

Re CONSTRUCTING
DAD

SEEING GOD THROUGH
THE LENS OF JESUS

CHUCK AMMONS



COLBY, KANSAS USA

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

Copyright © 2026 Chuck Ammons

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-936501-95-3

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-936501-96-0

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. Published by CrossRiver Media Group, Colby, Kansas. CrossRiverMedia.com

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001, 2007, 2011, 2016 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Scripture quotations marked TPT are from The Passion Translation®. Copyright © 2017, 2018 by Passion & Fire Ministries, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ThePassionTranslation.com.

Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Scripture quotations marked NCV are taken from the New Century Version®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked KJV are taken from the KING JAMES VERSION (KJV): KING JAMES VERSION, public domain.

For more on Chuck Ammons, please visit ChuckAmmons.com.

Editors: Debra L. Butterfield, Andy Lee, and Robin Melvin

Cover and Interior Designer: Tamara Clymer

Cover Photography: Photo ID 135896218 © Yufa12379 | Dreamstime.com

Printed in the United States of America.

To my earthly dad...

*You named me before I was born and you always wanted me.
Though you were gone too soon, I can't wait to dance with you
one day before Jesus! Your legacy is alive and strong.*

To my step-dad...

Thank you for cheering me on and teaching me redneck golf.

To my spiritual dad, Len, and my big brother, Chris...

*I love and lead like I do because you've loved
and led me so completely. I am eternally grateful!*

To my heavenly Dad...

*When You opened my eyes to see Your adoration
and how You've always pursued me as my Father,
You wrecked my world in the most beautiful way.
My every breath, my every thought, my every desire is You.
Thank You for this adventure we get to share.
It just keeps on getting better!*

CONTENTS

Foreward	13
Introduction: Life as a House.....	15
1. Fatherless	21
2. My Two (Schizophrenic) Dads.....	33
3. Dad Looks Just Like Jesus	43
4. Hold What You've Got.....	57
5. Conflicting Kingdoms	65
6. Foggy Pots and Funhouse Mirrors.....	75
7. This is My Son. Listen to Him.	101
8. Missing the Mark and Missing the Point	113
9. God is Not the Godfather	133
10. Terminator Jesus?.....	149
11. Just Right.....	163
12. Justice as Restorative Love	181
13. Two Sons, Two Nations, One Open Gate	195

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

A Prayer to My Father	205
Acknowledgments.....	207
About the Author.....	209
Endnotes	213

FOREWORD

THERE ARE MOMENTS when a book feels less like a read and more like a homecoming. *Reconstructing Dad* is that kind of book.

In these pages, Pastor Chuck Ammons extends more than words—he extends a hand. A hand that reaches into the ache of spiritual disillusionment, into the questions that polite religion often silences, and into the deep longing so many of us carry as we ask these questions:

Is God truly good?

Is He really like Jesus?

And if so, can I trust Him with my whole heart?

With the honesty of someone who's wrestled in the dark and the wisdom of one who's found light worth sharing, Chuck invites us on a renovation journey—not of religion, but of relationship. He walks us through the house of our faith, room by room, not to tear it down in anger, but to lovingly restore it with truth. Not abstract doctrine, but truth incarnate: Jesus, the visible image of the invisible God.

What makes this book so compelling is not only its theological clarity, but its compassionate tone. First, it's written by a wonderful dad. Chuck loves his family, I mean, really loves his family! And he loves the family of God. He's written this amazing book for those whose view of the Father has been shaped by absence, performance, fear, or disappointment. It's written for those who are ready to dismantle damaging narratives, not to destroy faith, but to rebuild it on something solid, on Someone sure.

Chuck's own story, his experiences as a dad and a pastor, and his deep reverence for Scripture all converge in this work, offering a kind of spir-

itual therapy for the soul. He doesn't shy away from the hard questions, but he also never leaves us there. He brings us back, again and again, to the Jesus who said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father."

So, if you've ever felt the subtle ache of spiritual orphanhood or carried quiet questions beneath the surface of your belief, this book is a gentle invitation to return, reimagine, and rediscover the Father who has always looked like Jesus—and who has always been closer than you dared to hope.

Welcome home.

Dr. Brian Simmons

Lead Translator, *The Passion Translation*

Passion & Fire Ministries

INTRODUCTION

LIFE AS A HOUSE

I STOOD INSIDE THE OPEN DOORWAY of our home horrified. The needs of our growing family of seven had forced a decision. Move or remodel. So, with the help of a contractor friend, we drew up a dream renovation and dove in. Now the very spot where my wife and I pictured raising our kids looked unrecognizable.

