

The Mother Heart of Father God

By Denise Jordan

“As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; and you will be comforted”

(Isaiah 66:13)

When I was a young Christian, trying to sort my life out, and struggling with the idea of God as Father, I desperately wanted to know that God had a tender, nurturing side that I could trust. My father had left the family; my mother was the one who stayed. I wanted to know that God the Father had something of a mother’s love in Him. I wanted God to be able to identify with me as a woman.

I am not saying that all mothers have brought love and nurture to their children. As James and I travelled, speaking about the love of God the Father, we have met many people who would come up to us afterwards and say, “I didn’t really have a problem with my father; my problem was with my mother.” But, whether we have difficulty opening up our hearts to a masculine figure or a feminine figure, we all really want to know the tender love that comforts and nurtures.

The Image of God

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:28)

It takes a man and a woman to fully display what the image of God is like. In Genesis 1:28, the terms “male” and “female” are not speaking primarily about biological and sexual characteristics. God does not have a body. He is spirit. But there is something in the way that He has formed us as human beings that gives a revelation of what His character is like and what His desire is for us as individuals within a home and a family. God’s image in mankind can be more accurately described in terms of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity.’ All the traits of masculinity and of femininity are supremely and originally in the nature of God.

Father put within the heart of the feminine—feminine that is within both the man and the woman—the tender longings and the tender heart of Himself. It is important to recognize that men also have the ability within themselves to express these tender longings that come from the femininity of God. There is, however, a way in which more of God’s femininity resides within the

female body. The female body is made for nurture. The female body is a prophetic expression of who God is in His feminine attributes. There is something about a mother nursing that speaks of comfort and nurture.

Love is a response to love.

I always think of it like this: it is the mother, or feminine love, who puts the heart into the human race. A mother that is whole enough within herself is the one who teaches her children how to both love and be loved. She puts within that child the ability to receive and contain love—a container that can overflow to others. As human beings we have to be taught everything: we have to be taught how to walk, how to talk, and how to eat, among many other things. But we also need to be taught how to love.

Storge—a Nurturing Love

Love is a response to love. We learn how to love as a response to being loved with a particular kind of love—a nurturing love—known in Greek as storge. Separate from other forms of love, storge is “family affection” and conveys the idea of tenderness and care. storge love is the type of love that builds the foundation of our life. It primarily comes from the mother because we grow within her womb and are comforted and nourished by her body from birth onward. However, storge also comes from the father. A father can show affection to his offspring by surrounding and protecting the household, keeping it secure and free from fear and anxiety. Storge love is also richly conveyed through the wider family, through siblings, grandparents, and beyond.

We are made for love. The truth is that God intended our first experiences of this life to be (in the words of Paul the apostle) “rooted and grounded in love.” We are meant, from the very beginning, to be established in this storge love so that we might grow up into His image—God is love!

Femininity in the Image of God

A woman’s body is made for nurture and for tenderness. I am not saying that this is the limit of what a woman can do; of course, there is much more that a woman can do. Neither am I saying that she has to be confined there but the point I am wishing to emphasize is this: What we are finding in contemporary culture is an outright rejection of this reality and a denial of the fact that a woman’s body is designed for nurture. So we find that we are departing more and more from the image of God.

There is something that God has put within the feminine that a baby really responds to—the softness of the feminine. When a father holds a baby he gives to the baby a whole different impartation to what the mother gives. The baby feels the strength of his arms, the solidity of his chest, the safety and definition within the man. What the father gives is meant to convey the sense of a defined world out there, a feeling of the essential “other.” But when a mother holds a baby, the baby feels gentleness and tenderness, that “sinking into” feeling, which is a feeling of oneness.

This is the oneness that we are born to feel. We were never meant to feel alone. God never created us as humans to ever feel that we are on our own. One of the tremendous needs that we as human beings have is to feel that deep sense of belonging—that this is where I, as an individual, am supposed to be. To feel that this is my true home. It is a mother who first gives us that feeling of the essence of belonging. She does this through her gaze and as she communicates the deep welcome verbally—through words, but also through the tone of her voice and the cadence of her speech. God has intended that we would hear the sound of the mother’s voice, and receive her words as words of life—words to soothe and comfort.

