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Appendix 1: *The Father Who Delights in You* © 2009 Living Seeds www.livingseeds.org Used by permission

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Week 1: A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Jesus is the King of a Kingdom. As children of God we are heirs to all His resources and are being changed into the likeness of His son Jesus. The Holy Spirit works in us to bring restoration, the ability to overcome in difficult circumstances and bring changes to our communities. This is seeing His Kingdom come.

To help us do this He has given us:

Ephesians 1:18-21.

What are these verses telling us about the power of the Holy Spirit that is available to us in Jesus?

John 5:19.

Did Jesus respond to every situation that caught His eye?

What might happen to a) ourselves, b) God's reputation or c) God's work if we do not learn to walk humbly with Jesus?

What must we do to be truly effective amongst our family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and those who we rub shoulders with in the course of our everyday lives?

Our job is to be carriers of the abundant life Jesus offers to those who believe as well as those who work to see His Kingdom extended. This is a great responsibility as well as a real life challenge.

Identify what some of the stumbling blocks to God's Kingdom being fully formed in you might be.

Matthew 11:12.

Matthew 25:34-46.

Write down your response to what you have read.

The key is not to seek the power or the force but to seek Father's heart of love; to be holy, fully surrendered and obedient to Him.

What is a disciple?

Mark 2:18.

Hebrews 13:7.

Who are you being called to imitate?

Matthew 4:19.

Matthew 9:9.

John 1:43.

What do you think Jesus might be implying in the words 'follow me'.

Where did Jesus' walk lead Him?

Luke 9:23-24.

Luke 14:26-33.

2 Corinthians 4:7-12.

John 10:10.

What image is brought to mind by the word 'surrender'?

"I take my hands off trying to control my own life and choose to submit my life, thoughts, choices and actions everyday into Your control."

What single thing characterises the life of someone who truly seeks to walk in Jesus' footsteps?

Deuteronomy 6:3.

Matthew 11:29-30.

What weight is the yoke of Jesus' Kingdom?

Week 2: FATHER GOD'S HEART OF LOVE

Genesis chapters 1-3.

Why did God create us?

What happened to spoil that closeness?

How does that affect us?

Why do you think Father God longs for us to recognise we need Him?

The Bible shows us that because of the depth of Father God's love for us, when the time was right, He took a very serious step in order that we might all be able to know and understand that love for ourselves and restore our broken relationship with Him.

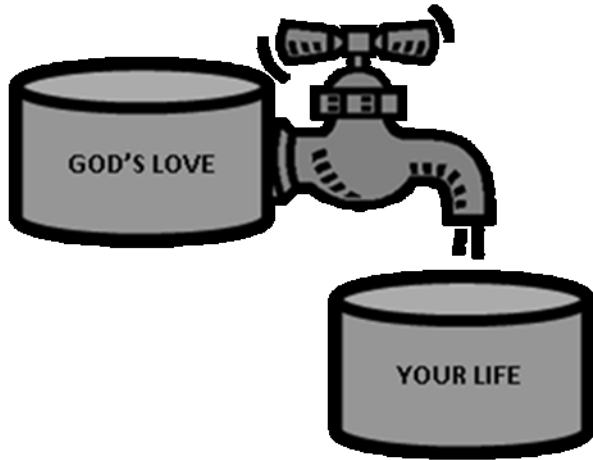
John 3:1-21.

What was this serious step God took?

Why did He do it?

Luke 15:11-32.

What is revealed of Father God's heart towards us in this story?



What does this illustration describe?

1 John 4:9-10.

What do you think these verses mean?

Luke 3:21-22.

How did Father God's presence show itself in these verses?

In what form did the Holy Spirit show Himself at Jesus' baptism?

What might this image teach us practically about the intimacy of God's presence with us?

How does sin affect this relationship?

All of us have to learn how to walk in a way that does not offend the delicate presence of the Holy Spirit dove but to live in a way that pleases Father God. This is a process that takes time. Try not to be too hard on yourself when you keep messing up!

Write down what Father God said to Jesus.

Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 42:1.

Who do you think these verses refer to?

What might be the significance of Father God speaking these words at Jesus' baptism?

1 John 3:1.

Who does this verse say we are?

What does that mean?

Ephesians 1: 3-8

Write down the meaning of the word 'lavish' as interpreted by these verses:

Father's heart of love towards YOU is so great, so vast, so generous, so abundant and so extravagant. He really wants you to know how much He loves YOU!

Whose responsibility is it to 'work' at your relationship with God?

What steps must you take to metaphorically 'go home' into the arms of Father God?

NOTES:

AFTER THE SESSION:

Perhaps you find it very difficult to relate to God as a loving, generous, extravagant Father who longs to have a deeper relationship with you. Perhaps you are even backing away at the very thought that someone calling Himself 'father' might want any sort of close 'relationship' with you.

Sometimes we find it difficult to relate to God as Father because our view of God and perspective of what a 'relationship' with Him might be has been shaped or even marred by our experience of relationships with our earthly fathers or significant authority figures. Even the very best of dads, and thankfully there are many, cannot fully demonstrate Father God's character because we are, after all, human.

If our experience of a parent has been someone mean, cruel or abusive towards us then we can subconsciously project that same characteristic onto Father God which is a significant barrier to us being able to fully understand how much we are loved by Him and to receive His love. The problem is that whilst our bad experience may, sadly, be true of our earthly parent it is NOT true of our Father God. It is a lie.

By believing the lie we are, without realising it, agreeing with a deception put into our thoughts by our spiritual enemy Satan! Until the lie is broken we actually *cannot accept the truth* of what the Bible teaches us about Father God's heart of love towards us. You and I are being robbed.

Look over the following list slowly. Stop at each word or phrase and prayerfully consider whether you have ever thought of God in that way. Tick the statements that are relevant to how you have viewed Father God.

Distant	Impatient	Demanding
Insensitive	Abusive	Fault-finding

Harsh or cruel	Never satisfied with me	Never there for me
Stern or angry	A spoil sport	Too busy for me
Cold	Controlling	Condemning
Perfectionistic	Manipulative	Unforgiving
Uncaring or unconcerned	Cunning	An abuser

Not one of these statements is true of Father God. If you have ticked some boxes then it is a very good idea right now to renounce (which means give up or stop believing) those lies. Before you do, please read quietly through the wording of the love letter from Father God which you will find in appendix 1 at the back of this booklet (these are the words of the track *The Father Who Delights in You* that may have been played at the end of the group session). Each of these statements comes from the Bible. For each negative box you have ticked above search appendix 1 to find a positive statement which counteracts it.

Look at the grid below. Write the negatives you have ticked on the left-hand side and the positives from Father God’s love letter to you on the right.

Using the wording at the top of each column as the first words of your prayer, pray your renunciation and declaration OUT LOUD over your life. Say it several times so that you hear yourself say it. The Bible says it is God’s truth that sets us free; what you are declaring is TRUTH.

I renounce the lie that my Father God is ...	I choose to accept the wonderful truth that my Father God is ...

Choose today to allow your thinking about Father God to be re-aligned with what the Bible says is His heart towards you.

Because you have believed these lies for a very long time, do not be surprised if it takes some time [a few weeks] before you really begin to *feel* deep in your spirit that Father God loves and accepts you. Be persistent. Keep saying the same renunciation and declaration every day until you know the blockage has gone.

It is possible this exercise may have re-opened a wound you thought you had dealt with and that will have been painful for you. For the time being, choose to let your focus be on the relationship Father God is calling you

to, determine to draw closer to Him and try not to allow yourself to be distracted from that ambition. This is the day of new beginnings...