



AN INVITATION TO “GO DEEPER”

Much more than a “how-to manual,” the UNBOUND MINISTRY Guidebook invites each reader to go deeper into the Heart of the Father.

I encourage everyone reading this book to be open to the “new things” the Holy Spirit will reveal to you as you more fully embrace the loving call of Jesus to serve Him in setting the captives free—including yourself!

— Nancy Greenhaw
G.R.A.C.E. Ministries



UNBOUND MINISTRY Guidebook

Helping Others Find Freedom in Christ

NEAL LOZANO

& Matthew Lozano



Jubilee Studio

CLINTON CORNERS, NEW YORK

UNBOUND MINISTRY Guidebook: Helping Others Find Freedom in Christ

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Published by:

JUBILEE STUDIO, P.O. Box 75, Clinton Corners, NY 12514. Jubilee Studio is an imprint of The Attic Studio Publishing House. Phone: 845-266-8100; E-mail: atticstudiopress@aol.com

in collaboration with:

HEART OF THE FATHER MINISTRIES, P.O. Box 905, Ardmore, PA 19003. Phone: 610-952-3019; website: www.heartofthefather.com

Book and cover design by Ted Schluenderfritz ■ www.5Sparrows.com

Cover photo by Savas Keskiner

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ISBN: 978-1-883551-25-4

Printed in the United States of America

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A Letter from Neal Lozano

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for continuing with us in this exciting adventure as, together, we seek to faithfully serve the One who sets the captives free.

For more than 40 years, I have experienced the great privilege and joy of helping others find freedom in Christ. The Gospel truly is good news! Traveling with teams both near and far, my wife Janet and I have so often witnessed the profound power of God's love and truth in utilizing the Five Keys of UNBOUND. As has been said by more than one participant, "The ministry of UNBOUND is a place 'where the rubber meets the road' in our journey with the Lord."

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Boundless Possibilities

Over the past decade, the message of the Five Keys of UNBOUND has been carried around the world in ways we could never have imagined. Some have told me that when they travel, they bring copies of *UNBOUND: A Practical Guide to Deliverance* in order to spread the good news of UNBOUND to different nations. With the publication of *Resisting the Devil: A Catholic Perspective on Deliverance* in 2010, new doors are opening for us to bring the message to Catholic seminarians, clergy, and bishops. **We planted the first seed; many of you have**

planted more; the planting will continue. This Ministry Guidebook is intended to cultivate and nourish the young seedlings so they will produce good fruit in the Kingdom of God.

UNBOUND MINISTRY releases the power of the gospel in a form that is easily understood and reproduced. Many groups have adopted the ministry and are now promoting the book more effectively than any marketing professional could. People hear about the freedom others have received. When they ask for help, they are often invited to read *UNBOUND* as preparation for a ministry session.

SHARING THE MESSAGE OF THE FIVE KEYS:

A Variety of Approaches

As the message of the Five Keys continues to spread, we are able to identify two basic ministry categories emerging. On the one hand, there are those who use the UNBOUND model as “a tool in their spiritual tool chest,” integrating it with other approaches to ministry. We are happy to be able to contribute in this way. On the other hand, there are those who are more singularly focused on using the UNBOUND model, receiving training to be part of formalized UNBOUND MINISTRY teams.

Both groups are legitimate. The main issue is that each group needs to identify its approach so that people coming for ministry know exactly what form of ministry they are going to receive. In this way, the integrity of UNBOUND MINISTRY can be preserved, while allowing a wide use of the principles by people beyond those who are officially aligned with the UNBOUND model.

