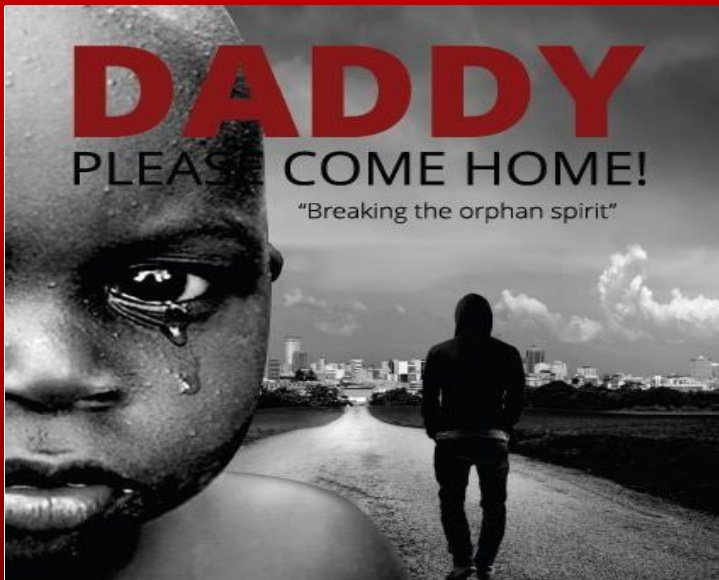


DADDY

PLEASE COME HOME!

"Breaking the orphan spirit"



THE FATHER HEART
PROGRAMME

TURNING THE HEARTS OF
FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN



MAHLOBO FOUNDATION



THE FATHER HEART PROGRAMME

"Breaking The Orphan Spirit"

THABO SIZO MAHLOBO

Husband, Dad, Teacher, Coach and Author

"Turning the hearts of fathers to their children and hearts of the children to their fathers"- Malachi 4:5-6

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GETTING STARTED

Welcome to the Father Heart Programme! Many of us believe we are simply unlovable. The wounds we have received early in life have dictated what we perceive and believe about ourselves and God. When we received these wounds, it often resulted in shame and subsequent performance in an effort to gain love from those around us. However, until we are healed, we will sabotage relationships subconsciously to prove what we perceive about ourselves—that we are unlovable. It takes others who are close to us to recognize this root issue in our lives and be willing to love us unconditionally. God forces us back to the place of our wound in order to bring us to a place of freedom and deliverance; into the broad place He desires for each of us.

This 10-day programme has been designed for fathers, aspirant fathers, boys, families, mothers, girls and leaders from all walks of life. It will equip those who want to grow in their relationship with Father God and their earthly fathers. Furthermore, it will benefit those who want to be effective parents by walking in the presence of our Father and modelling that to their families and society.

Your Expectations:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Workshop Objectives

Research has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, the learning occurs more easily and rapidly. With that in mind, let's review our goals for this programme. By the end of this programme, you should be able to:

- Know and experience God's love as your Father.
- Understand Biblical fatherhood as derived from God the Father.
- Have an in depth understanding of the roots and effects of the orphan spirit.
- Experience the Spirit of Adoption and learn to live as sons and daughters.
- Re-Discover Family and the Generational Blessing.
- Learn to create a culture of honour everywhere you are.

Your 1-3 months Goals relating to The Father Heart Programme:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....

SESSION 1

Called to Experience the Father's Love

"When God thinks of you, love swells in His Heart" – OS Hillman.

I can imagine the thoughts going through your mind as you reflect on that statement. For many of us, this idea is hard to accept. Do you really believe God loves you, even delights in you? If you are a follower of Christ, you will probably give me the politically correct answer and say, "Yes. I believe He does." However, most of us will respond to that statement perhaps with a "Well, yes, but...". It is hard for us to believe God loves us without adding a "but" after the statement. The very statement challenges our theology about God. Many of us associate the nature of God with holiness, judgment and righteousness. Our first cognitive association with that statement will be based on beliefs and conclusions we have formed from our individual life experiences. The opening statement is based on Zephaniah 3:17, which reveals the true heart of God toward us. God rejoices over us with gladness, love and singing! The psalmist also said in Psalm 139:17, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum total of them!"

