needs. Thus you develop a life of independence and self-reliance which can lead to aggressive striving and loneliness.
- You may carry guilt for your father leaving. This may lead to performing to earn acceptance from God, but always falling short causing more guilt.
- You may have no motivation towards God.
- In cases where the father dies, the children may have hidden anger against their father for abandoning them. They may be angry at God for not healing or protecting their father's life.

### **The Authoritarian Father**

- This father is a legalist and follows the letter of the law.
- He majors on truth, but there is little ability to express love, compassion, mercy, grace, tenderness, or patience.
- He may be kind to people outside of the house, but he is rigid and unyielding with his own children.
- He thinks only of his own needs and desires, but is not interested in yours. He is more comfortable with obedience and truth than love and intimacy.
- It is not that he does not love you, but that he does not know how to express it.
- There is little emotional bonding between father and child.

### **Affects of an Authoritarian Father**

- You are not allowed to develop your own individuality or think for yourself.
- You may have a hard time believing that God is loving and forgiving and not harsh, judgmental, and impatient with you. This unhealthy fear of God will hinder intimacy with Him.
- Your fear of failure may lead to self-denial or self-deception.
- You tend to blame others for things that go wrong because, to admit that you were wrong, would mean that you deserve harsh punishment.
- You may be a disciplined Christian, but lack intimacy and loving relationships.
- You may focus your reading of scripture on verses about holiness and righteousness and skip over ones on grace, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness.
- You may be intolerant of other Christians who do not think like you do.
- Your witnessing or preaching may be based more upon judgment than on love, mercy, and grace.

### **The Abusive Father**

- The abusive father inflicts deep emotional pain from: physical abuse (harsh punishment or beatings), emotional abuse (harsh tone of voice, devaluing words, demeaning looks, or purposed failure to meet the child's basic love needs), or sexual abuse (wrong touching of sexual organs, sexually explicit language, rape).

### **Affects of an Abusive Father**

- Having an abusive father makes it hard to get close to God for fear of being punished again.
- Even when you pray, read your Bible, and do the right things, you still feel guilty because He is not close like other people experience.
- You may feel that God is always angry with you and makes life hard for you.
- You may be angry with God for not protecting you from an abusive father.
- It will be difficult for you to believe that God loves you because He did not give you a different father.
- You may have a continual struggle with self-condemnation and sense of shame.
- You may feel too unclean for God to love you. You may have difficulty with spiritual authority in the church.
- You feel fatherless in the church and spiritual growth comes slowly.
- Sexual abuse creates the deepest wounds of all.
  - It is very demeaning and devaluing for the recipient.
  - It destroys the trust in male authority and a healthy attitude towards God.
  - You are left with large amounts of repressed anger.
  - You may feel that you are a bad person and deserve the punishment or feel guilty for feeling any pleasure from the abusive experiences.
  - Feelings of unworthiness and shame lead to fear and control issues.
  - You may have no joy for living and hate yourself.
  - You may need a supernatural encounter with Father's love to be cleansed and set free to experience intimacy with God.

## **The Importance of Our Mothers**

Mothers are the primary caregivers for the first two years of a baby's life. (The father becomes the most influential figure in a child's life from three to five or six years of age.)

- ❖ The mother is the one who carries the baby in her womb for nine months imparting warmth, security, and trust.
- ❖ After birth, the mother draws the child to her breast and tenderly nurtures the baby with love and affection. The tender loving, touching, caring nature of the mother imparts faith to trust, bonding, and the ability to receive and give love away.
- ❖ Mother relationships are all about rest and comfort, receiving and giving, nurture and affection, trust and bonding, intimacy and communion.
- ❖ You can spot a nurturing mother when she comes in the presence of a little baby. She begins to make soft cooing sounds, kisses the baby, and holds the baby close to her cheek and breast as love and tenderness begin to flow from her to the baby.

The relationship we had with our mother during those first two years is our first experience with love and helps form the way we feel about our self, the world, and God. (Ps. 22:9-10)

- ❖ Our mother's love affects how we relate to God, others, and ourselves. It begins even before birth when the baby senses the warmth, security and trust inside their mother.
- ❖ When we are held, cuddled, fed and nourished on our mother's breast, we learn how to trust life, relationships, and God. We will begin to develop a Godly belief that we will be comforted and have all of our needs met. This makes it easier to believe that God will meet all of our needs throughout life.
- ❖ Storge' love also gives us the ability to bond, and receive and give love away.
- ❖ However, without this storge' love, we are likely to grow up with fear of relationships and life and have an ungodly belief that God will not be there when we need Him.

