

“FEELING WHAT GOD FEELS”

“WHAT YOU FEEL I FEEL”

There is a wonderful song by Brian and Jenn Johnson that was released about three years ago and it is entitled, “Where You Go I’ll Go.” The majority of this song is directed to God the Father, and the chorus has the following words:

*Where You go I go
What You say I say
And what You pray I pray*

As worship leaders we have led others in this song many times, and as powerful as it is, there is one additional phrase that we would have liked to have seen included . . . that being “*What You Feel I Feel.*” Although we know that we are all called to do what Jesus did—that being to pray what the Father prays, say what the Father says, and go where He directs us to go—we believe unless we are able to connect with His heart . . . and His feelings . . . it will be very difficult to fulfill this calling.

OVERLOOKING WHAT GOD FEELS AND ITS IMPACT ON OUR HEALING

As we continue to work with many people who come to find deeper healing and a greater level of intimacy with God and others, we frequently observe reoccurring themes. One of these themes is the lack of awareness of and connection with how God feels . . . not about our sins or our failures or our successes . . . but about US . . . you and me! Some of the people with whom we work may share that they “know” how God sees them, but yet when we ask the question, “What do you think the Father *feels* about you?” or “How did the Father *feel* when that happened to you?”, they don’t even know what to say. This demonstrates a great disconnect between “head knowledge” and “heart experience.”

UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONS OF GOD . . . DOES HE HAVE THEM?

Before we go further, it is important to decide if the concept of God having emotions or feelings is biblical. Though there are some who may argue that God does not have feelings, Scripture has many references to the contrary. For example, in Jer. 31:3 it states the following in reference to the Lord and His people: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.” The Hebrew word for “love” in this passage is the same word that is used in many places in the Old Testament and it is described as “having a strong emotional attachment to and desire either to possess or to be in the presence of the object,” and it includes the love between a man and a woman as well as the love that a parent has for a child. It’s more than a “loving action.” It’s also the related feelings. In Isa.66:13, again in reference to God and His people Israel, it states that “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you . . .” This Hebrew word for “comfort” is used in many places in the Old Testament describing the actions and feelings of comfort, given from one to another. In the New Testament there are many examples of Jesus expressing

emotion. Looking at just a few, John 13:23 makes reference to John as “. . . the disciple whom Jesus loved . . .” The word for “love” here does not refer to a “loving action” but rather to Jesus’ “tender affection” towards John. We know that Jesus *wept* (John 11:35), and we know that He was very *angry* when He dealt with the money changers in the temple (John 2:14-17). And as it states in John 14:9 when Jesus addressed Philip’s request that Jesus “show him the Father,” He replied “. . . anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.” So, we can conclude that the *feelings* of Jesus reflect the feelings of His Father (God).

WHY IS ANY OF THIS IMPORTANT?

You might be wondering, “Is it really all that important to know that the Father *feels*?” Our response would be “*Yes, it matters a great deal!*” To be able to say, “I *know* God loves me” is important. However, to be able to say, “I *feel* His love for me,” moves this fundamental truth from our head and to our heart. For example, when we are grieving over a significant loss—whether that be a loss from childhood or a loss today—when we can feel that the Father grieves with and for us, it draws us more deeply into His heart and opens the door for greater healing and intimacy with Him. It makes the words in Ps. 34:18 even more meaningful when it states (paraphrased) “*When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you...*” And in John 17:23, when Jesus spoke of the love of His Father, He said that the Father’s love for us is the *same* as the love that He had for Jesus. To *know* that is very important, but to also *feel* this love from the Father takes it to another level . . . a level that we believe the Father desires for all of us! In addition, when we can feel the emotions of the Father—including His “cry” that we (individually and as a nation) turn our hearts to Him—it can motivate us in ways that otherwise doesn’t occur. If, as it says in Rom. 2:4 that it is the *kindness or goodness* of God that leads (motivates) us to change (repentance), but if I only *know* but are unable to *feel* His kindness and goodness towards me, then making the change that He desires (for my own good) will be more difficult.

DIFFICULTIES IN FEELING THE FATHER’S EMOTIONS . . . AND A PRAYER

There are many reasons why we don’t feel the Father’s emotions regarding us and others. In many cases our own walls of protection and inability to feel—often from early childhood experiences—causes a block in our heart that may require deeper healing. The first step is *believing* that the Father (God) *has* feelings and the next step is *asking* for that intimate connection with His heart. Please join us in this prayer . . . *Father, I desire to feel what You feel . . . first about me and then how you feel about others. I want to live more from my heart and less from my head. I invite You to open my heart and begin to remove anything that hinders me from feeling those things that are in Your heart for me. Your Son, Jesus, lived from a passionate heart and I want that as well. I believe You have made me “in Your image”—feelings and all. Father, like Jesus, I want to “go where You go, say what You say, pray what You pray, and **feel what You feel.**” I ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, Amen.*

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel