

**14 May 2023 Intentional Relationships Part 5: Closing the Gap with the Father
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Scripture reference: Ephesians 6:12 (BSB), Genesis 2:17, Genesis 3:6, Exodus 20:15, Exodus 32:1 (Tehillim), Mark 10:17-23 (ESV), Galatians 5:6, 1 John 4:15 (BSB), 1 John 4:18 (BSB), 1 John 4:16-17 (BSB), James 4:8 (BSB), (James 4:8 (AMP), Romans 4:20 (GW)

Praise the Lord. All right, is everybody ready? I'm also excited to hear what the Holy Spirit's going to say. I said to my wife, yesterday, I am so aware in the earth, how much noise there is. There is so many voices and so much knowledge and so much information and so many opinions about so many things. So much noise. And I was very aware of that in preparing, I had to, you know, and even responsibilities, just natural responsibilities can be a noise. You have to find a place where you can be at peace. For me this, this helps my peace, to have sound and song, to have beautiful sound waves hitting my ear into my soul. But for each of you that might be sounds, some of you it might be nature, some of you, whatever it is. Putting on instrumental music or you find that thing where you can quieten the noise. So, you can speak to the Father, that's for free. Okay.

I heard the Spirit of God say this to me... Please write this down, I'm giving you the message in a nutshell. It is vital to you and me, that we have love first, and we have first love. Everybody with me? I heard the Spirit of God say this to me; It is vital to you and vital to me that we have love first and we have first love. Can everybody say amen to that?

I went to go look up the word *vital*, what it means. This is some of the meaning; *life preserving, life sustaining and fundamental to the continuation of life*. Let me rephrase this. It is vital to you and me, it is life preserving, life sustaining, that we have love first and first love for the continuation of life. You all with me?

Let's pray. Father God, I pray in the name of Jesus that You open our eyes this morning to see and to know Your love. We ask You to help us by the Holy Spirit to listen with our spiritual ears and to turn our eyes on You. I ask that You speak through me this morning and You give me utterance by the Holy Spirit. And we pray this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

I'm going to, I want to encourage you, please, just because I was aware, when I was preparing that in every point, there is so much to unpack, I just don't have the time to unpack everything. I would really encourage you to go and listen to this. Not as a reflection on me, please, but there is so much to talk about in each of these points and it would be really valuable for you to meditate on all of this. Can I get a thumbs up? Okay, the Lord saw you, hey? Okay.

You and I are created by love, for love, and to love. We have always wanted to belong, be loved, and be accepted. It's in our souls, it's in our spirits, and it's in our bodies. Our bodies release endorphins when we are touched and shown affection. Our souls are comforted, encouraged, and secured when we are loved both in word and in touch. Our spirit soars when we experience the love of the Almighty Father.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit created us out of love, to love us, and to fill us to overflowing with divine love for Them and for one another. His love is holy. His love is righteous. His love is pure. His love is unshakable. His love is power. His love never changes. He never changes. You and I were made in His image, the image of love. I want you to put your hand on your heart. Say, "I was made in the image of love." [*Congregation repeats after Pastor Garth.*]

We are made holy, righteous, pure, unshakable, powerful and we too, should never change... Our lives, until we chose another way... We were made in His image and likeness. Holy, righteous, pure, unshakable, and powerful. Until you and I chose another way and went astray.

Our lives drifted away from the Father, and through generations, the Father waited for the fullness of time, to send His beloved Son to close the gap between you and me and Him. And I've forgot to tell you what the message is, *Closing the Gap with the Father*. So, *Intentional Relationships: Closing the Gap with The Father*. The Father waited for the fullness of time to send His Son to close the gap between you and me and Him.

The desire of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit has never changed. They want a family to love and for them to love Them and to fill us with Their love for one another. If I stood in front of every one of you this morning, and asked you why you were here today? I imagine every one of you would say something like this to me, "I want to know God more. I want to know His voice. I want more of His presence in my life. I want to know what His plan is for my life. I want to know His love."

Do you think that's good? In one way or another, if I stood in front of all of you and asked you that question, is that reasonable to think you would answer that way? [*Congregation: Yes.*] Excellent.