## **There are three primary areas of storge', or family love:**

**1. Affectionate touch** – Without touch, the body and emotions become unhealthy. Touch says that you are important to me, that you belong and have value. If we do not receive appropriate touching as a child, we may allow ourselves to be touched the wrong way during our teenage and adult years.

**2. Eye contact** – Our eyes are like windows into our soul where a child can see our love. We drink in the love that flows from the eyes of our parents. If we did not get understanding, loving looks from our parents, it can leave wounds in our heart. It may cause us to have difficulty making and keeping relationships with others later in life.

**3. Tone of voice** – Love is communicated to a baby when we speak gentle, tender, encouraging words in a soft voice. This continues all through the childhood years. A loving tone nurtures the soul and helps us feel valued and accepted. Without this soft voice, we can feel rejected and a failure.

**A mother's love calls our spirit and emotions to life.** Her love awakens our feelings of trust, acceptance, belonging, empathy, value, and self-esteem. It also leads to a healthy sexuality later in marriage.

## Mother Issues

### A. *Subtle Wounds*

- ❖ The wounds from our mother may not be so obvious or strong for most of us because of the nature of women to nurture and love.
- ❖ Any time a love need was not met by our mother can leave a wound in us. It might be as simple as a mother not keeping her word, a disappointment like forgetting to pick you up and you felt abandoned or left behind, a time when you needed comfort about something that happened at school and your mother was too busy or her thoughts were on something else.
- ❖ She may have made light of an injury or placed something else as more important than your scraped knee.

### B. *Wounds Before or Just After Birth (Ps. 22:9-10, Is. 49:15-16, Is. 66: 11-13)*

- ❖ The rejection and wounding could have come even before birth if the mother did not want the pregnancy, the circumstances resulting in the pregnancy were not positive, there was turmoil in the mother's life during the pregnancy due to finances, work, relationship problems, family problems, sickness, death, or accidents.
- ❖ The mother may have been fearful of going through delivery or the delivery was very difficult.
- ❖ The mother may not have wanted to breastfeed her child or there may have been physical reasons why she could not breastfeed.
- ❖ The child may have had to be taken away from her mother during those first two years because of physical problems, hospital stays and/or recovery time, sickness, or family problems. Any of these situations, whether intentional or unintentional, can leave a wound in a child.

### C. *Wounded Mothers*

- ❖ All of us are only able to give away what we have received. If our mother did not receive her love needs met as a child, she may be wounded and the pain and rejection in her heart may keep her from feeling comfortable with love herself.
- ❖ She may not have been able to give you the storge' love that you needed.
- ❖ She may not even know how to relate to her son or daughter because there was no role model at home where she grew up that she could follow.
- ❖ Some mothers try to live their lives through their children, pushing them into sports, music, or activities that they were not able to do when they were growing up.
- ❖ They may put pressure on their kids to perform academically or socially to meet their own needs for recognition or acceptance among their peers.
- ❖ Your mother may have been wounded by a divorce or abusive relationship.
- ❖ She may have a negative attitude towards men and may emasculate her sons. She may not let them do anything masculine growing up and try to shield them from interaction with other men. These sons often turn to homosexuality or rebellion.
- ❖ The hurts and wounds may come out as an angry edge, or she may withdraw inside herself, and never be transparent or intimate with you.
- ❖ She may also bury her hurts in hyper-activity, joining groups or in her work that takes even more time away from you.
- ❖ Your mother may have tried to get you to take sides against your father or rejected you if you did side with your father. Any of these actions leave wounds in our hearts.

**IMPACTS FROM ADOPTION** - Out of shame, fear, guilt, or hurts that resulted in the pregnancy, your natural mother may have chosen to give you up for adoption.

- ❖ Even if you had positive foster or adopted parents, there is still a feeling of loss and rejection from your natural mother that leaves a wound in your heart.
- ❖ You may feel cheated out of having a mother who loved you from birth and nurtured you at her side and on her breast.
- ❖ You may have a fear of bonding in other relationships or opening your heart up to love someone.
- ❖ You may have a fear of being rejected that keeps you from getting close or intimate with your family or others.
- ❖ You may deal with shame or fear of anyone finding out about your past, or blame yourself for what happened.