God created us foremost for relationship and second for mission. He desires our companionship. His heart longs to connect with our heart. He reveals this in Jeremiah 9:23-24, 'Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord'.

As much as God longs to be affectionate with you, Satan also wants to destroy your life by shutting down your heart. Jesus revealed the contrast between His plans and Satan's in John 10:10: "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." This verse is speaking of false prophets who will come to deceive God's elect. However, in 1 Peter 5:8-9, Peter tells us to, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Satan tried to kill Jesus at birth... "And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born" (Rev. 12:4). He also tried to kill Moses at birth to prevent him from fulfilling his important destiny to free a nation from slavery and lead them to the Promised Land.

Satan literally wanted to kill you at birth. If he couldn't do that, he would try to kill your destiny in your childhood. Satan knew that if He could hurt you at the deepest level—at your heart level early in life—he would effectively destroy anything good coming from your life. His last resort and desire is that you would not be able to relate to God or others on a heart level, and that you would attempt to live your Christian life based on performance, independence and legalism, never experiencing God at a heart level. He would try to wound you throughout your childhood so that you would be immobilized as an adult, attempting to deal with the effects of your woundedness. Your dysfunction would drive you through your adult life unless something dramatic happened that forced you to address your wound in order to become healed and free of its affects. Satan wants our past to become our future. He wants to steal our Father-created glory that each of us was created to celebrate. Psalms 4:2 says, "Oh ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?" He wants to keep us in the shame of our past.

In order to become an effective friend of God and friend to those we are close to, we must learn to be vulnerable and develop an ability to share feelings from our heart. It is a vital step to becoming a real person with whom others can connect with emotionally. This is not easy to do if your parents did not teach you to share your emotional life with others as was the case with myself. Emotional vulnerability is especially hard for men. Author Dr. Larry Crabb states:

Men who as boys felt neglected by their dads often remain distant from their own children. The sins of fathers are passed on to children, often through the dynamic of self-protection. It hurts to be neglected, and it creates questions about our value to others. So, to avoid feeling the sting of further rejection, we refuse to give that part of ourselves we fear might once again be received with indifference. When our approach to life revolves around discipline, commitment, and knowledge [which the Greek influence teaches us] but runs from feeling the hurt of unmet longings that come from a lack of deeper relationships, then our efforts to love will be marked more by required action than by liberating passion. We will be known as reliable, but not involved. Honest friends will report that they enjoy being with us but have trouble feeling close and connected with us. Even our best friends (including spouses) will feel guarded around us, a little tense and vaguely distant¹.

¹ Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, n.d.), 98-99.

SESSION 2

The Orphan Spirit

“Many of us simply believe we are unlovable”- OS Hillman.

Many of us believe we are simply unlovable. The wounds we have received early in life have dictated what we perceive and believe about ourselves and God. When we received these wounds, it often resulted in shame and subsequent performance in an effort to gain love from those around us. However, until we are healed, we will sabotage relationships subconsciously to prove what we perceive about ourselves—that we are unlovable. It takes others who are close to us to recognize this root issue in our lives and be willing to love us unconditionally. God forces us back to the place of our wound in order to bring us to a place of freedom and deliverance. He wants to take us into the broad place He desires for each of us.

Many of our young people suffer from emotional abandonment. Their fathers failed to invest emotionally in them, and they grew up angry, not knowing why they are angry. It is because they were not given what every child needs: emotional intimacy with their fathers. Emotional validation is so important to children and teenagers; it tells them they have value and are loved. Withholding affirming words and appropriate physical affection can be as damaging as negative words, or no words.

God made me revisit my place of wound in order to give me deliverance and freedom. In the process, I discovered that I was not wounded by negative words spoken to me, but it was the positive words withheld, never spoken to me that really wounded me. I was emotionally abandoned.

