



Chapter Ten – Dead Dog Love

Section 1

A healthy family is enriched and motivated by love, but it is defined by _____.

Malachi 2:13-16

This special bond between God and Abraham eventually led to the establishment of the *New Covenant* family of God—a family of a higher order than anything earthly.³⁵

Romans 4:13-25
 Matthew 10:34-37
 Matthew 12:46-50
 Mark 10:28-31

Who does the Bible say initiated the New Covenant family?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NASB)

Ephesians 3:14-15

Those who think that the God of the Old Testament was a harsh drill sergeant and that Jesus was/is syrupy sweet don't understand the nature of God, or the difference between the Old Covenant of law (judgment) and the New Covenant of grace.

John 14:7-9
 Galatians 3:6-14

Those who experienced judgment under the Old Covenant got what they deserved. It's only by God's mercy that we haven't experienced the full judgment we deserve for our sins.³⁶

Hebrews 8:10-12

The Bible makes _____ - _____ references to the fact that our heavenly Father sent Jesus to us!

John 8:42

We face a demonic assault on fatherhood today! Look at the movies and commercials. Fathers are mostly seen as absent, cruel or blundering idiots.

³⁵ This powerful truth does not provide an excuse to treat one's natural family with neglect or contempt, but does provide great strength and encouragement to those who embrace Christ and are thereby ostracized by their families.

³⁶ For the sake of clarity—it's often been said (and I wholeheartedly agree) that mercy is not getting the bad that we do deserve, while grace is getting the good that we absolutely do not deserve.



As a general rule we tend to picture God the Father in the same light as we do our earthly fathers.

Our failure to fully understand the Old Covenant of law certainly has intensified the problem. As a whole the Israelites' emphasis on law caused them to see Him as a revered, but _____ father.

How do *you* view your heavenly Father? Cheap? Absent? Harsh? Ready to *hammer* you as soon as you mess up?

1 John 4:15-19

Without a doubt, our perspective of our heavenly Father will determine the course of our lives. The way we treat people, the things we do and the internal motivations of our hearts are all dependent upon our view of God's view of us.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” Galatians 4:4-7 (HCSB)

1. God chose to adopt us as His children! In the Roman culture of NT times adoption was viewed as a privilege.

Adoption can be one of the highest forms of love because it goes above and beyond what's _____.

John 1:12-13

1 John 3:1

To a large degree, it is in _____ that we find our true identity. *Sonship* is positional, not defined by gender. Daughters are *sons* of God.

Hosea 2:14-23

“I will call those who were not my people, ‘My people,’ and I will call her who was unloved, ‘My beloved.’ And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” Romans 9:25-26 (NET)

2. Adoption is a legal process.
3. *Abba* was an Aramaic term of endearment, similar to “Daddy.” According to *New Bible Dictionary*, “The term conveyed both a sense of warm intimacy and also filial respect, but in Jewish circles it has never been a form of address to the Almighty.”³⁷
4. Notice the *motivator* behind us calling God *Abba*.

Romans 8:15-17

Chapter 10 Section 2

God doesn't faithfully love His children because He is bound to them in covenant. He establishes covenant because He _____ desires to share His faithful love with us!

chesed 1. loyal love, unfailing kindness, devotion, i.e., a love or affection that is steadfast based on a prior relationship³⁸

Exodus 34:6-7

Various translations for *chesed* are *mercy, love, faithfulness, lovingkindness, steadfast love, faithful love* and *unfailing love*.

“The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.” Psalm 23:1-5 (NKJV)

Psalm 23

“Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.” Psalm 23:6 (HCSB)

Chesed is a _____ love that forever *looks* for opportunities to help and bless.

Psalm 136

³⁷ Wood, D.R. W.; D.R. W.; Marshall, I. Howard: *New Bible Dictionary*. Electronic ed. of 3rd ed. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962, S.2

³⁸ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.) (DBLH 2876, #3). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.



2 Samuel 92 Samuel 9:1-8 - Jonathan & David → Mephibosheth

Mephibosheth, who had absolutely nothing to offer (except competition for David's throne) was given the highest honor of dining at the king's table, being treated as one of his own sons.

As the crippled grandson of a disgraced and fallen king, Mephibosheth's name (*from the mouth of shame*) probably served him well.

Ephesians 2:1-13Ephesians 2:1-7

We were *dead dog sinners*—broken and shadowed in the shame of failure, and yet Christ has carried us to sit at the King's table. He has given us the highest honor possible!

Chapter 10 Section 3

Luke 7:30

God loves every person on this earth with an amazing love, but not everyone experiences the full blessings of that love.

John 3:16-18

We've heard, "For God so loved (*agapaō*) the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)
But we might also say, "God so loyally loved (*chesed*) His covenant children that He *promised*"

For our purposes a *promise* is a declaration from God that He will or will not do something for our benefit.

Hebrews 6:9-20

As an expression of His amazing love, God makes covenant promises to His children. The unchangeable nature of God is that He is _____ true to His word. We may not always understand His ways, but His promises enable us to expect good things from our heavenly Father.

Hebrews 12:1-24

We err in attributing negative circumstances to a lack of love on God's part. As a loving Father He does allow them, but He uses them to *discipline* us into the eternal image of Christ.

When life goes awry we have the choice of becoming unbelieving, cynical and bitter; or like Abraham, we can _____ of our heavenly Father's covenantal promises. This often repeated process is at the very heart of spiritual transformation.

When we fail to trust God's promises it is because we don't know who we are, who He is, or we don't understand the nature of our relationship with Him.