The enemy of God knows that God's love is the most powerful force in the universe, and he has and will always try to keep you from ever really knowing how much the Father loves you. Why? He knows that if you know the love of the Father, you will become a conqueror. He knows you will become a fearless warrior; nothing will keep you back, nothing will keep you down. He knows your faith will soar, and your strength will go from glory to glory. He knows that your hope will grow, and your expectation will be in Him and not in man, and not in knowledge, and not in any institution.

This is the greatest aim and purpose of the enemy of God. To keep you from the love of the Father. How do you and I get to know the love of the Father? Well, it's through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I'm leaving, but it's good that I go because I am going to send the Holy Spirit, and He's going to help you. He's going to help you to go through Me to the Father." Because Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

Ephesians 6:12. This is the Berean Standard Bible, so you can just listen. ¹² **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the**

spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12 BSB) Quite similar to how we've heard it.

How many times is the word *against* used here? Five times. Our wrestle, or our struggle, is not *against* flesh and blood, but *against* the rulers, *against* authorities, *against* the powers of this world's darkness and *against* spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. In a biblical context, when a scripture or a chapter is using a word five times like that, it's wanting you to pay attention.

What does this word *against* mean? The Greek word is *pros*, and it has reference to being intimate, face to face, connected, or up against something or someone. Does this give you a slightly different perspective of what this scripture means? Right up against you. We are not against, connected, face to face, right up against flesh and blood. But we are connected right up against, intimate, face to face, with rulers, authorities, powers of this world's darkness, and spiritual forces in heavenly realms. Are you all getting a picture of this? Every day, from the moment you wake, and while you sleep, the spirit realm never sleeps. These forces are *against* you.

I am going to read, and if you really need to, put your fingers in your ears - this will be the time to do it, and tell yourself to listen. I am reading you from the Tehillim which is the Hebrew and Jewish Commentary on what happened in the garden of Eden. I want you to say, "I am listening. I am listening, Holy Spirit." So please listen carefully.

It is not adequate merely to say that Adam dwelled in Paradise, we would be more accurate to say that Paradise dwelled inside of Adam. He was blessed with the inner joy of security and self-assurance; he could trust himself. The agony of self-doubt never tormented the first man. He was completely at peace with himself, confident that his every motive was pure.

Adam was inclined only towards good. But now listen, But what is good? God said one thing, the serpent another. I want you to see what is up against you. God said one thing, the serpent said another. Adam heard the Word of God with his ears.

Genesis 2 verse 17. You can just take reference; I am going to go through the scriptures quickly. *For on the day that you eat of it... this is what God the Father said to them – ...on the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:17)*

Adam heard the Word of God with his ears, *But the serpent, the master of persuasion... Everybody say, "The master of persuasion." [Congregation: The master of persuasion] He presented an appealing argument. He reinforced his words with powerful evidence clearly visible to the eyes. 'Seeing is believing' - a vision is more convincing than a voice. Is everyone listening to this?*

Genesis 3 verse 6. *And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and enticement for the eyes. (Genesis 3:6) Adam changed profoundly after he was disobedient. At first, not the slightest trace of evil was within him. However, by eating of the forbidden fruit, Adam took the enemy into himself. Okay, remember what we're talking about here. Our wrestle is not against flesh and blood, but intimate with darkness. So, Adam took the enemy into himself and thereby made evil an integral*

part of his makeup. His inner harmony forever disrupted, his entire being was shattered into two opposing camps. His entire inner being was at war.

Now Adam's life became a bitter conflict, Are you hearing these words? ...an endless struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood. No longer could he trust himself. He hesitated. He stumbled. He fluctuated - which means up and down – between success and failure. No longer was man reliable or consistent.

Listen to this, To the extent that Adam's self-mastery vanished, he forfeited his sovereignty over the world. To the extent that Adam's self-mastery vanished, he forfeited his position, ruling and reigning in this life. Does everybody understand that? He forfeited his sovereignty over the world. And then, this is just beautiful, The universal song he had conducted ... was all but silenced.

So, you understand, there is much to meditate on in all of this, because you can reflect. We are all in these words. The Patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - sought to regain the perfection of Adam... At Mount Sinai, God gave Israel the opportunity to regain the dependable vision which Adam had forfeited. Exodus 20 verse 15. And all the people saw the sounds. (Exodus 20:15) All the people saw the sounds. They saw what they heard, and they heard what they saw.