To truly believe we are loved by God and can experience that love, we must overcome a number of personal hurdles. Many of us must overcome the dysfunctional family systems we were brought up in. Our earthly fathers may have taught us that a Heavenly Father could be a dictator, a rejecter of his own offspring, a sexual abuser, a boot camp sergeant, or a traffic cop. These attributes have been the only characteristics of earthly fathers that many people have known. So, to relate to a Heavenly Father who's unconditionally loving requires a miracle of sorts. There must be a time of healing from such wounds in order to experience God at a deeply personal, love, level. This often requires an intentional process of counseling or personal ministry. We must replace what we experienced with what we know the truth to be—that we are loveable and that our Heavenly Father loves us.

The Roots of the Orphan Spirit

It is important to know that first and foremost, God wants a Father-son/ daughter relationship with us, and out of this love and romance comes a passion to serve and reach out to the lost. This was demonstrated by the lives of Adam and Eve before the Fall. They were God's sons made in His image. It is important to note that the word image came first before purpose was given: "Let us make man in our image and likeness, so that they may have dominion" (Gen. 1:26).

There is no dominion over creation without the image and likeness of God. When Adam and Eve fell, they lost the image of God, the nature and very essence that made them sons. They lost dominion over the created order and were cast outside of the Garden of Eden and became the first orphans. They no longer had a direct relationship with the Father; they now had to work hard to provide for themselves and take care of themselves. They suffer from the trauma of no longer having a Father to take care of them.

The Effects of the Orphan Spirit

1. **The orphan spirit creates strongholds or makes you believe a lie, “Since my father never loved me, it means God the Father, does not love me”.**
 - Strongholds are a belief system that entices us to argue against the knowledge of God.
 - It is a thought or idea that is not rooted in God, which motivates us to meet our own needs independent of God.
 - It is a form of disobedience to the ways of God.

Please note that all spiritual strongholds in our lives develop when we begin to focus on meeting a need in our live outside God’s intended way. It tempts us to believe a lie about the nature of our Heavenly Father. It happens in a myriad of ways:

2. ***We try to meet these needs outside God!***

- A wife desires to feel better about herself by going out and meeting that emotional need through a shopping spree at the mall.

- A business owner uses manipulation and control to motivate his employees to greater performance because of his fear of failure, rather than seeking God for strategy on how to be successful.
- A man has an overwhelming need for sex so he visits pornographic websites rather than developing intimacy with his God and his wife that can meet his emotional and physical needs.
- A teenage boy gets involved in drugs to mask the emotional pain of rejection from a father or mother.
- A teenage girl has a baby out of wedlock because she is longing for the love of her father and seeks love in the wrong places.
- A business owner commits fraud in a business because the pressures to succeed at all costs outweigh the integrity of his soul.

3. **When we are under the orphan spirit, we are unable to connect emotionally with God and others.**

“Love God with your heart, soul, mind and love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:37).

- Instead of living your life from your heart, you live out of your mind; you rationalize everything, you don't take God at His word, and you don't connect deeper with other people.
- This often leads to dysfunctional relationships and marriages.
- Satan wants to shut down your heart and God wants you to open it up to receive His Love. Hence, He calls us to come into a deeper relationship with Him.

4. **Arrested development:**

When we are wounded as children, either by rejection, incest, molestation, emotional abuse, or physical abuse; the chemicals that would normally kick in around the age of 13 are blocked. Our emotional development stops, but our physical development continues. We grow and change physically, but our emotions are arrested and stay stuck. We then act like children when we are stressed, which isn't pretty when we look like adults.

We have no impulse-control and are driven by our childish emotions. We escape from the reality of life by distractions or addictions. We believe the world revolves around us. We develop a pseudo personality to cope in an adult world. This pseudo personality is often called the Jekyll/Hyde, dual personality, or the double-minded man found in Scripture. We are characteristically:

- Immature
- Lacking impulse control
- Lacking limits
- Unstable
- Unable to resolve issues
- Desperate for freedom
- Resistant of authority
- Unhappy with our jobs.

In most cases, we have two options when we are dealing with such arrested development: denial or shame. We either want to believe that our home, family, school and church as a child was normal, or we may just try to forget that any traumatic events ever happened as we were growing up. We then grow up with "holes" in our social skills, communication, and our ability to share with others our deepest and most intimate part of our lives.

