

Lesson 5: A Loving Father

Many are the sorrows of the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.

--Psalm 32:10

As a loving Father, God has many admirable qualities. No matter how wonderful a father you have--or if you daydream about how wonderful a good earthly father would be--he doesn't compare to our heavenly Father. In this lesson and the next six, I will review some of His outstanding characteristics.

The first, which is crucial to people starved for affection, companionship, and affirmation, is love. Many never had a deep relationship with their natural father. With some, it's because Dad doesn't live at home. In others, he lives at home but is absent emotionally. He either cannot or will not show affection for his children.

As a result, millions know the emptiness of never feeling a father's love. From firsthand experience, I know the tragedy of missing out on a father's love in childhood. For some, it inflicts long-lasting, seemingly incurable scars.

What a joy it has been to know God as my Father! He continually shows Himself to be wonderful and loving. Over the years, one of the most exciting things about the Christian life has been discovering, day by day, just how much my heavenly Father cares for me.

You may be among the many who don't know the love of an earthly father. As a result, you have been wounded emotionally and psychologically. I know how much your heart aches. But I also know the unfathomable, everlasting love of God can compensate for all you missed. His love can heal your wounds. Remove all your scars. Fill and overflow your heart. Give you a peace that passes all understanding.

As His love fills and overflows your heart, it can enable you to love and forgive others, just as He loves and forgives you. The God who gave you eternal life also passed on His loving nature. When you fully grasp what this means, you will be empowered to throw off the

bitterness and resentment that hold you back. You can become the kind of loving person you always wanted to be.

Deeper Study

1. Have you felt loved or deprived of love in your life? How has this affected your outlook?

2. The following verses will help you know and understand your Father's love. See how many different thoughts you can find about His loving nature.

Jeremiah 31:3 _____

John 17:23 _____

John 16:27 _____

1 John 4:10 _____

Ephesians 3:17-19 _____

3. Which of the thoughts that you just wrote down impressed you the most? Why?

4. Considering all that you have learned this far into the study, are you convinced that God loves you? Explain how this has made a difference this has made in your attitudes and actions.

5. How will learning about and experiencing the love of your heavenly Father affect your life in the future?

6. What does your Father's love inspire you to do? Explain how and when you will put these thoughts into action.