Walls were moved, the kitchen was gutted, and an entire wing of the house was off-limits to prepare for a new master suite. We had hired a nationally recognized flooring company expecting quick, quality work. My wife and kids moved to my mom's home until the house was livable again, as I stayed to oversee the project. That had been weeks ago, and our dream was quickly turning into a nightmare.

The flooring crew arrived late on their first day and then left early. They chipped up old tiles, leaving piles scattered across rooms like life-sized ant colonies. They continued this unorthodox routine until I arrived home from a long day of work to find they'd laid one-third of our flooring...except. They had laid every tile unevenly. Every. Single. One. The wood grain planks, meant to create a seamless appearance, looked like a drunken staircase of jagged edges. I stood in disbelief.

For a moment, I considered hiding the floor with area rugs. But this was our foundation. If it were ever to be a home worthy for my kids to grow up in, we needed to tear it up and start over.

When it comes to our relationship with God, building upon the right foundation is everything. The apostle Paul wrote, "By the grace

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care” (1 Corinthians 3:10 NIV). Your view of God as Father is the foundation on which you are building your life. And that foundation was largely shaped by the physical and spiritual house you grew up in.

YOUR VIEW OF GOD IS SHAPED BY THE PHYSICAL HOUSE YOU GREW UP IN.

God refers to Himself as our Father and declares He longs for us like a momma bird protects her babies under her wing (Matthew 23:37). He designed family to be a safe, tangible expression of His love and protection. That was the plan.

But sin invaded the story, distorting our lens with an incomplete picture of His heart at best and an immoral one at worst. Many have suffered under the neglect or abuse of parents who bore His name but failed to reflect His heart. That distortion shapes everything...how we see ourselves, what we pursue, and most significantly, how we see God as Father.

YOUR VIEW OF GOD IS SHAPED BY THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE YOU GREW UP IN

I have heard many people say, “The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it.” But the Bible was used to both defend and abolish slavery. It has stood at the center of movements for women’s rights and to advocate for women to be silent in churches. People use it both to affirm and deny spiritual gifts. Beyond this, we often find contrasting images of God in its pages—a God who seems wrathful in one moment and tender in the next.

The truth is, we all read Scripture through a lens. We don’t see things as they are...we see things as we are. You may emphasize certain verses and skim others based on the spiritual narrative you inherited. Just as with our physical upbringing, the spiritual image of God we received early on may be incomplete or even damaging to our hearts.

INTRODUCTION

This isn't a rant against the church. As a pastor of more than twenty-five years, I love the church. This is instead an invitation to maturity. We should honor every spiritual home that helped reveal God's love to our hearts, but we will only find wholeness when we let Him draw near and reveal any beliefs we've taken on that are unworthy of the gospel.

In the pages ahead, we'll explore how God revealed Himself progressively through the Old Testament, always from behind a veil, until Jesus arrived to show us the fullness of the Father. Jesus is the Father without a veil.

He is the interpretive key to everything. We'll never understand the Old Testament, God the Father, or our own story until we see it through the lens of Jesus.

There are things you believe about God that are beautiful and true. They shine through how you live and love. But there are also places where your image of God needs renovation to bring healing and make space for where He wants to lead you.

This may challenge long-held beliefs or unspoken fears, like saying, "God is good," while living like an orphan. Or wrestling with questions about God's love and the Bible.

If God really loves me, why does He seem so silent?

How can I trust God when He allowed (fill-in-the-blank) to happen?

What about hell, wrath, and violence in the Bible?

Maybe you've pushed the pain of your questions away or tried to drown it with distraction. Such busyness is nothing more than area rugs trying to conceal a faulty foundation. Meanwhile, God invites all of us to trade our fractured images of Him for a clearer vision that transforms and fills us with hope. That's what this book is about. Before we begin, let me give you three words of encouragement for the journey.

RECONSTRUCTION REQUIRES DECONSTRUCTION

Understand, we aren't reconstructing God. He is perfect and He never changes. Instead, we're invited to renovate the lens through which we have come to see Him. The topic of deconstruction has

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

stirred fear and confusion in many, and some of this is understandable. Crowds have used the banner of deconstruction to trade tenets of a historic faith, only to champion modern fads and the idolatry of their own opinions. They tear down theological houses but find themselves in sinking sand.