At Sinai, please listen to this, At Sinai, Israel's senses were so heightened that they became aware of the one overwhelming truth: the Word of the living God. The Word of God, which means their ears heard what was more tangible, more real than the sights of their eyes. I'm going to read it again. Israel's senses were so heightened that they became aware of one overwhelming truth, the Word of the living God. The Word of God, which to their ears was more tangible, more real than the sight of their eyes. Essentially meaningless, stimuli, visual stimulus, lost all significance to them. Everything that they were seeing with their natural eyes was unappealing to them, had no excitement to them. They saw the truth and the eternity of the Word of God. Furthermore, that which they saw with their eyes, was relatively vague and unimpressive. So, what they now saw with their eyes was unimpressive and vague. If you think about our condition today, it's the reverse of that. Right? Everything that we see with our natural eyes is exciting and appealing. The Word of God – vague. The vision of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - vague. The eyes were suspect for they could easily be deceived, just as Adam's eyes had been clouded by deception. Are you all hearing this this morning? Our eyes are suspect. Consequently, visual data made only a faint impression on them, Lord Jesus, help us, like barely a whisper.

Twice daily, the Jew faithfully attempts to perpetuate this message. He covers his eyes and solemnly declares, 'Hear O Israel, Hashem is our God. Hashem is One.' Cover up your eyes! Pay no attention to that which you see. Live only by the truth which you hear about the living God and follow His commands! Wow! They were excited, completely excited and stimulated by the Word that they heard and what they heard, they saw. They saw what they heard, and they heard what they saw.

Unfortunately, this Utopian situation. Utopian is like a high. Unfortunately, this situation did not endure. Only forty days later they were again led astray by their eyes which imagined that they saw what they really did not see.

Exodus 32 verse 1. Satan came and mixed up the world. Again. He showed them an apparition of confusing darkness and gloom, as if to say: 'Surely Moses has died.' (Exodus 32:1) That he came to deceive them, because Moses had gone up the mountain. And for 40 days, they were without their leader. The enemy lied to them and said, "He's died, he's not coming back."

The terrible result of this deception was the sin of the Golden Calf, and the spiritual decline of Israel. Once again the world was plunged into darkness, to await a new dawn, and a fresh vision. Glory to Jesus.

These rulers, authorities, powers, and evil forces are against you. A breath away, intimate with you. It's a violating spirit. Pastor John and Pastor Sharon, use that in talking to us about 'God taking the children' that the spirit that comes on them, and all of us is a violating spirit. What's a violating spirit? It forces itself upon you. Takes your goodness, your purity. Without using stronger language. You're getting a picture of what's against you. The purpose of this struggle is to keep you and me from looking at Jesus. Looking at Jesus, hearing His words and discovering the Father.

What is it that the enemy wants you and I to look at? Are you all still listening? What is it that the enemy wants you and I to look at? Does the enemy want us to look at him? No. Does he want us to look at God, or Jesus? So, who does the enemy want us to look at? Ourselves. the enemy wants you to look at yourself, yourself, yourself, yourself, yourself, yourself, and then at others. He wants you to compare yourself to yourself and then with others.

The evil that came into man that day produced self-consciousness. Can you see the struggle that you and I are faced with all the time? Even here right now, the enemy would love to keep you focused on who? Yourself. He wants you to focus on your condition and your needs. Think about what happened to Adam and Eve that day. They partook, evil came into them and immediately they died. Where did they die? Spiritual death. The Holiness that was in them, the life that was in them left, it couldn't stay with evil there. And immediately they saw themselves. And what happened? They hid from Who? Their Father. And immediately they wanted to cover themselves provide for themselves. They had no need of this before. How do we cover our condition and provide for ourselves? Are you all listening? By knowledge! We have to keep partaking of what the enemy enticed us with originally. Well, I wonder how... I'm going... well maybe... if I get these leaves, and I sew them together, then I can cover myself. Knowledge! And then if I find a good tree and a hide behind it, and it's a dense tree, then God won't see me. Knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. Because just as I read, - in this book - "The master of persuasion presents an appealing argument. He reinforces his words with powerful evidence clearly visible to the eyes." So now I look at myself, there's clear evidence that I need more knowledge, because I need to provide for me, I need to cover my own condition. God won't do that for me, I can't trust Him. He's going to slap me on the backside for what I've done. I don't want to jump ahead of myself. "He reinforces his words with powerful evidence clearly visible to the eyes. Seeing is believing." That's the lie.