"How difficult it is for me to fathom your thoughts about me, O God! How vast is their sum total! If I tried to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand." Psalm 139:17-18a (NET)

The eyes of our loving Father are *always* on his children! He will turn heaven and hell inside out for the sake of His covenant children! In fact, He already has!

"But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, [on our behalf]" Isaiah 53:10 (NASB)

Our heavenly Father was pleased to pay such a steep price because of the value that He has placed on each one of us!

We really are the _____ of the world—they just don't know it yet!

Sonship is what separates us from the commonality and corruption of our world. We are people of dignity, of royal lineage.

Pride demands that the world recognizes our goodness apart from God. Dignity is that quiet confidence that flows from the understanding that the King of the universe has chosen to honor us as His beloved and privileged children.

We will either seek a sense of self-sufficiency and goodness *apart* from God, or we live as people of dignity, drawing our significance from our envious position as the royal children of the King of the Universe. Which will you choose?

Romans 4
2 Peter 1:1-9

Romans 5:8

1 Peter 2



Dead Dog Love - Group Dynamics

Chapter 10 Section 1 – Group Discussion

1. Many people view adoption as a sign of being rejected. Why can it actually be a great act of love for a parent(s) to give a child up for adoption? What is significant about the love of adoptive parents?

2. Why is family so much more than a combination of people who love each other? In what ways are the roles of mothers and fathers different in shaping a child?

3. Is there a difference between *the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament*? Please explain. (John 14:7-9) Is there anywhere that you see mercy and grace at work in the Old Testament? Do we see Jesus exercising judgment in the New Testament?

4. Give some examples of the demonic campaign against fatherhood in our culture.

5. Why is it that people tend to picture God the Father in the same light as their earthly fathers? Talk about the following statement and its ramifications: “Our perspective of our heavenly Father, and of how He views us, will determine how we treat others as well as the course of our lives.”

6. Why does *sonship* form a significant aspect of one’s identity? (Romans 9:22-26) How do you personally feel about the idea of calling God *Dad* or *Daddy*?

Chapter 10 Section 2 – Group Discussion

1. Why do you think God would initiate the concept of covenant from the very beginning of man's creation?

2. What is *chesed*? How does it differ from performing random acts of kindness? Talk about a true instance of where you saw or experienced *chesed* in action.

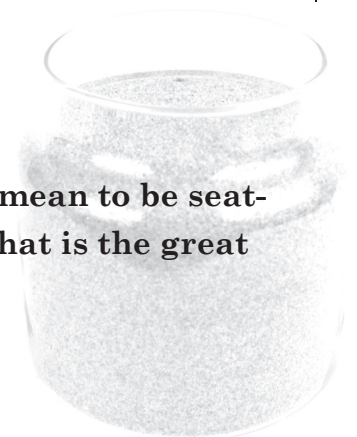
3. What stands out to you about Psalm 23:6 from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*? (page 99)

“Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.” Psalm 23:6 (HCSB)

4. Why did Mephibosheth feel like a *dead dog* of no value? What contributing factors in our lives might cause us to relate to his feelings of shame and worthlessness?

5. How does the story of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:1-13) help us to better understand God's unfailing, covenantal love? How does 2 Samuel 9:7 speak to you specifically at this point in your life?

6. What would it be like to sit at a king's table? What does it mean to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places? (Ephesians 2:1-7) What is the great irony at work in all of this?



Chapter 10 Section 3 – Group Discussion

1. What is a *promise*? How does trust in God's promises reflect trust in God's character? According to 2 Peter 1:1-4 what is the outcome when we lay hold of God's promises for our lives? What happens when we fail to lay hold of those promises?

2. What is the difference between *formative* discipline verses *punitive* discipline? What should we do when we find ourselves saying, "Why does this always happen to me?" (Hebrews 12:4-11)

3. In what ways can God's amazing love for us be compared to the *sand of the sea-shore*? Do you believe that this applies to you personally? Why or why not?

4. What do you think about the significance of Isaiah 53:10? "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering. . ." (NASB)

5. Talk about how Christians will one day be the envy of the entire world. Why is there no place for pride in our lives even though God has lifted us to such a lofty state of privilege and honor?

6. In what ways should our *royal sonship* separate us from the commonality and corruption of this world? (Proverbs 31:1-9)

DEAD DOG LOVE - PERSONAL PURSUIT

Please record a personal reflection of something meaningful in each passage.

2 Samuel 9 _____

Prayer Point: Pray for God to open the eyes of someone you love to His amazing love.

Ephesians 2:1-13 _____

Prayer Point: If you are a Christian, you are no longer a *child of wrath*. Thank God for this amazing truth!

Hebrews 6:9-20 _____

Prayer Point: Is there an area of life in which you have let go of your *anchor*?

Hebrews 12:1-24 _____

Prayer Point: Is there an area of your life you need to yield to God? Is there a *root of bitterness* that needs to be axed? Is there someone you are called to strengthen?

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Romans 4 _____

Prayer Point: Find a promise of God for an *impossible* situation in your life.

2 Peter 1:1-9 _____

Prayer Point: Thank God that He is establishing in you a faith that is more precious than gold!

1 Peter 2 _____

Prayer Point: Pray for God to give you a clearer revelation of true royalty.

Extra Effort:

___ Review your notes at least twice.

___ Read the non-boldfaced Scripture passages in the margins of this chapter.

___ Read the boldfaced Scripture passages in the margins of the next chapter.

___ Recite your memory verses from the previous chapters.

___ Write out and memorize Ephesians 2:13 _____

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