

## GETTING PERSONAL

*“I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than the love of women.”<sup>1</sup>*

Perhaps I can share about relationships from God, in a little more intimate and personal way, I have waited until the end to share at this depth, hoping by now, there has been enough explanation and revelation so that what follows does not appear to be illegal. My hope is that the testimony of this chapter will reveal the passion, which has accomplished what has gone before.

I believe that the love between David and Jonathan was mutual, so that we can read our opening verse in the following sense, “the love we shared, was to me, wonderful...”

Just how much love, and how much intimacy is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul prayed: “... *that we, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*”<sup>2</sup>

Peter writes: “*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.*”<sup>3</sup>

It is so easy to just read the ink, be mere talkers, paying lip service to love, but without passion, “...*from such turn away.*”<sup>4</sup>

Divine Encounters Anointed by Love:

One evening quite some years ago now, I was sharing a fresh insight about relationships that come from God. When I was through sharing, I asked everyone, “Well, who do you think you are?” The question was asked in a very gentle and loving way, not in the Satanic sense in which it is normally asked. Those present became like children on a Christmas morning, thinking about who the Lord had made them to each other, and to others who, though not present, had been made

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<sup>1</sup> II Samuel 1:26

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 3:17-19

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 4:8

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 3:5

special to them by The Lord. The implications of the question went far beyond that room, but for some, who were there, came the discovery of who they were to others in the room. There were lots of hugs and tears, many very precious conversations.

One man, about my age, then mid forties, with whom I had felt a close bond for some time, was very quiet, however. I approached him, and asked the question once more, "Well, who do you think you are?" He started to respond, tears flooded his eyes, he choked up, turned on his heel and left.

Several days later, he appeared at my office, I jumped up to hug his neck, and he waved me off, saying that he had the flu, but had to come by. He went on to explain that I had asked him a question, and the question deserved an answer. He also said that he had known a lot of rejection in his life, and had great difficulty risking rejection once again, but then went on to say, "I think that you are my dad." That was all I had to hear. I leaped over the desk, landed in his lap, hugging and kissing him. We sat there and wept like a couple of babies. I prayed over him, as I had my arms around him. The Lord healed him on the spot, and he went off to find his natural son to take them to the winter Olympics, which were in Lake Placid New York that year. We have been very close ever since that day.

On another occasion I was overseas, had spoken to the church through a translator who I had barely met. Afterward he came up to me with tears in his eyes, and said: "I want to tell you how important it is for me that you are here, but I do not understand why."

I wonder if you can guess how this made me feel. I responded, "I think I understand, we need to talk." By then, I also was in tears. We went to lunch together, he, his wife, their little girl, and me. It was very precious.

There was the first time that I was overwhelmed with feeling for a complete stranger. I met him in Detroit, in the early Seventies. It was at a men's conference on evangelism sponsored by the Assemblies of God. We were knit together immediately. It felt like "love at first sight." I had no doctrine to account for it at the time. I felt like I had been emotionally violated. The feeling was so strong it was as though God had physically altered my heart and mind. It was sovereign. It felt illegal, it felt weird, but it did feel. We continue to walk in that grace right up to today. I didn't understand it at the time. It happened before either of us had even had a chance to speak at all, let alone with one another. But, afterward, it was certainly confirmed as being mutual, and now, validated over time. In this case, The Lord had given me an older brother.

At the time, my understanding of relationship was limited to the doctrine of the brotherhood of all believers. It was The Lord's mercy that my first experience with His sovereignty in relationship, was with a brother.

It was some years later before I discovered that The Lord could also put spiritual fathers in my heart. When this first happened, and I shared the sense that I had with each one of them, in each case, the expression of my own heart's content toward them brought tears to their eyes. In two cases, they were men who had ministered for many years, but had interacted with others more in the context of doctrine, and ministry than the reality of relationship.

More and more, I found myself risking transparency. More and more I found the Kingdom of God increasing. More and more I was willing to take risks for the sake of relationship.

I well remember the first time I had these special feelings in my heart for a woman other than my wife. I was tormented by the feelings, I was sure that they were illegal, I was sure that it had to be lust. Internally, I was running away from someone I later discovered The Lord had given into my life as a spiritual daughter.