We try to fit in with the big boys or big girls of the world and have long-term relationships with other people but are never quite able to make things happen. We bounce in and out of so many projects, jobs, friends and social situations that don't even notice our behaviour.

We fight the messages from childhood that said we were stupid, but inside secretly wonder if we really are stupid. We are never able to answer the questions: what is wrong with me, and why is the rest of the world able to handle issues successfully but I can't?

5. Slavery Mentality (Living as a Slave)

Establishing a relationship with God is vital to understanding your purpose. If you don't have this relationship with God as your Father – you will seek to fulfill your purpose out of wrong motives, such as fear, insecurity, pride, money, relationships, guilt or unresolved anger. I thought I could also find my meaning in life by being involved in the following activities that many are involved in:

- Achievements: performance and achievement are where many find their value.
- Relationships: many believe meaning in life is based upon the kind of relationships they have.
- Children: some believe purpose is found in having children.
- Acquiring money/things: some find meaning in acquiring money and material things.
- Recognition from others: some find meaning from what others think of them.
- Work/careers: some derive their purpose and identity from their work/careers.
- Play hard: some believe they must work hard to be able to play, which is their ultimate goal in life.

God's desire is for us to be motivated out of love for Him and to desire to worship Him in all that we do. Most of us lack purpose and meaning because we have no relationship with God. "May He grant you according to your heart's desire and fulfill all your purpose" (Psalm 20:4).

Psalm 127:1-2 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrows; for He gives His beloved sleep".

Without the Father-son relationship we often find ourselves living as slaves:

- Slaves believe they must perform to gain the father's love.
- Slaves believe becoming an heir is tied to performance, and not their position as sons in the family.
- Slaves believe provision is only through performance.
- Slaves believe that when they fail, they believe they deserve judgment.
- Slaves believe that they are entitled to a share of anything they do.
- Slaves resent their dad's character because it has conditions.
- Slaves value is only based on what they do and how well they do it.
- Slaves believe that love is earned.
- Slaves have an entitlement mentality.
- Slaves are self-righteous and prideful.
- They live from legalism.
- They believe that they are defective (they carry shame).
- They operate only in the outer court of performance as a king.
- Worldly kingdom perspective defined by performance and posturing.
- They reject God's authority.

SESSION 3

Fatherlessness and Dysfunctional Families

“Children want the father's presence and not the father's presents” – Willerton and Freeks.

In the last few decades, the South African society has strayed away from recognizing the importance that fatherhood holds (Ratele et al., 2012; Freeks 2004; Krohn & Bogan 2001). In many cases the family has been redefined, and the father is not even present (Ford et al., 2008). Children obviously need their fathers and want to spend time with them, as Willerton et al. (2011) and Freeks (2011) indicated. Children want the father's presence and not the father's presents. The traditional family is fading away, and with it we are losing God's idea in terms of family, and the significant role of the father (cf Freeks 2016:13-20; Freeks 2011:204-212; Le Roux 2007; Bergh 2002:47-55). Most South African communities are facing the challenge of father absence. A possible solution to the challenge could be the restoration of fathers with the focus on their crucial role within families (Del Russo 2009).

Fatherlessness

Father absence or fatherlessness is a worldwide phenomenon and a worldwide tendency in communities (Freeks 2013:3; Freeks 2016). Research was done in twenty-one countries, including USA, Russia, South Africa, Brazil, Grenada, Seychelles, Chattanooga, and others. In every country, father absence and fatherlessness were identified as the biggest problem (Carstens 2014:9-11; cf. also Richter et al. 2012, Freeks et al. 2015:22-24; Freeks 2013:8-18; Freeks 2011:1-4; Freeks &

Lotter 2009:520-524; and Freeks 2004:1-6). The following statistics caused havoc in terms of family and societies in America:

- 63% of suicides come from fatherless homes,
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes,
- 80% of rapists motivated by displaced anger come from fatherless homes,
- 40% of all children do not live with their biological fathers,
- 85% of children with behavioral problems come from fatherless homes,
- 90% of homeless children come from fatherless homes,
- 71% of children who do not finish school come from fatherless homes (Carsten 2014; Fathers for life 2013; Statistics South Africa 2011; and Goodsell & Meldrum 2010).