To that end, we ask that if you use the UNBOUND model in combination with other approaches to healing and deliverance, you call your ministry something different so as to distinguish it from UNBOUND MINISTRY. If you have a healing, renewal, or transformation center and UNBOUND is *one* of the many ministries that you offer, please make the distinctions clear so seekers can choose what type of ministry they desire. In some instances, there may also be those who miss a piece of

what we teach and thereby misrepresent the principles and the values of UNBOUND MINISTRY. If we are to increase as a movement that reaches people around the world and influences many parts of the church, we need consistency in what others present as UNBOUND MINISTRY (or the Five Keys).¹

As is the case with this *UNBOUND MINISTRY Guidebook* (emerging from our shared experiences over the years), every aspect of the UNBOUND model has been carefully reviewed and tested. There is a reason behind each of the core points of what we teach and why all the keys are integrated into one approach to inner healing and deliverance. We have resisted complicating the UNBOUND model with elements and teachings that are not part of the basic core. We've seen that those who have been most successful in using and spreading the message have stuck to the simplicity of what we have taught. One leader noted, "I learned the most by sticking to the model, using all five keys. I grew in my understanding of them as I used them." Another person, after watching Janet and me minister to someone, said, "The difference between you and all the other people I have observed using the Five Keys is that you and Janet trust in the keys and do not go beyond them."

The *UNBOUND MINISTRY Guidebook* builds upon what was written in the second part of *UNBOUND* and I trust it will be an encouragement to all those using the Five Keys to help others. **I believe that what is in this book is vital to keeping us on course and empowering people to set the captives free in a way that continues to be reproducible in different parts of the church and among the nations.**

Among the many dedicated co-laborers over the years who have contributed their wisdom, insights and experiences to the *MINISTRY Guidebook*, I would especially like to thank my son, Matthew,

¹ You will find a clear discussion of what constitutes UNBOUND MINISTRY on our website, www.heartofthefather.com. We urge you to visit us online as you plan your own ministry. Our website offers a wealth of material to serve those involved in Unbound Ministry, including a document, "Using the Unbound Name."

who collaborated with me in preparing this book and wrote two of its chapters. He is currently assisting UNBOUND leaders as they develop local ministries.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

May the Lord use the time you spend with this guidebook to bring you into a deeper encounter with the truth of His love for you, so that you may become a more perfect vessel of His liberating power to those who are in need.

In the Father's Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neal Lozano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Neal Lozano

This book is dedicated to our faithful friend, Joseph Marchese, who served with us from the beginning of Heart of the Father Ministries. He went home to be with the Lord on July 6, 2011, as this Guidebook was being written. His faith, love, joy, and humble service are a lasting legacy which he has imparted to all of us who served with him. ❖



INTRODUCTION

Sharing Your Encounter with Jesus

You were delivered. You found freedom. Perhaps your breakthrough came at an UNBOUND: Freedom in Christ conference. Perhaps it came as you read *UNBOUND: A Practical Guide to Deliverance*. It may have happened last year or five years ago, but however or whenever you received deliverance, now you want to give it away. This is the door to greater freedom.

Everyone who has received from God can give. In fact, God expects us to give freely what we have received (see Matthew 10:8). One man who experienced liberation during the pre-conference training returned to his office thirty minutes later and used the Five Keys as he prayed with a furloughing missionary. The missionary was set free as well. Another, a man who had been a psychotherapist for twenty-five years, became a regular member of our ministry team after receiving his freedom. He testified that though he had helped many people over those years, now that he prayed with them using the UNBOUND model, he saw them healed and set free. This, he said, was a greater privilege.

Never forget the privilege you have of releasing the power of the gospel into the darkness of a man or a woman's heart. Remember the encounters you have had with God and what He has done as you have led others to the freedom Jesus brings. Remembering will motivate you to greater dedication, releasing deeper understanding, and provoking a readiness to make sacrifices to serve those who come to you for help. Janet and I remember so many of God's children who have received freedom through UNBOUND and through Heart of the Father Ministries. We remember the broken man, unable to look Janet in the

eye because of terrible childhood abuse and years of living under the shame. We remember his inability to be touched; we remember the complete change when he allowed Janet to hug him after the Father's blessing. We remember the tormented woman whose great-grandmother had been a psychic; we remember her happiness as she spoke of her experience of the Father's love. And we remember Clair, a committed Christian and successful professional whose life was ruined by the lie that she would make a mistake that would ruin everything and cause those who loved her to abandon her. We will always remember how Clair stood up with confidence at her church and testified publicly to her freedom.

Now, what will they remember? Will the man remember the respect Janet gave in gently asking to touch his hand? Will the tormented woman remember the lack of fear about the occult and how gently Jesus came to set her free? Will Clair remember the understanding, the acceptance, and the lack of judgment? Will she remember the way I stumbled over some of the words I used to lead her—which will remind her that God will cover over her mistakes if her heart is right? In each interaction, we sought not to follow a method or perform a job well; we sought to follow Jesus' heart in loving each person as we were guided by the Five Keys. It is likely that they will remember the little things we do with love and they will remember the big thing God does—which will be their motivation to seek deeper freedom for themselves and those they love.

MINISTRY DEEPENS

The word *ministry* means “service.” Whether you occasionally have an opportunity to help a friend or are part of a team that provides UNBOUND ministry, the quality of your service needs to continue to deepen. As you learn to lead UNBOUND teams and pray with more and more people, you will need much more than information; you will need active faith, sincere compassion, deep humility, and utter dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this guidebook is to equip you and further propel you into a model of ministry that took us many years to learn. This is a resource that you may read and reread through the years as you serve those who come to you. Our prayer is

that this guidebook will take you deeper into the treasures the Father has for you as you learn to love others well. We invite you into the process of going deeper with the Lord.

The journey begins here: with your understanding that deliverance and freedom are never one-time experiences. Just as the Scriptures talk about salvation as a past event, a daily present deliverance, and our future hope, so freedom is much greater than an experience. It is the ongoing flooding of the soul with the awareness of God's love and mercy. It is also the promise of the glory that we will know someday—the glory of being always in the presence of God and experiencing the fullness of His love. This is why Paul prays for the Ephesians—and for us—that they may know this love.

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, 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 that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:14-19 (NIV)

That is our prayer for you as well. As men and women who minister under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, each of us is in need of His daily deliverance, in need of the Lord's presence. For this reason, we begin this guidebook by addressing the foundational issues for sons and daughters of God: faith, hope, and love in the Holy Spirit. You will find them in my book, *UNBOUND*, like threads of different colors woven through a tapestry. Here they are addressed directly. If you have been seeking the Lord through the years, I am confident that God has been weaving His fruit into your life, for He is faithful. He has been preparing you for ministry long before you could see what He was preparing you for, just as the foundation is poured and set long before neighborhood watchers have any idea what a house will look like.

The most important foundation for ministry is your own full participation in the heart of the Father—in His delight in you (Chapter 1).

This truth empowers you to speak the Father's blessing into the hearts of those to whom you minister and imparts to you a greater ability to give away what the Lord gives you. For this truth to work deep into your heart and spill over into the lives of others, it is essential you learn to trust the Holy Spirit in all things and listen to His voice (Chapter 2). Above all, seek after compassion and humility (Chapters 3 and 4), for this love is His will:

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3:12-14

As you read these first four chapters, I pray you are led to a deeper hunger to be like Christ in your ministry and to be more fully a vessel of God's love.

MINISTRY HELPS

Part II of this guidebook offers practical teaching on implementing the UNBOUND model. As you listen to God and the one He sends to you, you will find the Five Keys increasingly effective (Chapter 5), you will gain greater insight into the enemies' strategies, which will lead you to have greater success in assisting a person in need to name their enemies (Chapter 6), and you will gain a deeper understanding of the human heart (Chapter 7).

Chapter 8 focuses on exposing the work of self-justification, a basic response of man's fallen nature, while Chapter 9 gives suggestions and examples to help you effectively speak the Father's blessing into the lives of those who have been set free.

Part III serves as an FAQ reference guide as you use and teach the UNBOUND model, but it is much more than simply answers to questions. By adding my "further reflections" to each question, I give you the opportunity for deeper understanding of the answer and related issues.

Finally, the Appendices contain additional material that will expand your understanding of the UNBOUND model and extend your ability

to help others find freedom. Appendix A contains four testimonies that add depth to topics addressed in Chapter 4 and Questions 8, 9, and 14. You will also find a ministry session that was transcribed so you can see how the Five Keys were applied. Appendix B contains practical materials on discernment of spirits, lists of lies and spirits, and other documents that you can reproduce or download from our website. We conclude with a Postscript that points the way forward.

ASK THE LORD FOR GUIDANCE

We thank the Lord for using you to draw people to the Father, where they will find the truth that every human being longs for: the truth that God calls them sons and daughters, the truth that He delights in them. As you begin to minister, ask the Lord to be your guide. You may be tempted to read for information and to categorize what you read as valuable or not. I invite you to read asking the Holy Spirit to teach you. Some things I say will be too much for you to implement now. Just leave them with the Lord as you whisper, “Lord, please teach me about that.” He will in time. When you reread a page or a chapter, you will be surprised at the ways He has answered your simple prayer of faith.

The Lord will continue to build you into a house of welcome and a doorway to freedom for others. One of my favorite passages is from Psalm 26: “LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells.” (verse 8 NIV).

As you delight daily in His presence, as you seek to dwell in His heart, remember that being a house, a place of ministry, is first being a place for Him to dwell: “If a man loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23).



PART I

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD

*Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons
of the living God.* (MATTHEW 5:9, paraphrased)

As sons and daughters of God we are called to do His work, reconciling man to God and reconciling persons in the human family. God's work is not something we simply do; it flows from who we are. To do His work we must be God-like. In Biblical times a son represented his father not only in his business but also in his person. The words of Jesus would have made perfect sense in His culture: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

If you are doing the work of a peacemaker using the UNBOUND model, be confident that as God works through you He is going deeper in you, producing in you the qualities of a son or daughter of God. Each of the first four chapters will give you the opportunity to ask yourself one of the following key questions and to dive deeply into the answer. Do you know that God delights in you? Do you rely on the Holy Spirit? Is humility your path? Is it compassion that moves you? Before we learn more in Part 2 about releasing the gift of freedom in others, we will consider our own freedom as children of God, who, knowing the Heart of the Father, are thereby equipped to serve as Jesus served. God is working in us as He works through us. God is able to do both simultaneously with ultimate efficiency. We who wish to do what the Father is doing must be careful to keep in balance these two areas, God's work in others and God's work in us, not neglecting the one for the other.



CHAPTER I

God Delights in You

BY MATTHEW LOZANO

*The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.* (ZEPHANIAH 3:17 NIV)

Here is some good news: God likes you! He really, really likes you! This is the fundamental reality of who you are in Christ and the essence of your life as a son or daughter of God. Do you want to minister like Jesus, setting the captives free? Then you need to understand that Jesus' authority to heal and deliver came from His perfect relationship with the Father. The power to heal and deliver can only come from the same place—from your union with the Father through Jesus, His Son. The Father imparted to Jesus *His* fundamental reality by expressing the pleasure of His heart: “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” Notice, the Father didn't say, “Listen to Jesus—He's really holy!” Instead, the starting point of Jesus' public ministry began with the Father's declaration that His Son was a great pleasure to Him. This declaration became a wellspring of strength and authority, as pleasing the Father was the motivation for all of Jesus' great works.

It gets better: As we embrace our identity as ransomed and adopted children of God, we too lay claim to the blessing and inheritance that belongs to Jesus. Take in the Father's words as I paraphrase His blessing over you: “This is My beloved child, in whom I delight. This is

the love of My heart; My favor rests on you. Son, you please Me well. Daughter, you fill Me with joy.”

The Father’s delight in us is not just a happy thought. It is the Creator’s *original disposition* toward us as His greatest creation. The purpose of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection was to restore a right relationship between a loving Father and His wayward children by destroying the power of sin, enabling us to trust Him and experience His delight. Furthermore, knowing His delight is a *key to life* and it enables us to walk in obedience, handle tough circumstances, and fulfill our call and destiny. Our ability as a redeemed creature to experience God’s pleasure and love becomes a wellspring of motivation to minister to others, to set the captives free.

The problem is many of us do not want to accept the thought that we please God. For some, the idea of God’s love as a virtue or theological principle is okay, but the idea that God actually *likes* us is hard to handle. We identify with the sin in our lives and see ourselves as shameful sinners who are merely accepted because of Jesus. God therefore tolerates us, holding His nose like an uncomfortable dad with a stinky, diapered infant. One problem with this thinking is that we identify with the very sin Jesus came to remove and reject the identity He came to bestow. We are not called to participate in the old self but to put on Christ and live in the power of His resurrection—we are a new creation. By adopting us as children, God invites us to participate in His life and in His nature.

DELIGHT IS THE NATURE OF GOD

To *delight* means “to take great pleasure; to experience great satisfaction or gratification.” Because of His perfection, God is, by nature, completely delighted in Himself. He dwells in an unbroken, eternal family relationship, in complete and utter pleasure. There is no pleasure like that experienced between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Proverbs gives us a prophetic picture of this eternal delight: “Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind” (Proverbs 8:30-31 NIV).

God expressed His complete joy through creation. Ponder this: God created all people—including you—from His delight and *for* His delight. You were made to be His companion, a person like Him but not Him. This is the great generosity and vulnerability of God, who wants another to experience Him and know Him intimately. Being made in His image enables you to experience communion with Him, to feel what He feels. Furthermore, you are also given the ability to freely and deeply love Him in return. Each man, each woman, is a person capable of thrilling God's heart with endless delight.

How do we know God is thrilled? Because He stopped creating. God did not look at us and say, "Let Me try that again." Rather, God made man at the very end of the creative process and when He looked at the whole of His creation He then said, "It is *very* good!" God is very creative (I'm a big fan of His work), and He certainly would have made us differently if He needed to. But He didn't. He was delighted with us as the final touch of His creation. So He chose to stop working and begin enjoying. He walked in His creation and had fellowship with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day.

Have you ever wondered why God placed man in a garden? First, because a garden is a place of intentional order, where caring nurture provides the opportunity for life to grow and flourish. But second, a garden is intended for the pleasure of the gardener. Having finished all his work, the gardener wants to enjoy what his imagination has created. This is particularly true of Adam and Eve who were the pinnacle of that creative process. They were made in the Gardener's image and He wanted to enjoy communion with them. This is the reason God chose to dwell in it.

If you are designed to know and respond to His delight in you, then what happens when you reject the truth that He delights in you? The answer is you don't know Him fully. You can know of His power and His majesty, His beauty and His wisdom, but if you don't know what delights Him so profoundly, you have missed the essence of who God is and the source of His motivation. You have missed the heart of the Father. I've been to several funerals where someone has said something like, "You really don't know Bob unless you know he loved fly fishing." I often walked away from these funerals feeling like I knew the person

better because a friend had revealed the source of his passion. It is the same with God. When you miss the source of His passion, you miss His heart. When you miss His heart, you misunderstand the Person.

YOU ARE HIS BRIDE

The apostle Paul echoed the heart of God for His people when he prayed for the Ephesians “that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19b NIV). What is another word for *fullness*? *Delight!* Delight is extreme gratification and satisfaction. Paul’s prayer is that we find fullness in God’s fullness and pleasure from His pleasure over us. Read his prayer again as I paraphrase: “that you may be gratified to the measure of the gratification of God, delighted to the measure of the delight of God, and satisfied to the measure of His satisfaction.” You see? He wants you to experience His delight. He wants you to feel, experience, and live in His satisfied heart. This transformational reality enables you to love Him in return.

