

Soul Strong Study – Week 2 “SOURCE”

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(Chapter 1 “Live Loved” in Soul Strong)

“I believe I am loved completely by my heavenly Father.”

A Prayer for the Ephesians (written by the apostle Paul)

“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every 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 Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Eph. 3.14-21

God is the SOURCE of LOVE

Sacrificial LOVE

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” 1 John 4.10

God’s part _____ My part _____

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” Galatians 2.20-21

What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee. Bernard of Clairvaux 1153

Occupying LOVE

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

eso anthropon = _____

katoikeo = _____

Father of spirits, this my earnest plea
I bring again and yet again to Thee:
Fulfill me now with love, that I may know
A daily inflow, daily overflow.
For love – for love my Lord was crucified:
With cords of love He bound me to His side.
Pour through me now; I yield myself to Thee,
O Love that led my Lord to Calvary. (Amy Carmichael 1867-1951)

Undeserving LOVE

⁴ But because of his **great love** for us, God, who is **rich in mercy**, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2.4-5

G _____
R _____
A _____
C _____
E _____

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and **this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God**—⁹ not by works, so that **no one can boast**. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2.8-10

Rich LOVE

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead. Ephesians 1.18-20

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches”

Comprehensive LOVE

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and **in Christ you have been brought to fullness**. He is the head over every power and authority. Colossians 2.9

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, **to grasp** how **wide** and **long** and **high** and **deep** is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge— that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3. 17b-19

WIDE – God's love _____
LONG – God's love _____
HIGH – God's love _____
DEEP – God's love _____

Extravagant LOVE

...that you may be **filled to the measure of all the fullness of God**.²⁰ Now to him **who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine**, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3.19b-21

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[a] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

Nothing can separate us from God's Love:

NOT _____ nor life.

NOT _____ nor demons.

NOT the _____ nor the future.

NOT any _____.

NOT _____ nor depth.

NOT _____ in all creation.

Assurance of Love

But we can't *be* perfect any more than we can *love* perfectly. God's grace is what rescued me from a pattern of needing to be loved by someone in order to feel worthy as a person. But much more important than that, grace is what rescued me from the bondage of striving to *earn* God's love. I was released from being a POW (prisoner of works). And now I live loved.

Love (III)

**Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.**

**But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.**

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here":

Love said, "You shall be he."

**"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee."**

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

"Who made the eyes but I?"

**"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."**

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"

"My dear, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."

So I did sit and eat.

– George Herbert (1593-1633)

Closing Prayer – singing over you

The love of God is greater far
than tongue or pen can ever tell;
it goes beyond the highest star,
and reaches to the lowest hell.
The wand'ring child is reconciled
by God's beloved Son.
The aching soul again made whole,
and priceless pardon won.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song. Frederick M. Lehman, 1917

Small Group Discussion

1. On pages 3-5 we read love verses and underlined portions that spoke to us. Can you share one of the phrases of love that touches you especially at this time?
2. What is the greatest hindrance to your embracing identity as **God's beloved**?
3. At the bottom of page 8 we read Romans 8.15. What do you think of this concept of being an adopted child of God? Do you ever act like an orphan instead, and if so, how does that look?
4. The graph on page 11 reviews some imperfect loves you may have experienced in life. Would anyone like to share one of theirs?
5. Did any of you write a letter from God to yourself (page 9) and would you like to share a few lines from it?
6. On page 15 Lucinda has a paragraph about how she came to base her sole identity as "**beloved.**" Where are you on this journey of knowing how to "live loved?"
7. Bonus: What did you understand from George Herbert's poem "Love" on pages 12-13?
8. Of the 6 loves Lucinda taught tonight, which is the hardest for you to embrace?
Sacrificial LOVE
Occupying LOVE
Undeserved LOVE
Rich LOVE
Comprehensive LOVE
Extravagant LOVE
9. Close in prayer.

HOMEWORK – Please try to complete chapter 2 "Be Authentic" before we gather again next week. Pray for those in your group.

I realize that many of you may not have yet been able to write your love letter from God. Take your time, but know that this will be a life-changing experience as you recognize the words He would truly say over you. I'm praying!