Further, the following statistics indicated a great concern in communities in America, regarding men:

- Men commit 90% of major crimes.
- Men commit 100% of rapes.
- Men commit 95% of burglaries.
- Men commit 91% of the offenses against the family.
- Men comprise 94% of drunk drivers (Carstens 2014:10).

It is noteworthy that South African fathers are not very different from fathers elsewhere. According to Bartlett (2013:1), the problem of father absence escalated from 42% to 48% in 2011. Hence, South Africa is one of the countries in the world with the highest figures of father absence (Richter et al. 2012:2; Richter et al. 2010:360; and Freeks 2016:6). It is estimated that 2.13 million children in South Africa are fatherless, and 9 million grow up without fathers, which is a tremendous fatherhood challenge for the country (Dube 2016:2; and Frazier 2015). That is the reason why father absence can be mentioned as one of the main causes that put family life in jeopardy (cf Ratele et

al. 2012). This phenomenon is on the increase in the South African context, and it generates problems such as broken families, aggressive behaviour among children, financial and social problems and poverty (Freeks 2016:2). Evidently, this phenomenon is a desperate, negative, cry for change as it means that most household families are run by single mothers (Hawkins 2015).

Therefore, it seems that South Africa is rapidly becoming a fatherless society with fatherhood in decline (cf Feni 2016:2). Dishearteningly, the increasing number of absent fathers on the horizon has become not only a dilemma but a serious debate in South Africa; especially on subjects such as socio-economic implications, morals, maturation of children, children development, relationships and replacement of fathers.

According to Munroe (2008), the root cause of many socio-economic problems and challenges is the absence of fathers in our world. This is unfortunate for children in many societies today, because these children do not have fathers in their homes, and they do not have the benefit of a father to help cultivate them in the honour and respect they need for God, parents, people and society. Hence, the greatest contemporary problems with regard to the maturation of children is the failure of many fathers to resolve their identity crisis vis-a-vis being a father. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that fathers experience this challenge but would not admit that they have this problem (Munroe 2008; cf. also Castillo 2010).

Tseng and Verklan (2008) indicated that fathers are in crisis due to situational and/or moral issues. Research has shown that where the father is absent, it is reflected in both the development of masculinity in boys and femininity in girls (cf Perrin et al. 2009). Many children experience a father hunger: a deep, persistent, desire for emotional connection with the father (Perrin et al. 2009; Goodsell & Meldrum 2010; and Fagan et al. 2009).

Many children are uncertain, confused and feel deeply the need for a father's attachment, presence and a lifestyle characterized by good values received from their fathers (Freeks & Lotter 2011; Freeks 2011; Freeks 2007; Algera & Sink 2002; and Carr 2000). Children are in need of a platform of certainty (Ford et al. 2008).

Nevertheless, in many families, there are prolonged periods of separation, which limit the father's opportunity to engage in direct interaction with his children and which reduces the ability of the father to positively influence the children's development (Willerton et al. 2011). Unsuccessful father-child-relationships are often caused by absence of fathers (Palkovitz 2007; and Perkins 2008). Studies have indicated that boys who grow up without a father can easily become involved in crime and destructive behaviour (Mandara et al. 2005).

Historically, fathers defined their manhood in terms of the various roles they fulfill for their families and for society. At present, these roles are in transition, and there is no longer a solid definition of masculinity. As a result, many fathers believe that they have lost part of themselves, and they generally do not have anything concrete with which to replace it (cf. Munroe 2001). Amidst all the changes in society (of which the role and position of the father is one of the more dramatic changes), children still enjoy a greater advantage when their fathers are involved in their lives (Vogel et al. 2006).

The value of the father is crucial in terms of the love and attention that he gives to his family and how he leads by example when it comes to values (Williams 2008). Fathers should not only be there to provide material security, as is so often the case. It is important to understand that boys in particular need a role model. Leading by example, especially in terms of values, the boy is able to successfully take up his own role of fatherhood when he matures (Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2007). Girls are more balanced when they have a normal relationship with their fathers.