**D. *Working Mothers***

- ❖ Working mothers, whether due to divorce or death of their husband or because of financial needs in the home, can leave wounds in their children.
- ❖ They may not be there when you needed to be comforted, or they were too busy taking care of the house chores or fixing dinner to give you the love and attention that you needed.
- ❖ You may have had to come home to an empty house or been left alone for long periods of time while your mother was at work or doing errands.
- ❖ You may have been left in charge of younger siblings while your mother worked and you felt like you missed out on being a child.
- ❖ You may have been dropped off at day cares, nurseries, activities outside the home, or had a nanny or babysitters a lot of the time. This could have left you feeling like you were a burden or an inconvenience to your mother even though she tried to show you love.

**E. *Domineering or Controlling Mothers***

- ❖ If the father is passive, the mother may take charge of the family and begin to make all the decisions for their children.
- ❖ You may have never been able to establish your own identity or feel good about yourself because your mother made all the decisions for you.
- ❖ She may have dictated what style of hair you had, picked out all your clothes, or told you what activities you were or were not to get involved in. She stepped in and solved all your problems or covered for all of your mistakes.
- ❖ Out of her own hurts, lack of love from her husband, absence of a husband, or other insecurities, she may not be able to release her children into manhood or womanhood.
- ❖ She may have totally controlled your time, never allowing you to make any choices.
- ❖ Love is expressed with a hook.

**Results of a Mother's Wounds**

Without a healthy bonding with our mothers, we may begin to shut down our hearts to receiving comfort and love.

- ❖ Even receiving small wounds from our mother, we may have a difficult time receiving the tender, loving feminine heart of God.
- ❖ If we have shut ourselves off from receiving storge' love from our mother, we begin to cut our heart off from love and hardness begins to set in.



- ❖ We feel like we do not know how to love, even though we have feelings of love locked up inside of us.
- ❖ We try to love by doing things for our family and our relationships are serious and reserved.
- ❖ We feel uncomfortable sharing our real feelings or getting close to others.
- ❖ We may feel emotionally rejected, abandoned or orphaned by our mother.
- ❖ You learn that to receive her love you have to do things a certain way or perfectly. This can result in aggressive striving, perfectionist attitude (defeated perfectionist - easily quitting before you even try because you know you cannot do it perfectly), dishonoring your parents, rebellion, being unable to have normal sexual relationships in marriage, or having negative attitudes towards women or anything feminine.
- ❖ We are unable to act responsibly as men and women independent from our mother.
- ❖ Men who have overly bonded with controlling mothers may have problems with proper sexual orientation, express effeminate behavior, be passive husbands, struggle with fantasy lust and pornography, or be overly dominant with women.

### **A person who never bonds with their mother may struggle with:**

- |                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| - Addictions                    | - Compulsions             |
| - Feelings of separation        | - A lack of trust         |
| - Fear of bonding to others     | - Fear of abandonment     |
| - Feelings of emptiness         | - Fears and insecurities  |
| - Anxieties and anguish         | - No sense of comfort     |
| - Fear of living                | - Fear of the future      |
| - Open doors to sexual bondages | - Unhealthy sexual drives |

### **Healing for Father & Mother Issues**

- ❖ What your parents did was not right, but you are only responsible for your responses to what happened. Give them the gift of *forgiveness* and *take them and all the painful memories and hurts to the cross*. It is the only way to be healed of the wounds and hurts.
- ❖ Have the young child within you forgive your mother or father for the things that happened and for not giving you the love you needed. Ask Father God to comfort those areas that were hurt (be specific) and give you the love that your mother and father were unable to give you. Call the emotions awake and restored to innocence.
- ❖ Then walk to the other side of the cross so you see your parents through the cross.
- ❖ Forgive yourself for the way you responded to the wounds from your mother and any wrong actions you may have taken.
- ❖ Next, ask Father God to be your Father and Mother from this day on and for the rest of your life. Sit in “Daddy’s” lap and enjoy His embrace! (**Is. 66:11-13**) Enter into His rest and peace. (**Ps. 131:2**)
- ❖ We cannot give away what we have not first received ourselves. Begin to realize that God’s love has been shed abroad in our heart. God is love and He has come to live in us! (**1 John 3:9, 1 John 4:7-8, 16**)
- ❖ As our hearts are healed, move away from sin and unrighteous living, and begin to get rid of the shame, fear, and control. Then the love that is inside of us will be able to come out and impact those around us.
- ❖ His plans for you are perfect, filled with purpose and good things. (**Jer. 1:5, 31:3, Ps. 139:13, 17-18, Ps. 71:6, Ps. 22:9-10**)