When I finally stopped to look at the old creation long enough to discover what life had to teach me about relationships, I realized that, I was never up all night when someone else's child was sick, but I was up all night when my own children were sick. The old creation taught me that there is room for special feelings toward other women. I am the father of two daughters. We know who we are to each other, so we can be very close with no problem. In fact something would be terribly wrong if we were not very close. Now I have daughters in the Lord with whom I am also very close, and it is wonderful.

I have a mother in The Lord as well, she has long since gone on to be with The Father, but the crafty woman got me into the place where I first came to know The Lord, and looked after my spiritual welfare quite a while after that. The mother of Rufus was a spiritual mother to Paul also.<sup>5</sup>

On another occasion, The Lord had given me another spiritual daughter. I had met her years before, but for a number of reasons, said nothing, about what I had felt. After more than 6 years, as we were walking together, I put my arm around her and said, "all right, I think I have waited long enough to ask you a question... Who do

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 16:13

you think you are in relationship to me?" She answered, "I think I'm your daughter in The Lord." It was that simple, and that clear. I wonder if you can imagine how I felt. I immediately answered, "Yes!, and I could not possibly love you any more if you were my own flesh and blood."

Think about it for a moment, take the kaleidoscope of emotions felt toward a child from the first news of their conception, through birth, and growing up, cram all of that into a single moment in time, and you will understand why I could barely stand, let alone keep walking. In the weeks that followed, as we began to unwrap the gift of relationship that The Lord had given us in each other, and in anticipation of a block of time when we could share at some depth, I was minded to risk saying a number of other things as being foundational to whatever the rest of the conversation might uncover.

First I repeated something already understood, but perhaps not already verbalized, and that is, because Jesus is Lord of who we are to each other, there would never be anything between us that could not be understood in that light. Second, that I would never want to do or say anything that would violate her conscience. This would, in part be determined by the cultural givens with which she had grown up and with which she was surrounded. Third and perhaps most vulnerably, I said that, "if I was not convinced that Jesus had given her into my life as a daughter, I would be scared to death, because there is no other way I could account for such strong feelings toward her. All of this she heard and immediately understood. It was also understood that care needed to be taken not to fall into an appearance of evil"<sup>6</sup>

On a previous occasion, she had written:

"I have to say I was quite overwhelmed by the affirmation of our father-daughter relationship when I stepped in the door last night and saw you. Thinking about the depth of feeling that seized me (and not of my own volition) is very peculiar to me and brings tears to my eyes as I write. It seems almost presumptuous to feel so much like a daughter to you, whom I've known in this way for a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless...I wanted you to know.

Your daughter,"

In His prayer in John 17, Jesus said "*I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me...I gave them the word*

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<sup>6</sup> I Thessalonians 5:22

*that you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given, for they are yours...I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me..."*

I found myself praying that same prayer. I wasn't praying it on purpose, so to speak, but supernaturally. Without even trying, I was saying the things that the father is saying, loving the ones that the father had given me. It wasn't me. It was Christ who lives in me.

Jesus did not try to reproduce by having office hours, and making appointments. Rather, He said to those that The Father gave Him, "*come on with me.*" They had something like three, round the clock, years with each other. It must have been something! That has been our heart for many years now. We have tried to walk it out in such a way that those that the Father has given us can get as close as they want for as long as they want. Quite a few have stayed in our home, some longer than others. There have been, 3:00am desperate bursting into the house, all night deliverance sessions, lots of house calls, carried some, bandaged others, lots of tears, you name it. And all of that while our own flesh and blood children were still with us.

The flesh and blood kids were mostly gone, and here was a new daughter in The Lord. I wanted her to know that we would not likely to have the time together that would be the desire of a father's heart, especially a father with a new daughter. If she moved in to the house, after three years, I might have wanted a break, but short of that, not to count on it. This to say, that she would have full and complete access, whether in tears or rejoicing, whether in confusion or in clarity, yes, even in sickness and in health, whether abounding or abased.

There are other divine encounters that I could (and might) share, but perhaps enough for now.

This is The Church, as she is revealed on and between the lines of the Scriptures. To the religious she looks like a cult, but to God, she is the light of His life to people living in darkness. She is the validation of, and expression of the Love of Christ in the World.