Many authors directed an urgent appeal that fathers should embrace their God-given identity in order to restore families, societies and communities (Freeks & Lotter 2009; Williams 2008; Steytler 2007; and Munroe 2001). They support the maintenance of the "normal" traditional family, a form that has become increasingly scarce in African countries and in the world as a whole (cf. Zulu & Sibanda 2005).

Often substitute fathers take up the place of the father. The typical situation in African rural culture is that an older brother replaces the absent or deceased father. This replacement may however create serious problems such as wrong identification and the adoption of wrong values on the part of the children (Olsen 2007).

In reality, there are many single-parent families with only a mother figure as the head of the family. These mothers see themselves as more competent child-care providers than the fathers. Such mothers play a key role in determining the father's place in the family and often oversee, correct and criticize the fathers' parenting behaviour (Tremblay & Pierce 2011). Some studies show that the role of the father is ranked second to that of the mother in the family (cf. Ford et al. 2008). According to Martin et al. (2010), many supportive fathers influence child development more as potential buffers against unsupportive mothers.

The State of Fathers in South Africa

In an article written by Cape Town ETC, a recent OMO advertisement flighted for Father's Day implied that 57% of kids in South Africa grow up in homes with absent fathers. This was based on outdated statistics, and more recent research done in 2017 by SA Stats and Sonke Gender Justice shows that the actual percentage is surprisingly even higher, with over 60% of fathers being absent.

A resident of a household is classified as individuals who spend more than four nights a week on average, over four weeks, at a residence. A

child is considered anyone under the age of 18. With these classifications in mind, in 2017 the biological fathers of roughly 61.8% of children were absent from households; this is similar to the 2016 figure which shows that 62.2% of biological fathers were not present in their children's lives. This includes fathers who have passed away over these years.

New statistics on South Africa's first State of Fathers' Report were released on 12 July 2018. They included policy proposals for increasing men's involvement in childcare. Childcare has been identified as one of the huge areas in need of improvement and upliftment in South Africa, along with education, sanitation, housing and healthcare. According to the Early Childhood Development report by Stats SA, the majority of households in traditional and untraditional areas had a disproportionately large burden of care for young children by grandparents and other family members. A big percentage of children are growing up in home environments that do not provide communication or play to stimulate learning.

According to an inaugural report on State of fathers in South Africa issued by the Sonke Gender Justice and the Human Sciences Research Council, it is said that most children in South Africa are cared for by women as their primary caregivers. These women are usually their biological mothers or maternal grandmothers.

- 36% of children in South Africa live in the same household as their biological father.
- 35% of children in South Africa live in the same household with another man who is not their biological father.
- Biological father non-residency does not necessarily equate to fathers being uninvolved. When non-resident fathers are involved, it is usually financially by paying for school fees and groceries.

- When fathers are the primary recipient of the Child Support Grant, they use it for the same childcare expenses that mothers do.
- Despite high levels of father non-residency, reported violence and neglect by men, the role of caring fathers in the lives of children and families is very important and undisputed.

This report coincided with the important moment in history when key amendments to South Africa's labour law will allow for better parental leave for fathers in the Labour Laws Amendment Bill.

The report also highlighted the importance of father involvement, irrespective of marital or residence status. Moving away from the deficit model of absent fatherhood, the report focused on the involvement of non-resident biological and social fathers in parenting and care giving. The inaugural edition of the state on fathers in South Africa provided explanations on the benefits to children, mothers and fathers of men's involvement in the first thousand days of a child's life and recommends key intervention points for policymakers to improve fathers' involvement in childcare.

Some of the benefits of fathers' involvement in the first 1000 days are:

- Healthy pregnancy.
- Maternal health and wellbeing.
- Infant care and well-being.
- Father and child bonding.
- Better relationship between mother and father.
- Mother access health service more.
- Fathers are healthier and more connected socially.
- Long-term involvement between father and child.