However, another far more foundational sense of deconstruction is inevitable if we are to mature in our faith. The truth is, you and I don't yet see God fully as He is. "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

We each carry within us some beautiful hallways of truth that fill us with joy. And we have some closets of fear and unbelief that steal our peace. Why? Because salvation is instantaneous, but discipleship is the continual renovation of our souls, catching up with the reality that already took place in our spirits.

If you know Jesus, He's already fully redeemed you, and you are now on a journey of learning and unlearning with Him by your side. Honest evaluation of our inherited theology is essential to our spiritual growth. Jesus welcomes our questions, reminding us we aren't called to have faith in our faith, but faith in the Faithful One.

Many of us were taught that asking questions was dangerous. But trust isn't formed without questions, and you cannot place a new revelation of God on a faulty foundation. In the pages ahead, I am going to ask questions that might make you uncomfortable. I may pose questions you wish I'd left under the rug. I beg you, don't run from the discomfort. Instead, invite the Holy Spirit, your Comforter, to walk with you. And wherever He reveals uneven tiles, let Him lay new floor on your foundation.

PROGRESS OFTEN LOOKS LIKE CHAOS

As you begin to ask honest questions, it may feel like the floor is falling out from under you at times. It's okay. It feels scary because it matters to you so deeply. But it also might be a sign that you've been

INTRODUCTION

trying to hold things together on your own for too long. As you invite God to reveal who He truly is, with courageous honesty and without fear, He will show you He's been here all along and that your whole world is being held steady by His hands (Colossians 1:17). He's holding *you*. Don't rush putting your house back together again. Just stay honest before Him in the sawdust. Jesus is your destination. You've already arrived and He's already pleased.

YOUR FATHER LONGS FOR YOU TO FIND HIM

“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 29:13–14a).

You didn't stumble here by accident. God has been drawing you to this moment. Let Him speak for Himself and resist the urge to shape His story around what you wish He'd said...or hadn't said. Jesus is the Father's answer, and He is good!

I've been seeking, praying, and wrestling against chaos for eight years writing this book. During that time, many of the truths I've come to embrace have formed gradually in a refiner's fire. This is our Father's heart. He longs to be found by us, so we can run together in new fields of grace.

Jesus Christ is the fullness of who the Father has always been. Your decision to allow God to build this truth to maturity will be like my home renovation. It'll take time. It will be messy. Your commitment to ask honest questions, to refuse labels, and to continually choose a life of radical non-enemy-making love will cost you. It may cost your reputation or social standing in some groups. This has been true for me. But Jesus already footed the bill, and He promises to usher you into a more beautiful space with Him than you have the capacity to ask or imagine. It's worth it.

I may not know you, but my Father created you and He adores you. That makes you my brother, my sister, and my friend. Friend, I bless you! I pray our Father will move the very foundation of your being to a spacious residence alongside the Father called Mercy. The Father

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

called Love. The Father who looks just like Jesus. May He heal old wounds, remove old carpet on the floors you've walked on for so long, and replace the tired artwork on your heart's walls.

Chuck Ammons

February 2026

FATHERLESS

The human problem is the orphan spirit

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING. *I was over it a long time ago. Everyone deals with loss. We all have been dealt tough cards in the hand of life. Yes. My dad died. But that was over thirty years ago. I'm okay now. Actually, I'm better than okay. I'm happy. Goodness gracious, I am a dad. I've dealt with this wound already...right?*

That's what I told myself. But the tears forming, threatening to appear at any moment, told a different story.

It had been a normal day until then. I'd gone to work as usual, come home as usual, and sat in a familiar chair in the gymnasium where my thirteen-year-old son practiced karate...as usual. This was supposed to be a quiet retreat, a safe space to read and reflect. I was preparing to lead a group of college-aged guys at our church through *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge. Years ago, the book had changed my life, and on this evening, I found myself working through the journal that accompanied the book, the *Field Manual*.

I guess it was lost on me that a field manual was given to people headed off to war, because I sat in my chair, emotionally unarmed, grinning like an idiot. Little did I know I was walking my heart onto a literary minefield of sorrows I thought I'd escaped long ago. I read, and reread, the simplest of questions for which I had no answer.

"What was your father like emotionally?"

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

“What did he like to do?”

“Was he full of fun, or serious?”

“Was he a man of great adventure, willing to take risks?”¹

Like the end of a movie with an unexpected plot twist, I sat dumbfounded. I had to admit to myself for the first time I didn't know even the most basic information about the man whose mannerisms and features I had inherited. The father who dreamed of the day he would welcome a son into the world, and who eagerly picked out my name long before I was born. The man who set up living room forts, took my sister and me to Busch Gardens, and let us eat Easy Cheese straight out of the can.