For thousands of years, mankind has been creating what is pleasant to the eyes, by using knowledge. We have been creating our own *'golden calf'* and worshipping it. What's interesting to me is that the enemy has always had a counterfeit, he's always had a fake, he's always had something false to represent what's true. Within the Father, within the Godhead exists the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three. Listen to this. These are the three Gods that were mainly worshipped from those times all through history. And we have some insight into that. The god Baal - he was called the possessor - and he promised prosperity. Then the enchantress girl-god called Ishtar of sexual immorality, and who promised fertility. The third god Molech who received the sacrifice of our children by fire. We've been taught at some level on those three gods. But interesting, that is Three and three. How do you say Garth that we have been serving these gods? Well, by giving our lives, our bodies, and our children to knowledge. Knowledge has powerful evidence clearly visible to the eyes. Look at the greatness of our schools. Look at the greatness of our universities, and businesses, and careers all built on knowledge and look at the prosperity that it brings. Look at what Baal promises and from young we offer our children to Molech because as we give it to him, Baal will reward us with prosperity through our children, or reward them with prosperity. Are you all seeing this? I put myself in the same boat, you, and me. I'm not going to go into the sexual side. But we are all aware at the moment how much sexual immorality and evil there is in earth right now. Well, why do we serve these things? Because the evidence is clear to our eyes. What we see is appealing, it's exciting and the words have evidence.

Please hear this today, church, and I speak to myself as well. God wants us to know today that knowledge is fading and it's passing away. You can say, Amen. Or Oh me? No, Amen. He wants us to return and revolt against knowledge. He wants us to have a full revolution back to His original instruction to man - eat only the words of life! Interesting that in the garden, there were two trees that were placed in the centre of the garden, in the midst of the garden. The tree of life, which God never said, you don't eat of that tree. Of all the trees you can eat except, the knowledge of good and evil. It's interesting that, that tree actually indicates that Satan was giving them - it wasn't just knowledge - he was saying, "You partake of good and evil, and then you decide what's good, and you decide what's evil." He wanted Adam and Eve to be king of their own lives. He wanted them to be a king unto themselves. It wasn't just like a nebulous or mystical fruit that was the knowledge of good and evil. He was saying, "No, you partake of this and then you become king, and you decide what's good, and you decide what's evil, you become sovereign, not God." And God was saying, "No! Partake of life!" So, He (God) wants us to return and revolt against knowledge. He wants a full revolution, back to the original instruction, eat only of life. And when He said that to me, in my spirit I saw the picture of these olden-day scales, they would put the weight on the one side and then it would tip, and they would balance the scales. The Lord said to me "I want to tip the scales, knowledge is heavy on the earth, and life it seems, is irrelevant and void of any real weight." So, God wants to tip the scales, you will understand that. Okay. Knowledge is heavy on the earth, and it seems irrelevant and void of any real weight.

God wants a full-scale war on knowledge by shouting, "Love, love, love is our war-cry."

God never instructed us to teach our children knowledge. Throughout the Old- and New Testament, He instructed us to teach our children the way of the Lord. Deuteronomy 4. He told us to speak about His wonders, our salvation and what He has done for us morning, noon, and night. Deuteronomy 6. And He told us to meditate on His word's day and night, that we would make our own way a good success. Joshua 1. And he instructed us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 9:10. This wisdom or knowledge comes from God. This is true, goodness. Knowledge may look good, but only wisdom, which comes from God is good.

God wants us to keep His words and His statutes. O church... God wants us to keep His words and His statutes, like the rich young ruler. But more importantly, He wants us to love Him first, and have first love and sell everything we have to follow Him.

I'm going read you the Scripture and then I'm almost done. Praise God. But there's a lot in the Scripture, Mark 10, verse 17, to 23. And you can read along with me, please. Mark 10 verse 17 to 23. This is the story of *The Rich Young Ruler*. Are you all still listening? I know there's a lot in this, and you have to focus, but just tell yourself to focus a little bit longer.

Mark 10, verse 17 to 23. Verse 17, ¹⁷ **As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him**, So this is Jesus, as Jesus was setting out on journey. Please live in the scripture with me. Imagine this. **...as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him...** I would say there's some desperation to this man, right? Jesus is on a journey and a man runs up to Him and kneels before him. **...and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do so that I may inherit eternal life?"** He's desperate for this eternal life. Can you see that? But ¹⁸ **... Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good, except God alone.** ¹⁹ **You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother.'** ²⁰ **And he said to Jesus, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth, Are you hearing, church? I have kept all these things from my youth."** (Mark 10:17-20 ESV)

Look at this. ²¹ **Looking at him**, this is Jesus looking at him. Jesus showed love to him, and said to him, so imagine this, Jesus sees and knows that this young man has kept all of these commandments and statutes from his youth and loves Him. Jesus showed love to him, ²¹ **...and said to him, one thing you lack:** One thing you lack. Wouldn't it be nice to hear that, even one thing you lack? But listen to this, ²¹ **...go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow Me.** And I've underlined this, ²² **But he was deeply dismayed by these words, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.** ²³ **And Jesus looking around said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"** (Mark 10:21-23 ESV)

What do you think happened to this young man's life? How do you think he felt for the rest of his days? Deeply dismayed, and grief. Those are not small emotions. In our times, we would say extremely depressed, clinically depressed. Jesus showed him the way, gave him the answer, and his spirit, listen to this, his spirit, his soul, and

his body rejected His love. Why? Because he had built his own kingdom based on knowledge and reliance on himself. He was a man of good stature in the community, probably even a generous man. He was smart. He was an upright man. We would even say he had great faith, because he had kept the commandments and the statutes of God. I pray your spirit hears this. But he was tormented by fear, and death, because he had built his entire life on the knowledge of good and evil. Even the knowledge he had of God was just knowledge to him. He kept the knowledge of God very, very, very well. But it was not through love! He knew he needed true life, eternal life. The one thing he lacked, the first love of God, was the very thing he couldn't receive, because he did not recognize that it was love. Jesus!

Galatians 5 verse 6, just the end of the scripture, **⁶ faith is activated and expressed and works through love. (Galatians 5:6 AMPC)**

What do you think was going on inside this man? How about this? "How can I ever do that? I can't give everything I have. I have so much. How can I give everything and follow a man? How will I live?"

How can I give everything and follow a man? How will I live? How will I survive? How will my needs be met? I can't give all that I have. That is not a wise decision. That is not a good choice. It will be the death of me. Fair to say that that is what was going on inside of him. Oh, Jesus.

God wants fear out of His church. Say, "I am His church. God wants fear out of me." How? By love.

First John 4 verse 18. I really am almost done - first John 4 verse 18. **¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. The one who fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:18 BSB).** 1 John 4 verse 15 **¹⁵ If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:15 BSB).**

How many of you have confessed that Jesus is the Son of God? If you have not, there will be a chance for you to receive your salvation at the end. But really, can you put up your hands please, if you have received Jesus as your Saviour, and confess that Jesus is Lord? Okay, that is all of you. God abides in you and you in God. Say, "God abides in me, and I in God." Does that leave any gap? If God abides in you, and you in God, does that leave any gap? **¹⁶ And we have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love; whoever abides in love, abides in God, and God in him. ¹⁷ In this way, love has been perfected among us.** I wanted you to note this, **¹⁷ In this way,** so it is the first individual, God is love, whoever, are you a whoever? **Whoever abides in love, abides in God, and God in him. In this way, love has been perfected among us, so that we may have confidence on the day of judgment; for in this world, we are just like Him. (1 John 4:16-17 BSB).**

Just for you to note that your personal abiding in God and God in you, and you in God and God in you. When we come together, the love of God is perfected among us. Oh Jesus. I am going to repeat. It is vital to you and me that we have love first, and we have first love. Is God talking about faith? Faith works by. So, you and I, like

Your Word my treasure, my primary source of life in my life, my absolute treasure. For not loving Your words, but loving lots of things. And not loving Your Word, the Bible, first and foremost in my life. Forgive me. Look at me Lord, look at me. Look at me for not making Your words the treasure of my life. Look at me God. Help, help!"

James 4:8 ⁸ **Come close to God [with a contrite heart] and He will come close to you. Wash your hands**, all the things that you and I have touched in this world, wash your hands **you sinners; and purify your [unfaithful] hearts, you double-minded [people]. (James 4:8 AMPC)** I have to do this (*Pastor Garth pointing to himself*) "Wash your hands you sinner. Purify your unfaithful heart, you double minded person." No, not anybody else. No, no, no, no. Me.

It's funny for me... like God has a good sense of humour for me. This is like a spiritual antibiotic. Romans 4:20, and I think you know this about me already. Romans 4:20, **Abraham didn't doubt God's promise out of a lack of faith.** Remember I've said this to you before, Abraham couldn't pray in the Spirit, he didn't have the new birth, he didn't have the ancient language, he didn't hold fast to the confession of his faith, he didn't have the Bible. What did Abraham have? Here is a spiritual antibiotic. ²⁰ **He didn't doubt God's promise out of a lack of faith. Instead, giving honor and glory to God for the promise, he became strong in faith (Romans 4:20 GW).** What is one of the greatest ways that you and I can close the gap with God the Father? Love Him. I worship You, I praise You, I give You glory, I give You honour, I thank You for Your promises, that Your promises are true, I give glory to You and honour to You.

And this is the last thing; we've been taught about the war of wills, the war of words, and the war of worship. The Lord said this to me when we were taught about that by Pastor John, "Worship will bypass your will and your words." Worship. Why? Worship is the only thing that you can give God. Worship makes God bigger, yourself smaller, worship gets your eyes off you, your faith, your knowledge and gets your eyes on Him. Even faith can become that, "Oh, look at my faith. I've been speaking the Word and I have my foot in the message and I know the Bible. I can quote the Bible from Genesis to Revelation." Worship gets your eyes off you, off your faith, your knowledge and gets your eyes on Him, who He is and His greatness. Worship will keep our focus on love first and create first love.

I know I left the best thing for last, but there's a lot of meat in there. And, what's wonderful about the Father is He corrects those that He loves. I said to Marcelle I'm going to just have a moment of honesty with you, when I was preparing, I said to Marcelle, "My darling, I feel so unworthy delivering a message like this to God's people because how far have I come from love first and first love?" This is a correction and His love to me, first, and for you all. Our dependence on knowledge, God wants a full revolution and revolt against knowledge and a complete revolution to what He instructed us to do; talk about Him, love Him, meditate on Him and with our children, we teach them the Word, the Word, the Word, the Word. From the Word comes wisdom. Lord knows our children need wisdom; we need wisdom. Hey?

I said to Marcelle, "It's funny, it's Mother's Day, but I'm talking about *Closing the Gap with the Father.*" You know, the world says, "Happy mother, happy home". But let me tell you, a father who serves and fears God in the home is invaluable. A father who

doesn't, a woman has war. Massive struggles. That's for another time I can share that with you because my beautiful wife and wonderful mother has had much of that in our home in my past - waiting for this father and this man (Pastor Garth talks about himself) to love God first and have first love. Not to please man. Jesus. Hey? That's what the love of God does, it drives out the fear of pleasing man as well.

And I can say this to you, I don't do this for anybody else except God. In fact, in my natural person, I would prefer not to be on stage in front of lights. Really. But I do this to please God. I don't even do this to please Pastor John and Pastor Sharon. I do this to please God. Because, if God is pleased with me, Pastor John and Pastor Sharon will be pleased with me. Praise the Lord. Glory to Jesus. Pastor Sharon?

Pastor Sharon:

Pastor Garth, I'm in recognition of this moment that God has brought us to. I've been sharing with those that I'm close to that since Pastor John and I came back from the last overseas trip, I have recognised a shift in the way in which God is dealing with this church in the three messages he brought, and he's been saying this is a moment God has brought us to, this is a moment God has brought us to, and I've been recognising the moment. In the last message that he brought, this is a moment that God has brought us to, and he said, "Here is a prayer of choice that you should be meditating on."

And so, I'm finding that this is a moment that God has brought us to, right now, and we can't just go home. It doesn't matter what the time is. It doesn't matter what the time is. Melissa, if you can just come up. And Pastor John said, "The power of the choice that you make, is not in me asking you to come forward but it's in the quiet decision of your heart." That's the way he put it, in the quietness of your choice, your quiet choice, what you say in your heart. Melissa is going to play, we're going to have some personal quiet moments with the Lord now before we go home. This is too big of what God is doing here with us as a congregation, for us just to go, "Be blessed, the power and the blood of Jesus surround you and protect you..." this is a moment.