Some of the barriers that limit father involvement in the first 1000 days are:

- Fathers and children not living together.
- Structural factors: unemployment, poverty and migration.
- Families restrict access due to uncompromising cultural practices.
- Negative stereotypes of men and fatherhood in South Africa.
- Mothers restrict access due to conflict.
- Gender insensitive health facilities.
- Policy gaps.

*First private member's bill passed in Parliament
seeks paternity leave for fathers, article by Jan
Gerber from News 24.*

History was made in Parliament in South Africa on Tuesday, the 27th of November 2018, when a private member's bill was passed for the first time in the National Assembly. The Labour Laws Amendment Bill, proposed by ACDP MP Cheryllyn Dudley, aims to give fathers the opportunity to take paternity leave. "The bill seeks to provide for parental leave, adoption leave and commissioning parental leave. It also provides for the payment of parental benefits as well as commissioning parental benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund," the ACDP said in a statement earlier in the process.

Dudley was congratulated by her party leader Kenneth Meshoe. "The African Christian Democratic Party has worked for many years to protect and defend children – their well-being, their right to be free from maltreatment, neglect, abuse and degradation, their right to a life, a home and a loving family – and their right to loving and effective discipline," Meshoe said in a statement. "The ACDP values family and the important role it plays in society, and we are grateful for this opportunity to inspire legislative reform which we believe will positively impact on the lives of children in South Africa. I would like to thank ACDP MP Cheryllyn Dudley on her vision and work in bringing

this important piece of legislation into being. It is a remarkable achievement in that she is the first opposition member of Parliament to have a private member's proposal reach this point in the legislative process", Rev. Meshoe added.

A Step in The Right Direction

He said the bill was drafted in a manner that would harmonise it with current legislation and ensure the provisions contained in the bill are constitutional.

"It is of course true that the ACDP does not support, nor did it in the past support amendments to the Children's Act, 2005, which allowed for same-sex couples to adopt children. It is, however, the view of the ACDP that this bill – that is applicable in the current legislative environment – will be applicable should the Children's Act ever be amended in line with ACDP policy," Rev. Meshoe.

He highlighted that while the legislation would not remedy all social ills or challenges facing families, it was a step in the right direction.

"In a country where fathers have historically been separated from their families and survival necessitated an acceptance of not being able to bond and be hands-on in their day-to-day upbringing, initiatives that facilitate the involvement of fathers in their children's lives are welcomed and encouraged by the ACDP".

In an interview by Huisgenoot and YOU Magazine, ACDP MP Cheryllyn Dudley as the initiator responsible for the original drafting of the recently passed Labour Laws Amendment Bill had a lot of questions to answer and I have included them below to give more clarity on the new legislation supporting fathers' involvement with their newborn children.

Re Story on the Labour Law Amendment Bill That Allows Ten Days Paternity Leave

Question: Why is this a big win for fathers and the whole of South Africa? Does it mean we are keeping with the times in the current and changing socio-economic conditions?

Answer: Labour Laws Amendment Act workers will now have the right to:

- ✓ 10 days paid parental and paternity leave when one's child is born and
- ✓ 10 weeks' adoption leave when legally adopting a child 2 years and younger.
- ✓ UIF benefits for workers losing their jobs increase from 8 to 12 months.
- ✓ Women covered by maternity leave when having a still born birth or third trimester miscarriage.
- ✓ Maternity leave payments increase from 54% to 66%.
- ✓ Salaries.
- ✓ Billions of Rands released from the UIF into workers' hands and spur local economic growth.
- ✓ UIF protection extended to public servants.
- ✓ Boost to the UIF through their contributions, which will allow further future expansion of access to the UIF and its protections for workers. This is vital in an economic recession where thousands are being retrenched.

"Fathers have been separated from their families and less present in their children's lives traditionally, and due to our history, which divided families. They have been excluded from the experience of the birth of their children and from sharing the burden of childcare and domestic responsibilities. Research shows that dads who have paternity leave bond with their children and are more likely to accept responsibility for them. The majority of fathers in South Africa do not have their

names on their children's birth certificates. They will have to do so to claim the leave.