Sure, I had acquired facts about him. I heard stories. But the first moving picture memories I can access in the vault of my mind are from just after my picture-perfect world fell apart. My first memory is from the day my mom picked my sister and me up from school to tell us, through tears, my dad had been in an accident...and he was gone. The second memory is from his funeral where I comforted grieving guests with tissues, telling them everything was going to be okay. Before that moment, all I have are faded snapshots.

I snapped back to the present when I caught a glimpse of my son gliding across the gym floor smiling at me with warm and knowing admiration. At that moment, I was forced to face the enormous weight I'd shielded myself from. I was a son who didn't know his father. And this fact shaped how I approached God as Father.

PHYSICAL FATHERLESSNESS

As I write, nearly twenty million children in the US, more than one in four, live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home. This number has nearly tripled since 1960. Psychologists have invested billions of dollars and hours in counseling and research, resulting in mountains of statistics pointing to the same simple truth—the absence of a father figure affects society at the most foundational level. Respected political science scholar Stephen Baskerville confirms the seriousness of this reality. He wrote, “Virtually every major social pa-

FATHERLESS

thology has been linked to fatherless children: violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, unwed pregnancy, suicide, and psychological disorders—all correlating more strongly with fatherlessness than with any other single factor, (surpassing even race and poverty).²²

Statistically, those without dads are far more likely to face poverty, substance abuse, behavioral disorders, and incarceration. But this isn't about statistics. It's about stories. I don't share this to shame anyone but simply to state the obvious. Dads matter.

Our own experience with our earthly fathers, for better or worse, shapes our view of God as Father. And to my fellow dads, I ask you to consider that your current approach to parenting is unavoidably linked to how you think God is fathering you. Every action of patience or anger, intimacy or distance, grace or threat reflects who you think your Father-God is and how you think He relates to you.

Our expectations of our kids bear a striking resemblance to what we think God expects of us. The way we speak and respond reveals what is happening in our hearts (Luke 6:45). This matters because children who feel unseen or unsafe with their fathers often carry an orphan mentality into their relationship with God.

Though no two childhoods are the same, three father types show up most often in father-wound stories—distant dads, disappointed dads, and destructive dads.

DISTANT DADS: A LACK OF PROXIMITY

Distant dads leave a child with a void where guidance, encouragement, and protection were meant to grow. My dad died when I was six. His absence wasn't his fault, but the ache remained. Other distant dads may be deployed, divorced, or just emotionally detached and unavailable—present in body but unreachable in heart. Some children grow up watching their distracted father pour time into work or hobbies but never into his child's forming heart. Others had strong, silent fathers who rarely showed affection, teaching without words that emotions were weak and help was a burden. As a result, these children often view God as similarly detached.

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

In contrast, God is the Father who never leaves. We hold His gaze and His delight as He lavishes love upon us. And in every space where we struggle or find our souls overwhelmed, He invites us to run to His throne of grace assured of His goodness (1 Peter 1:7).

DISAPPOINTED DADS: A LACK OF PRAISE

Disappointed dads rarely voice praise, pleasure, or pride in their children, and their silence becomes deafening. Whether they're disappointed in their child, themselves, or life in general, the result is the same. Kids of these dads feel they're a constant letdown. Some live under impossibly high standards. Others feel invisible in the shadow of a father's unhealed regret.

Children of disappointed dads tend to operate as perfectionists tying their worth to what they do. They believe they must get it right before they can be worthy of love, affection, or rest. They're prone to become people-pleasers, or break under pressure and simply lose heart. Their image of God is often a hard-to-please critic rather than a loving Father.

In contrast, Scripture reminds us that even when our hearts accuse us or try to shame us, God sees the full truth about us, and His fixed verdict carries greater authority than our ever-changing feelings (1 John 3:20). He welcomes us fully and delights in us as His beloved children. We're continually surrounded and saturated in the unending love of the Father. And we live in the staggering reality that, by the time we opened our eyes this morning, our Creator had already thought more thoughts about us than all the sand on the beaches in Hawaii (Psalm 139:17-18).