## **The Fear of Rejection**

One more word of testimony: On the day I was baptized in the Spirit, I was heading for a monetary conference. Over the previous ten years I had come to

know those who would be attending and speaking. I had come to know, and desire their acceptance and respect, but this day I had a Jesus button on my collar. The first person I ran into at the conference told me to take it off, that it would drive these sophisticated people away from me. He said that I would be rejected. After some considerable prayer and soul searching, I left it on, and he was right. People got out of my way for the two days of the conference. No one wanted to be seen even speaking with me. Today, I might make a different decision, but I made the right one for that day. The acceptance of those in attendance meant too much to me, almost more than obeying The Lord, I was baptized in The Spirit prior to making that decision. I needed that power to make the right choice.

It does not require a Ph.D. to be led by the Spirit. There are many cues. Where relationships are concerned perhaps one of the strongest is found in Luke 24:32: *“And they said to one another, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?’”* Where The Lordship of Christ in relationship is concerned, about the closest carnal analogy I can think of is the feeling described as ”love at first sight.”

Mary had Jesus inside of her, but did not speak the Magnificat until the baby leapt in the womb of Elizabeth. Where a tangible response to Jesus in another person is concerned, John the Baptist was the first, and that while he was still in his mother's womb. Encouraged by John's testimony Elizabeth took the risk of telling Mary, and Mary had the confirmation she needed for the expression of her heart in her Magnificat.<sup>7</sup>

Do not be afraid, your heavenly Father is not a harsh master reaping where He has not sown. He has sown the life of His Son into your heart. Won't you take the risk of investing Him in others? This is the work, which God requires, to believe in the one whom He has sent, perhaps the one who is standing right in front of you.

By way of explaining some of the above, I have included an email to my spiritual daughter, so I could I add the following:

One night I received a very excited call from her, I had sent her this Chapter, as it appears above. This is the cover note that I sent:

“I have not had the opportunity to proof this yet, so be merciful. You have certainly been on my heart as I have written it. If there is anything that I have said that is either in error, misrepresentation, or a betrayal of our relationship, please tell

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<sup>7</sup> Luke 1:46-55

me. That is the last thing that I would want to do. As for my part I want to be willing to be vulnerable, but I do not want to presume to put you in that position, unless that is where you want to be.

It is just that it breaks my heart when I think about the emptiness of life and relationship for so many Christians, when the Lord has paid so dear a price to give them both, and more abundantly.

Sweetheart, I have not sent this to anyone yet. I knew that I had to have your input and blessing to do so. If there is any reservation please tell me. I would never want to violate who we are to each other.

Yours, Jay”

I sent the chapter first to her, because, she had the most to lose of those mentioned. I have removed her name for the purpose of sharing it with you. Other than that it is in the same rough form in which I sent it to her.

She responded:

“I read the chapter while waiting in the airport. It's good. I was very blessed by your proud description of our relationship! I must admit, however, that I'm not sure I can be very objective or helpful as far as judging its impact on those reading it for the first time (since I am a part of it). But if you wanted my blessing, you've got it! Also, while I continue to appreciate your caution as far as protecting me from others who might not understand our relationship and I respect your intuition resulting from your previous experience along these lines, know that I am a consenting partner in our relationship and, basically, that I WON'T WALK AWAY!”

She went back to school, after the holidays, knowing that there were others there that were special to her, and looking forward to discovering and confirming who they were to each other. She called right after the first of her explicit encounters, and related to me the following:

Not quite knowing how to open the subject, she shared this chapter with her friend, a girl that she thought might be a sister to her in the Lord. As the girl read it, she began to weep, finally coming out and telling my daughter of her own feeling about her, even to the point of, sometime in the recent past, trying to make a list of all the things about my daughter that were special to her. She said to my daughter “I know that I am your sister.” The two of them hugged and wept together for the

next 30 minutes or so, and my daughter, rejoicing, phoned me right afterward to share what had happened.

While in Connecticut, I shared some of this with my flesh and blood daughter, Heather. Her hair was a little straight up about the whole thing. She had a general sense of where I was coming from for many years, but had never seen it so clearly before, her reaction was, “But, Dad, how do you know the limits of such a relationship?” I answered with a question to her, “Heather, how do I know the limits on my relationship with you?” When you understand the nature of a relationship, the old creation itself will tell you the limits on what is appropriate to that relationship in The Spirit.

God Bless you!

Jay - Circa 2000