Pastor Garth:

I want to say this, because this is something that really helps me, that God, the Father, He will take what so little we give Him and multiply it. He took those two loaves and the fishes and fed 5000. God is not asking you right here, right now to change everything about your life, but He wants you to give Him something. He wants you to give Him something, and every time that you say, "I love You," to the Father, you're giving Him something, you're giving Him a piece of your heart. If you can't say, "I love You," to the Father, that's a good recognition of where your heart is at, because to Him there's no gap. There's no gap. He wants you and I to say freely to Him, "I love You, Father. I love You, Father. I love You, Father. I love You, Father. I love You, Father. I take my eyes off the things that are appealing in this world and right here, right now, I tell you that I love You. You are my Father. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me so that I can have this relationship with You." Whatever is in your heart to say to Him, give Him something. Hey, church?

Some of you need to do this as a family. Please. Please, grab each other's hands and before the Lord, before the Father say, "We love You. We love you." That God's love may be perfected in your family first. Hello! Come on guys. If you're with your

family, grab, grab their hands, and say it as a family, “We love You, Father. We love You, Father. We love You, Jesus. We love You, Holy Spirit.”

And one of the greatest things you can do is to say thank You to Him for the blood, because the blood speaks of mercy and forgiveness; forgiveness for all of the sin that exists in you and you as a family, mercy for you and for your family. “Mercy! Help me!” Say, “Father, thank You for Jesus. Jesus, thank You for Your blood. Thank You for forgiveness. Thank You for mercy.” I pray that every one of you throws yourself at the mercy of God. Throw yourself at the mercy of God.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. [*Reverencing His presence.*] Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. This is by the Spirit for you, families. Fathers, men, husbands, begin the revolution in your home. You get out the Bible and begin reading to your family. Speak of the Lord and the ways of the Lord. Remember what He has done for us. Speak about His wonders in the morning, the noon and evening, fathers, men.

Women, wives, mothers, encourage, encourage your husbands to do this. Encourage them. Don't accuse them, don't point a finger at them, encourage them to be spiritual men. Speak to who they are; “You are made in the image and the likeness of the Father, you are righteous, you are pure, you are holy, you are a man of integrity.” Encourage them to pick up their Bible and to read scripture to the family. Oh Jesus. That love may be perfected in our homes. Jesus. And fear can leave, and instability and insecurity can leave and self-doubt, the agony of self-doubt, can leave, that love would be perfected among us in our homes first and then when we come together as a church, we have confidence before the Lord. Glory to Jesus!

You know, the enemy hates the Father because it was the Father who kicked him out of Heaven. He's been determined to destroy the image of the Father from the dawn of Creation. I said this by the Holy Spirit in prayer the one evening that we don't even have an example of what Adam would have looked like as a father with children before the curse. We only saw Adam and Eve with children and Adam as a father after the curse. So, we have no idea, actually, what the image of a father looks like in the blessing, in the fullness of life - protector, warrior, strong, mighty men. And remember, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. This is not for condemnation. The Lord is encouraging us. He is encouraging us. He is encouraging me. Praise God.

Men, put up your hands. Put up your hands, men, all men. Because even the men that are not fathers yet, maybe you'll be fathers and say, “I love You, Jesus. I love You, Father. I love You, Holy Spirit. I give You my heart. You are precious and valuable to me.” Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Well, I'm done. I think the Holy Spirit is done. I'll pray for you. Happy Mother's Day.

Father, thank You for this wonderful day. Thank You for the things that You've said to us. Thank You for being so loving with us. Thank You for bringing these words of life to us, words of light to us, and words of love to us. Thank You for correcting us and for showing us the way of the Lord. Thank You for leading us and guiding us and helping us by Your precious Holy Spirit. Thank You, that even today, You help us to

change our conversation to remember what You have done for us, to speak about Your signs and Your wonders and Your glory, to change our conversation as families, to love on You as families. I bless Your people today in the precious name of Jesus with great peace, with joy, and all of the good things that You have in store for them today, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Thank you for coming church. May you all live so long that the people in Heaven think you didn't make it. Praise the Lord.