DESTRUCTIVE DADS: A LACK OF PROTECTION

Destructive dads are those who inflict harm on their children emotionally, verbally, physically, or sexually. This kind of abuse is the deepest betrayal, decimating a child's identity and sense of worth. The damage runs deep, often cloaked in secrecy and shame. These children

FATHERLESS

grow up battling anxiety, addiction, or self-hatred, unsure why they struggle to believe in love at all. If a father's love was unsafe, God's love feels foreign. But our true Father is nothing like that. He rescues the weak and defends the wounded. He is the perfect love who casts out our every fear (1 John 4:18).

If any of the above is reminiscent of your experience with your earthly father, I offer some help in the healing process at the conclusion of this chapter. As I grieve with you in this moment, I also stand wildly expectant for the healing that waits as you embrace the Father you were created to know! Keep going. Hope is on the way.

SPIRITUAL FATHERLESSNESS

It should not surprise us that the patterns that shape our physical relationships with our fathers often echo in the spiritual relationships we form with those who have authority in the Church. The imprint of fathering does not stop at the threshold of the home. It often continues in how we view pastors, mentors, and leaders. And in turn, it silently sculpts our perception of God.

Children who feel unseen or unsafe with their spiritual leaders often struggle to believe God sees them or can be trusted. The wounds of spiritual authority gone wrong cut deep, not only because they harm, but because they do so in the name of the One who is meant to heal.

As you consider your story, take a moment to reflect on a few questions:

- What kind of God did your church speak of—one of invitation or one of interrogation?
- Were the leaders tender and trustworthy, or did they guard their position with distance or fear?
- Did you feel seen? Known? Or were you left to assume God's attention was reserved for those more spiritual, polished, or put together than you?
- Were words spoken, glances given, or tones used that quietly etched into your soul an image of a Father who was impossible to please?

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

Our early encounters with spiritual authority carry great weight because we believe these are the people God appointed to represent His heart. If those entrusted with shepherding souls misuse that trust, it could leave a scar not just toward the church, but toward God Himself. Where spiritual leaders were aloof or authoritarian, modeling a God who was angry, disappointed, or emotionally unpredictable, we often internalized this message. And over time, we began to confuse their voice with His.

WHAT I'M NOT SAYING

Before we continue, it's important to pause and say clearly what I am not saying.

This is not a call to point fingers at our fathers, mothers, or spiritual leaders and hold them solely responsible for our wounds. We live in a world that is both breathtakingly beautiful and tragically broken. None of us escape without scars. And none of us, me included, have parented or led without making mistakes.

A growing tendency in our culture villainizes authority and clings to victimhood. That's not the heart of this book. The cross of Christ does not just expose pain...it redeems it. It does not leave us bound in grief or blame. It offers us a path into healing, freedom, and restoration.

Yes, people have failed us, but they too often operate from places of deep personal pain that is still being healed. Hurting people hurt people. The brokenness they caused in our lives was merely a mirror of the brokenness they carried. And if we will not allow the Father to heal us, we will pass it on too.

This is why we must confront the truth about our stories—not to get stuck in them, but to be set free. The enemy has always sought to undermine the image of the Father in our earliest years. He tried to kill Moses as an infant. He tried to kill Jesus as an infant. And he knows if he can distort the Father's face while we are still learning to see, we'll spend our lives afraid to look again. But that's not where your story ends.

Please don't forget, many have loved you well—mothers and fathers, pastors and teachers, mentors and friends who showed up with fierce,

FATHERLESS

faithful love. If their faces come to mind right now, take a moment to thank God for them. Maybe even reach out to thank them. And to every dad reading this, lift your head. Square your shoulders.

You've been entrusted with holy ground of the heart of your child. You don't have to get it all right. But your presence, your gaze, your blessing, your delight matters. It all reveals the Father. And you were created to carry that kind of love.

GETTING FREE OF THE ORPHAN SPIRIT

Fathers, mothers, and spiritual leaders shape our earliest conceptions of God as Father, and for many, these conceptions carry great pain and distance into adulthood. This is the key fruit of the orphan spirit. By this, I mean the universal propensity of mankind to believe we are on our own in the world, needing to protect ourselves, provide for our own welfare, and promote our own agenda in the world.

THREE S'S OF THE ORPHAN SPIRIT

The orphan spirit is undergirded by feelings of shame, blame, and fear. This spirit usually expresses itself in one of the three S's below.

Scarcity—There's not enough, so I must...

Striving—I'm not enough, so I must...

Scapegoating—You're not enough, so I must...

