

**RELATIONAL THEOLOGY SERIES FOUR**  
**THE GOD WHO WANTS TO KNOW OUR HEARTS**

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**I Jn. 2:12-14; Eph. 2:12-18**

•SLIDE #1: Why is George Washington called, “The Father of Our Country?”

He always shared His life with his soldiers. In the cold of winter he was in the trenches with his men. If there was a river to cross, he was in the front of the boat. If there was little food to eat for his soldiers, he went hungry with them.

He never sought the office of president. He was unanimously acclaimed to be the first president. No other candidate was in sight.

He protected and nurtured and cared for his country. He was the father.

One day the disciples asked the Lord Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray. He began with the words, “Our Father...”

What are the implications of Jesus teaching us to begin our prayers with the words: “Our Father?” Could it be that Jesus is portraying a God who longs to be caringly involved in our lives?

I know that some of you had wonderful fathers; but, I know that most of you did not. As children our fathers greatly shaped our theology—our view of God.

What were your earliest memories of your dad?

Do you remember him as the one you ran to when you skinned your knee or had a bad dream?

Or, was he someone who lived in your house, and delivered the punishment when you disobeyed: “Just wait until your dad gets home and you’re really going to get it.”

Maybe he had tickle wars with you or took you to ball games.

Or, maybe your dad was not there—perhaps he worked all the time? Or you visited him only on weekends or in the summer because he did not live in the same house as you? Or died when you were too little.

Maybe he read you Bible stories as he tucked you into bed at night? But, perhaps instead you got to bed and pulled the covers up over your head in hiding because he drank too much and you were afraid when he came home.

Our dads powerfully affect our view of God. That is why it is imperative that we go to the Bible to experience what God is really like.

•SLIDE #2: Three spiritual levels are enunciated in 1 John 2:12-14. We see here not just a progression in spiritual growth; we see here a progression in depths of intimacy with God. There are different levels of spiritual maturity. There are different levels of intimacy.

READ 1 John 2:12-14.

The whole idea behind this passage is that God wants to have a relationship with us. Doesn’t that just scream out to us from this passage?

What does it do to your heart to know that God wants a relationship with you? He wants to be intimate with you.

Is it fair to say that God doesn’t want to be alone?

•BUILD SLIDE #7A: Remember Genesis 2:18 when God said to Adam: “It is not good to be alone?”

- BUILD SLIDE #7B:** How did God know that? Perhaps He knew because He once experienced what aloneness was like—back before the creation.

Before the creation God was alone. No birds, no waterfalls, no clocks, no time, no rhythm, no plants, no animals, no people. It was dark and lonely.

- BUILD SLIDE #8A:** Imagine that out of His aloneness He created the universe. He stepped out on the edge of Nothingness and said, “Let there be light and soon life burst into existence all over His universe. God was no longer alone.

We often have a very rational view of an omnipotent God who has no needs.

- BUILD SLIDE #8B:** But, remember that God is a God of love. He needs someone to love. That is why He made you—and why He made me.

Illustration of girl on airplane from LA to TUS. Talked to her, about 23 or 24. Recently married. Talked about her husband and relationship.

“I am going to Tucson for my Dad’s funeral, you know.”

“Oh, I am so sorry. This must hurt a lot.”

“Well, we weren’t very close.”

“I will bet that was not your choice.”

Dad divorced from her mother when she was a child.

“You must struggle with so much rejection.”

“I think it was because as I grew older that I looked so much like my mother and he did not want to have anything to do with me.”

Now what am I thinking. Sorrow for her. Then thought of that dad. What had he missed! He missed a relationship with the lovely young lady sitting next to me. What a loss. She wanted to know and be known, to love and be loved—and he missed it.

God is longing for an intimate relationship with us.

God will never reject you or turn away from you based on the relationship He wants to have with you.

Let’s talk about some of the implications of our relationship with God revealed in these verses.

- SLIDE #3: CHILDREN: KNOWING SECURITY AND PEACE WITH THE FATHER**

Point out in the Bible the two things children know.

Children know that their sins are forgiven. Peace with God is achieved at the cross.

Children know that God is their Father. Relationship with God is restored at the cross.

The cross removes both the aloneness (Genesis 2) and fallenness (Genesis 3) which result from sin.

Talk about the cross: Sin separates us from God. Just as sin separates us from each other. There is a war between our inner nature and God. The cross brings peace. This is where we all start.

It is great to know we are at peace with God. Our relationship is restored.

Read Ephesians 2:12-18.

But this is just the beginning of our relationship with God.

We must not stop here. We haven’t even begin yet.

The problem is that children are self-conscious. The whole world seems to center around them. They want to know their sins are forgiven.

God exists like a genie to give them what they need.

They don't understand well the things of God. They think they know how God works but they have little real understanding at all.

They know God all right, but it is only on their terms.

Most Christian children never grow out of this stage.

God can't reveal much of Himself to children. They are not spiritually ready. Why: Because of the principle of enmeshment.

•SLIDE #4: Have you ever made a genogram? Explain Genograms: squares are males, circles are females.

•SLIDE #5: Explain Lines: double slashed between grandma and grandpa = divorce. Single line between mom and dad = usually OK but no real knowing of each other. Double line between me and granddad means = deep relationship, he really knew me. Wiggly line between mom and dad is conflict. Dotted line between me and dad = distant relationship.

•SLIDE #6: Triple line between me and mom = Enmeshment: Parent enters into inappropriate relationship with a child. Lives our life through child: pushes them into sports, ballet and parent lives vicariously through them. Or, Mom and Dad have bad relationship filled with conflict. Mom begins to confide in daughter against dad. Tells her things best not for her to know, but it makes mom feel better, but it devastates the daughter.