Feminine love is the only love that can give us the foundation that we need. The reality is that for many, the roots of their lives have not gone down into a pure and holy love that God intended them to have. And, God is coming to reveal Himself, not only as Father—but also as “Mother.” You can receive nurture that is not going to destroy you but rather build you up in life. His feminine love will establish you to live in holiness because now you can have a source of intimacy and belonging.

The Brokenness of the Fall

This is the written account of Adam’s family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind” when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. (Genesis 5:1-3)

Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. But, then came the Fall. After Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden, when life, as it was intended, became broken and distorted, we read that something significantly changed. Adam and Eve were created in the image of God; but, their children were created in their image. Now, fallen masculinity and fallen femininity entered into the life of man and woman. This brokenness distorted the true nature of love and has been passed down from generation to generation.

When the roots of our psyche do not go deeply into pure love, there will be negative results in our lives. I believe that is the reason for much of the anger, hostility, insecurity and depression that is so prevalent in our culture today. There is an emptiness because there is not the rich soil of nurturing love. This has not happened for many of us through our own natural conception, birth and infancy; but, the wonderful reality is that God the Father can come and He can root and establish us in His love.

You and I were conceived in God's heart long before we were conceived in our mothers' wombs. He is the very source of our life. We can trace our origins back even further than our own natural conception and meet God in that place of original love. We can meet Him at the fountainhead of all belonging. He, the Source, can come to us and minister that primordial nurture that our hearts so desperately need.

Throughout Scripture, we have seen wonderful miracles of healing in the lives of different people as God the Father has come—as a mother—and touched deep in the human spirit. He has come and ministered to the very foundation of human life, the very ground of our being. He has shown Himself not only to be a father, but He has shown the tenderness and nurturing of a mother's love.

The Heart of a King Established in Love

King David, the shepherd-king of Israel, knew what it was to avail himself of the nurture of the mother heart of Father God. In Psalm 131, burdened with the awesome responsibilities of military command and nation-building, he says,

My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul. Like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

He speaks here of himself as a child at the breast of his mother. Israel's greatest king sees himself in this way. He does not speak of being "weaned" in the sense of being weaned off the breast in order to eat solid food. The word "weaned" in this context carries with it the sense of a child being fully sated, engorged with its mother's milk, so that it lies milk-drunk and sleepy on the breast. Picture this king with the heavy burdens of statecraft laid down, and satiated at the breast of El Shaddai.

The Mother heart of Father God

Isaiah 49:15 we read,

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!”

Here, God the Father is comparing Himself—not only to a mother but to a nursing mother. In these words, He is expressing the kind of love that will rise up one hundred times in the night for you, the kind of love that will even die for you. If you are crying from sickness or fear, this kind of love will always be available for you. This is the kind of love that knows no end. It will go on and on and on and on!

With fallen motherhood, it is actually possible that a mother is capable of forgetting and capable of lacking compassion. But God cries out, “Even though she may forget, I will not forget you!” He is a greater expression of motherhood than a human mother in the full flow of her nurturing. He is the original source and expression of motherhood. He is saying, “I have an infinitely greater capacity to comfort you and love you tenderly!”

Much later in this prophecy, in Isaiah 66:13 we read:

“As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; and you will be comforted ...”

As a mother comforts her child! Isn't this amazing? The way that a mother comforts her child is different than the way that a father comforts his child. When a little child, for example, falls over in the garden and runs indoors crying with a grazed knee, the father—if he gets there first—will generally bend down, perhaps give the child a pat on the back and say, “You're OK. Off you go, run and play. Everything will be fine!” A mother will stoop down and scoop the child into her arms. She will hold her child, soothe them and let them cry. She will comfort them.

Father Loves You with a Perfect Love

If we are not rooted and established in this nurturing love, in this depth of holiness, we will always and ever be searching for it. We will never, ever be satisfied with anything else. We will continually be on a quest for it. Our romantic relationships may go some way towards assuaging it but there will always be a deeper need gnawing at our soul. We all have a constant need for Father—not only expressed in the masculine but expressed in the feminine. He loves you not only as a father loves but as a mother loves. You can come to Him now and receive deeply of His nurturing love.