St. John writes, “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19 NIV). His love initiates your love. His love unlocks your heart. When you receive His delight as the truth about who you are, you are empowered to love. In Ephesians 5, Paul writes about a key image which describes the relationship between Christ and His church: that of a bridegroom and his bride. The word *delight* comes from the Latin word meaning “to allure” or “to entice.” A bride is enchanting to her bridegroom and he is drawn to her. As the bride of Christ, you intoxicate God and He is drawn to you.

A bride is one who receives the knowledge of the bridegroom’s delight and embraces it as her identity. She responds in freedom and boldness because she knows she is pleasing and is secure in the love of the beloved. She neither responds out of the fear of disappointing him nor tries to offer obedience in exchange for favors. The bridegroom showers his love on his bride, and she responds out of the deep understanding that she is satisfying. She does not have to guess what pleases him; she only needs to give the gift of herself. Loving God is not simply about righteous behavior. Loving God means knowing and experiencing His pleasure and living in the knowledge of what pleases

Him. As you move with His heart and grow closer to His heart, you mature as a lover of God.

SIN, SHAME, AND UNWORTHINESS

Sin, of course, separated mankind from this reality, spoiling freedom and distorting our perception of God. Sin took Adam and Eve from the garden of delight to a place of hard toil and obstacles. Their first response was one of shame; they covered themselves out of fear. You too, when you were lost in sin, related to God with suspicion and the fear of punishment. Because you identified with sin, God could not enjoy the delight of His heart. The Old Testament prophets show us the pain of a bridegroom who longs for his bride to become responsive to his love. An unresponsive bride offers sacrifice and token obedience when the bridegroom only wants her!

Even in the state of your worst sin, however, you never stopped being the source of God's delight. He continues to delight in the person you were created to be. In fact, the very wrath of God is directed toward sin because it separates Him from the object of His love. The intensity of God's anger is actually a measure of His passion for you. This great desire and furious anger met at the cross—where Jesus dealt forever with the barrier of sin.

Now that you have been redeemed from sin and reconciled to God through faith in Jesus, why do you still struggle with the idea He actually enjoys you? Why is it hard for you to respond freely and boldly from the heart? The answer, for many, is a faulty sense of unworthiness. Now don't get me wrong—no one ever deserved God's mercy. No measure of justice would have declared us innocent. In this sense, we are right to say we were not worthy, or *deserving*, of the gift we have received. However, we often fail to honor another definition of worth. *Worth* is also defined by the value—or price—that is paid for something. Hebrews 12 tells us Jesus, "for the joy set before Him, endured the cross." God the Son measured out the price of His precious blood in exchange for an eternity with you. Do you know what this means? He chose *you*. What was the "joy" (delight) set before Him? His bride. You are worthy by the measure of His love. If He loves you this much, then you must be lovely.

Many of us confuse what we deserve with our value. We choose to measure ourselves by what we have done rather than what He has done for us. But Jesus was not a fool to die for you. Who are you to claim that you have no value when He has declared your great worth on the cross? Can you deny the glorious Son of God the deepest desire of His heart? Why settle for your own self-judgment when He has called you His joy?

SIGNS OF THE STRUGGLE

Unless you accept the reality of God's delight in you, it will be difficult for you to mature in love. In the Old Testament, there is the tragic figure of King Saul, chosen by God to be the first king of Israel and yet he never fully trusted in God. We can identify five symptoms that reveal Saul's inability to accept God's love and delight in him. As you read about each symptom in his story, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if you, like Saul, need to know His delight.

1. *Unworthiness and shame:* Do you refuse to receive the revelation that you are lovely and desirable? When Samuel found Saul to anoint him king over Israel, Saul's response was: "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?" (1 Samuel 9:21 NIV). Saul did not have the spiritual formation that he needed to be king—a kingship that was forced upon him by an anxious people who did not want God's will. He saw himself as unworthy, and he acted from a sense of unworthiness and shame throughout his life.
2. *Fearing the displeasure of others more than God's displeasure:* When God's pleasure has not touched your heart, it is easier for other things to come in and motivate you. Are you motivated to please other people more than God? Saul sure was. God gave him a simple task—destroy the enemy and take no spoils (1 Samuel 15:3). But Saul could not say 'no' to the people. He allowed the people to keep spoils because he feared their displeasure more than God's (1 Samuel 15:24). God's pleasure had not permeated his heart to the point where he was able to say, "Nothing is more important than

Your desires; nothing is more important than pleasing You.” When Samuel came and tried to correct him, Saul lied, self-justified, and then finally begged for forgiveness only when the fear of punishment took over.

