



Glow



Discipleship Course

Term Three



Welcome to the Discipleship Course!

Every study has a short video, study notes and discussion points. Our prayer is that as we study together, we are transformed by His Word and His Spirit, strengthening our relationship with God and one another.

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| WEEK 1 | Introduction + Father
The Father Heart of God |
| WEEK 2 | Son
The work of Jesus on the Cross |
| WEEK 3 | Holy Spirit
The person and power of the Holy Spirit |
| WEEK 4 | Community Accountability
Following Jesus together |
| WEEK 5 | Reflective Reading and Persistent Prayer
'Why' and 'how' we read the Bible and pray |
| WEEK 6 | Total Stewardship and Sabbath
Everything we have from God/ Rhythms of rest |
| WEEK 7 | Praying for the sick + dealing with the demonic
Continuing Jesus' ministry |
| WEEK 8 | Expanding the Kingdom of God
Making disciples, serving the poor |

REAL
BOLD
LOVE



Week 1: The Father Heart of God



Glow

**Discipleship
Course**

Introduction

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. 2 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. 3 For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 And when Christ, who is your[a] life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. 5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 6 Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.[b] 7 You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. 10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.”

COLOSSIANS 3: 1-10 NLT

When it comes to Christianity, freedom starts in the foundations.

When we build a house or any kind of structure it is important to build on a solid and firm foundation. If we don’t, the entire structure will not be supported. It may begin to lean, sink or eventually collapse. Think about the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It is on a lean as the foundations were not built correctly. If you want to build right, you need to get the foundations right.

Many people live their life with a lean, because the foundations aren’t built correctly. Just like a building needs a strong foundation, so do we to withstand the temptations and storms of life and to build strength into our character. If we don’t pay attention to our foundations we will not grow or progress as God intended. When we build strong foundations we are built to last.

THREE TRUTHS ABOUT FOUNDATIONS:

1. **You can’t properly build without foundations**
2. **Foundations need to be strong**
3. **You don’t ever remove your foundations**

We need to come back to the foundations of our Christianity. If we don’t we may live our lives with a lean. If we find that our life isn’t as stable as we would like it to be, it may be because our foundations are not correct. Change truly starts in the foundations.

THERE ARE THREE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH:

1. **The Father Heart of God**
2. **The work of Jesus on the Cross**
3. **The person and power of the Holy Spirit**

Over the first three weeks of this booklet we will unpack these so we can know our foundations are built correctly. As Christians we need to continually come back to these three foundations and build our lives around them.

As you continue through this study, consider your own foundations. Are they strong? Or do you need to rebuild some of the foundations of your faith? When our foundations are strong, we are strong.



The Father Heart of God

JESUS
LOVE
HIM

Why did Jesus come? Most people would say the reason was to die on the Cross, show us the way to live, to demonstrate miracles and healing. But at the beginning of the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us He came to make the Father known. Everything Jesus did and said was pointing us to, and getting our attention on the Father. Jesus wanted us to understand the Father Heart of God. Prior to Jesus, there was plenty of religion but Jesus wanted us to know who God was and what He was like. Jesus put on flesh and said, 'I'm going to show you what He thinks about you, how He feels towards you and how He acts towards you'.

He came to make the Father known.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the parable of the Prodigal Son. It is the story of a son who does not want to wait for the father to die before he receives his inheritance, so that he can go and party and live the life he wants. The father does not stop him and allows the son to choose the life he wants. In the same manner, God has given us the free will to choose the direction of our life. The son eventually realises after spending his inheritance and ending up in a pig pen that maybe this life is not so great after all and wants to return to the father. In verse 20 we read the father's response.

"20....And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.[b]' 22 "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found."

LUKE 15: 20-24

And so the party began! This story is Jesus' way of showing us the 'Father Heart of God'.

LET'S TALK

- Q. What does this parable tell you about God's Father Heart?**
- Q. Name four characteristics of a father's heart that is revealed to the son.**

+

**Four important
things we learn about
the Father Heart of
God.**

1. He Pursues You

We think that we are trying to find God but this is not biblical. We see all throughout scripture that God is not a God who waits at a distance. He pursues us. He goes after us. He is a God who longs to be in relationship with us.

"...And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son.."

LUKE 15: 20

The father ran to him filled with **LOVE** and **COMPASSION**.