Orphanhood is a scheme our enemy has been pursuing for a long time. Leif Hetland put into words what is happening beneath the surface. "Many of humanity's problems can be traced back to the orphan spirit. It is an ancient spirit unleashed upon mankind through the work of the Evil One. It is a spirit whose chief joy is to separate children from their Father...his primary goal is to turn everyone into a version of himself—fatherless, disinherited, and lost."³

The following list is not exhaustive, and several of the responses can

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

easily be categorized in multiple groupings. But this is a good start to help you recognize behaviors and responses rooted in an orphan mentality with God. They fall into the categories of fear, fight, and shame.

Fear-based responses

- Striving (Fear of Failure). “My performance determines my worth.”
- Control (Fear of Danger). “I have to know or I have to be in charge to be at peace.”
- Worry (Fear of Lack). “I have to figure out how to provide for myself.”
- Religion (Fear of Judgment). “If I don’t keep God’s rules well enough, I’m in danger.”
- Flattering Tongue/Dishonesty (Fear of Conflict). “I must tell you what you want to hear.”
- Image/Appearance (Fear of Disapproval/Loneliness). “I must project myself as someone you will respect.”
- Scapegoating (Fear of Injustice). “They must be shut down in order for us to be lifted up.”

Fight-based responses

- Anger/Inability to Forgive/Resentment. “They have to make what they did right.”
- Gossip/Division. “You need to know what they’ve done.”
- Blame (God/Others). “They are the reason I am in pain.”
- Jealousy. “I would be happy if I had what they have.”

Shame-based responses

- Guilt. “If you only knew what I’ve done.”
- Rejection. “I do not deserve to find love/friendship/community.”
- Insecurity/Unworthiness. “I struggle to see why God or others

FATHERLESS

would love me.”

- Doubt of God’s Goodness or Promises. “I believe God moves for others, but not for me.”
- Isolation/Difficulty trusting others. “God and people will ultimately let me down.”
- Hopelessness/Despair. “I will always be in the pain I am in now.”
- Restlessness. “Nothing will ever truly fulfill me.”

As you read this list, which responses and behaviors stood out to you? Perhaps you saw several and got a little discouraged. But I beg you to see this truth through a new lens. Every item on the list above invites you, without condemnation, to experience a new revelation of who your Father truly is.

The universal human problem is the orphan spirit. And the universal invitation to be a child of God is found on a cross. This invitation is from the One who came to reveal who our Father has always been. Whatever you are tempted to feel in this moment, I promise at the center of it all lies this one fundamental truth about your heart. Your heart is crying out to be fathered.

HOPE FOR THE ORPHAN SPIRIT OF FEAR

“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Romans 8:15–16 NIV).

Your spiritual adoption sent an eviction notice to fear and its right to operate in your life. And now, as you get to know God as Father, you can release the need to be your own provider, protector, and promoter, and just be His beloved.

HOPE FOR THE ORPHAN SPIRIT OF ANGER

“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together

RECONSTRUCTING DAD

in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons” (Romans 8:22–23a).

We passionately yearn for everything broken to be made right, but that yearning isn’t for vengeance. It’s for adoption. It’s a desire to know the Father of Justice has seen our cause, and He will bring the full inheritance He promised, even as we stand in confidence bearing the first fruits of His indwelling Spirit.

HOPE FOR THE ORPHAN SPIRIT OF SHAME

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!...Dear friends, now we are children of God” (1 John 3:1–2 NIV).

“I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (Song of Solomon 6:3).

At the cross, God baptized you into His love. Imagine God’s love like one of those giant buckets at a water park, completely overwhelming and drenching you. Today, He calls you His beloved. It means His favorite.⁴ They say parents shouldn’t play favorites. But our Father only plays favorites, and you, Beloved, will come to see sooner than you know that He loves you, and He likes you. In time, you will love and like you too.

Over the next chapters, we will walk through the story of the Bible to see how Jesus unveils the glorious picture of who the Father has always been. But before we move forward, would you pause and ask God where He is calling you to forgive? Ask Him where you need healing from wounds received in your childhood affecting how you see Him as Father.

Your Father delights in you and cannot wait to take you deeper into His Love. He came so you’d never be fatherless again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which type of father wound (distant, disappointed, or destructive) has most shaped your story, and how has it influenced the way you see God?

FATHERLESS

2. Reflect on the spiritual leaders or church communities in your early faith journey. Did they model a God who was approachable, joyful, and loving, or one who was strict, silent, or angry?
3. Of the three S's of the orphan spirit (scarcity, striving, scapegoating), which one do you find yourself most tempted to live from?