3. *Misinterpreting God’s intentions for your circumstances.* God’s intention was for Saul to repent. He took away His Spirit and sent an evil spirit to torment him, to cause him to see the destruction in his life and to agree with what the Lord had said through Samuel—that he would no longer be king (1 Samuel 16:14). But Saul misinterpreted God’s heart in the matter. He interpreted it as a rejection of himself—not as discipline. Saul felt the loving hand of God (who grieved for Saul) as if it were punishment. Instead of looking forward to his future calling, Saul felt abandoned. Because Saul was not close to God’s heart, he could not see that the correction, discipline, and rebuke were working in love for him, so he did everything he could to hang onto his kingdom in opposition to God’s direct Word.
4. *Missing God’s heart and His secrets.* God has secrets for you—things He wants to say in the secret place that only you can hear. He wants to share what is in His heart. He won’t share his secrets with anybody else and He won’t share them with someone who is not after His heart. (David, unlike Saul, was just that sort of man). As with the first human, God wanted to meet Saul in his inner garden and delight in Saul, but Saul could not hear. He saw God’s delight in David as an affront to him: charming, spiritual, fearless David would take his kingdom. God’s purpose was not to humiliate Saul. Rather, His purpose was to turn his heart, to get Saul to say, “Me too, Lord. I want a close relationship with You. I want to know Your delight.” When God brings hard circumstances to you, this is His purpose. He wants you to be jealous for His heart.
5. *Putting your position over your identity.* After all, the best substitute for unmerited love and joy is a “good old position” over other people, right? No man ever tried to wrest Saul’s position from him. David refused to touch the Lord’s anointed and even Samuel, with all his power, left the crown in Saul’s hands. But Saul still fought to

protect his crown and his reputation even as David continued to rise (1 Samuel 18:8). Your heart was not designed to be satisfied with power or titles. Your heart was made to experience God's love. Jesus told His disciples to be like little children sitting in their father's embrace. Young children do not worry about titles or a pecking order. They revel in the knowledge that Mom and Dad love them.

THE RAVISHED HEART

In contrast to Saul, we have the story of David. Here was a man who was both a mighty warrior and a heartsick lover and friend of God. His mission was to fight his enemies, expand his kingdom, and create the environment for the dwelling place of God. He swooned in God's presence and yearned for God's presence like a thirsty deer. God called David "a man after My own heart" because David's heart was ravished by God. God's pleasure over his life was his greatest treasure. He understood that no matter what his circumstance or his failures were, God was for him. What was true of David can be true for you too.

Over time, God's grace begins to work deeply in our hearts. As you let your heart be ravished by God's love, you will begin to experience the following in your life.

1. *Shame no longer dominates you, and the fear of punishment goes away.* Have you noticed how the people in the Bible who loved God did not keep very good records of their sins? David was intensely aware of his sin. He was a murderer and an adulterer, but when he confessed his sin, he knew it was gone. How else could David write, "God has rewarded me according to the cleanness of my hands"? Did he suffer from memory loss? No, he understood the Father's love. Perfect love *drives out fear* because fear has to do with punishment (1 John 4:18 NIV). When we are motivated by the love of God rather than the fear of punishment, we can humbly repent when we fail. We can earnestly seek God, knowing that he is pleased by faith and rewards it (Hebrews 11:6).
2. *You become bold in the face of adversity.* When Goliath mocked young David and came at him with the sword, David faced the giant without fear because he knew without a doubt that God loved