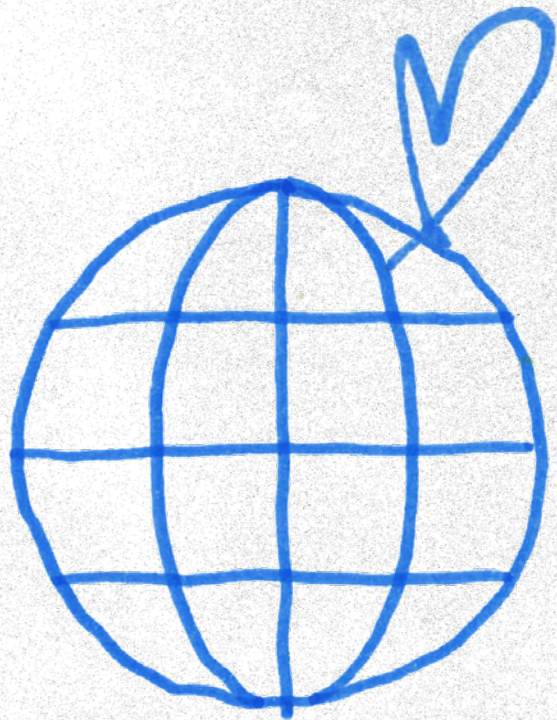
Some people think that God's pursuit of us is more like a police pursuit. He's coming after us because we have done something wrong, and He is coming to bring judgement. But this scripture does not reflect that. The scripture reflects a love pursuit. He's going after us filled with love and compassion. This was the energy fueling the pursuit of the father in the parable for his son.

"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion."

ISAIAH 30: 13

God is running toward us, but we often are running from Him. We do this because we don't fully know and understand the Father's heart. God's love is not a police pursuit, it's a love pursuit. We run from God because we think He's going to give us what we deserve. But we see through the story He doesn't ever give us what we deserve. Why? Because Jesus took what we deserve on the cross so that we could get what Jesus deserved. The love and compassion of God. He pursues you!

SAY IT AGAIN!



2. He Embraces You

“...he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.”

LUKE 15: 20

As Jesus was telling this story, his audience would have been thinking that the father was going to run to the son, beat him and give him what we think he deserved. The custom in Jewish tradition would have been to stone the son for the disgrace he had brought to the family. But no, the father runs, he embraces and kisses his son. Countercultural to the customs of the day. Theologians believe this was to protect the son from the stoning. So the embrace doesn't just speak of affection, it speaks of protection.

He protects us from our accusers!

Next, he kisses the son. The kiss was more than an act of affection. The kiss meant 'to pardon'. The kiss meant, 'I know everything you've done and I'm going to willingly forget it. I'm going to pardon you'.

Many of us have neglected the Father Heart of God that says He will protect and pardon us. He is not holding us to our past anymore. We allow the past to continue to accuse us because we have forgotten the foundation of the Father Heart of God. He is not holding us to our past anymore.

Our past has been pardoned.

YOUR
CALLING
GOD'S
POWER

3. He Covers You

"His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'

LUKE 15: 21

"But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet.'

LUKE 15: 22

The father places the finest robe on the son. This speaks of a covering. The son has spent his recent years working in a pig pen and is running to the father stinking of a pig sty. The father throws the finest robe over the mess. God desires to cover you with the finest robe.

"Come now, let's settle this," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool."

ISAIAH 1: 18

The finest robe is symbolic of the righteousness of Jesus.

God's righteousness covers the most horrendous mistakes we've ever made. It covers us. The finest robe in God's wardrobe is not riches, it's His righteousness. We are not seen for what we have done but for what Jesus has done for us. You are covered in His righteousness.

"Love covers a multitude of sins."

1 PETER 4: 8



4. He Blesses You

“Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.”

LUKE 15: 22-24

If we really understand all the things God has to do in order to bless us we would be humbled by it because we realise how much we don't deserve it. The truth is we are broken, lost and messed up, but God's grace says, 'I will bless you anyway'.

PREACH!

The father in the story put a ring on the son which speaks to inheritance & authority. The sandals he placed on his feet speak of sonship. In the Jewish traditions slaves did not wear shoes, only the children wore shoes. We are no longer a slave to our past, we are now sons and daughters of God. The feast speaks of God's unmerited favour. His blessing. God blesses the undeserving. God's grace covers us!

The Father Heart of God is not something we move on from, it is something we move deeper into. Build your life on this foundation. Freedom is found in the foundation of knowing the Father's heart toward you.

LET'S TALK

- Q. What do you need to know about the Father Heart of God?
- Q. How strong is the foundation of the Father's heart towards you in your life?
- Q. How can you build on this foundation?

LET'S PRAY

“God you are my loving father, I thank you for loving me. I don't think I will ever truly know the depths of your love, but I know I can discover and experience more of your love, reveal more of your love for me today. Help me to let that love become the foundation of my life. Amen.”