There are depths of intimacy and things God wants to reveal to His children, but they are not ready for it. Talk about the depths of this intimacy next week.

•SLIDE #3: CHILDREN: KNOWING SECURITY AND PEACE WITH THE FATHER

Let's talk about

•SLIDE #10: YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN: LEARNING SKILLS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Young men and women are learning about the power and character of the God with whom they now have a deepening relationship. They are discovering that He is a strong conquering God of life, love and power.

Young men and women are experiencing God's power over the Evil One.

Illustration of woman: "I am going to scratch your eyes out!" Dropping to the floor.

This was back in the early days of our deliverance ministry when we were more involved direct confrontations and I was helping to lead it.

Illustration of young girl in trance, eyes not blinking, "Would you like to receive Christ?" Tear drops out of corner of her eye.

Young men and women are growing strong.

Young men and women know the Word of God.

Learning the Bible—but more they are learning to hear God speak in their inner spirits. Take spiritual growth class next week.

Learning God's power is something that we must experience. We can't learn it all from reading the Bible.

•SLIDE #11: Book: How to Play Your Best Golf All of the Time by Tommy Armour.

But, no one ever learned to play golf from reading a book. No one ever learned tennis, or how to swim from reading a book. We have to go out and practice, and try it and experience it.

We cannot learn everything from reading the Bible. We have to experience it. We must learn to fight spiritual battles. We must discover what it is like to hear God speak in our inner spirits. Time to go on and experience God Himself.

•SLIDE #10: YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN: LEARNING SKILLS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Let's talk about

•SLIDE #13: MOTHERS AND FATHERS: EXPERIENCING INTIMACY WITH GOD

•SLIDE #14: When I first saw Julie I wondered what was in this for me. What could I get out of a relationship with her? As I got to know her better I began to discover who she was and what she did! I wanted to share in her life.

Finally, our relationship led to deeper level intimacy. The look. Ordering at restaurants.

•BUILD SLIDE #15A: The three Hebrew words for intimacy enlighten us into the relationship God wants to have with us:

“Yada” = “To Know”: God knows us (Jeremiah 1:5).

•BUILD SLIDE #15B: “Sod” = “To Disclose”: God allows us to know Him (Proverbs 3:32).

By the way, God wants us to know His heart. What does it do to your heart to know that God wants to open His heart and allow us to come in?

•BUILD SLIDE #15C: “Sakan” = “Deep, Caring Involvement”: God wants to know us so that He desires be caringly involved in our lives (Psalm 139:3).

If His motive were to judge, criticize, and hurt us, we probably wouldn't want a God like that to know us very well after all. I want to let God know me because He wants to do good things for me.

•BUILD SLIDE #16A: Remember the different levels of friends: Acquaintances, Casual, Close, Intimate?

•BUILD SLIDE #16B: Measure openness and vulnerability with them with an inverted V. Not open with acquaintances—totally open with intimate friends.

•BUILD SLIDE #16C: Measure number of each type with a V. Many acquaintances to few intimate friends. What if God wanted to be one of your most intimate friends?

Intimacy is someone who enters into our world and feels what we feel, and experiences what we experience, and knows us like we know ourselves.

Let me illustrate a bit of this intimacy.

•SLIDE #18: Bronwyn's journal and intimacy with God.

•SLIDE #17: The most easy to remember verse in the Bible (John 11:35: “Jesus wept.”) is a verse about a God who weeps. What does this teach us about the heart of God as He relates with us? Julie and I leave Bronwyn in London cries. On plane Julie takes Bible and began weeping. “I just realized that God is reading my heart and weeping with me.” God comforted her. That’s intimacy.

•SLIDE #19: *Children know what to believe. They have their doctrine straight. This is the first purpose of Truth.*  
*Young men and women know how to behave. They know the right morals and ethics. This is the second purpose of Truth.*  
*Mothers and Fathers know intimacy with God. This is the third and often forgotten purpose of Truth.*

•SLIDE #20: Meditate for a moment on the implications of Jesus desiring a relationship with us based on Revelation 3:20.

Imagine that Jesus is outside the door of your heart right now wanting to come in. He wants a relationship with you. You become a Christian when you open the door of your heart and let Him come in. Have you opened the door and let Him forgive your sins and restore a relationship with you. What does it do to your heart to know that He is waiting for you to open the door. Think how He feels because you won’t open the door. Imagine how much He hurts. Imagine how He will feel when you open the door and let Him come in. See how excited He is. You have spent so long getting on in life alone. You don’t have to be alone anymore. God created you and knows everything about you. He knows your strengths and weaknesses—all He wants is a relationship with you.

This is written to Christians. In Rev 3:20 the Christians have shut him out. He wants fellowship with you. You have been living too long as if Jesus wasn’t even there. You have shut Him out. Aren’t you tired of fighting the battles alone, going to sleep alone, struggling alone? You have been so self reliant. Imagine how Jesus feels as He sees you struggling and wants so much to help. How do you think His heart must ache because you are leaving Him out.

Some of you are filled with so much self-condemnation. You don’t think that God could ever love you. God wouldn’t care about me. He does care. If you think about it, He has been knocking for a long time. He knew you in your mother’s womb. He made you just the way He wants you. He thinks you are incredibly special. You have been away from Him for too long.

Some of you have been so selfish about this. God created you to be partners with Him. He wants to minister with you. He wants to bless lives with you. He wants to share His burdens with you. He wants to be actively involved in a relationship with you and you are keeping yourself all to your self. Imagine how He feels as He knocks. “Please, let me into your life. We can have such a great time together.”