Many fathers have expressed their pain in having to prioritize their job over their family - for the sake of their family. Many young men have also expressed their delight at being invited into this space which they have been excluded from and welcome the challenge and privilege" – Cheryllyn Dudley.

Question: Does this mean all fathers, regardless of where they work, are entitled to ten days' paternity leave?

Answer: All who pay UIF and are not entitled to maternity leave.

Question: Do they have to apply for this leave with their employer as normal leave?

Answer: Yes, my understanding is that HR departments will need to facilitate the process from 1 January 2019. Claims will be made to the UIF.

Question: Same-sex couples. How does that work. One parent applies for maternity leave and the other for paternity leave.

Answer: This will be Adoption or Surrogacy leave of 10 weeks applied for by one parent - the other parent can claim parental leave of 10 days if they have been paying UIF.

Question: I read that this bill is also important because it started as a private member's bill. Why is this relevant?

Answer: This is historic as it is the first private member's bill ever to be passed by parliament and signed into law.

It was the first ever to have been declared desirable as a bill in the committee of the NA. Then it was the first to be voted on and passed in the NA. Additionally, it was the first to be declared desirable in the NCOP and then to be passed by the NCOP and now signed into law by the President.

“The Labour Laws Amendment Bill took almost five years, but it got there. It provides for Parental & Adoption leave and has been celebrated across South Africa by workers and especially young fathers who enthusiastically welcomed being recognized and valued in this important role. It has been such a privilege for me to have been entrusted with this bill and I am grateful to God. Having four sons, one daughter, four grandsons and two granddaughters, I couldn't be more delighted for young people starting families. This legislation should also empower women who have traditionally shouldered all the childbearing, childcare and domestic responsibilities. When dads share domestic and childcare responsibilities it is very empowering for women; and children benefit. In a country where men have been separated from their families through circumstances and very few even have their names on the registration of their children's births – this legislation allows space for fathers to meaningfully connect.

Adoption leave is also such a relief for those who are considering taking this step and an encouragement for others to do the same; too many children grow up on the outside or periphery of a family and it is so unfair, heartbreaking.

We are strengthening families little by little!

SESSION 4

Spirit of Adoption: Learning to Live as Sons and Daughters

“We often fight the messages from childhood that said we were stupid, but inside secretly wonder if we really are stupid” – OS Hillman.

Ephesians 3:14-19, “For this reason [seeing the greatness of this plan by which you are built together in Christ], I bow my knees before the Father *of our Lord Jesus Christ*,¹⁵ For Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named [that Father from Whom all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name].¹⁶ May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened *and* reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality].¹⁷ May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love *and* founded securely on love,¹⁸ That you may have the power *and* be strong to apprehend *and* grasp with all the saints [God’s devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it];¹⁹ [That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]” (AMPC)!

Ephesians 1:3-4, “⁴ Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love.⁵ For

He foreordained us (destined us, planned in love for us) to be adopted (revealed) as His own children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the purpose of His will [because it pleased Him and was His kind intent]" (AMPC).

Romans 8:14, “¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.¹⁵ For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father” (AMPC)!

Galatians 5:4, “⁴ But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law,⁵ To purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to [a]tone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God’s sons].⁶ And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)! Father!⁷ Therefore, you are no longer a slave (bond servant) but a son; and if a son, then [it follows that you are] an heir by the aid of God, through Christ” (AMPC).

John 1:12, “¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (AMPC).

Understanding Son-Ship in The Kingdom

The words for sons in the Greek are:

- a. Baby son: “*teknon*”
- b. Maturing son: “*teknion*”
- c. Matured son: “*huios*”

When you came into the kingdom of God, you were given the power and privilege to become a son (both male and female) of God. Grace made you a son. Grace in the Greek is “*charis*”: a divine substance, nature, property that makes God who He is. When we believe we access that substance, nature and immediately we become His children; we share the same DNA, God’s DNA and not only human DNA.

Born of the will of God and not of man (John 1:13).

When we believe, our faith gives us access to Grace (Romans 5:1-3) and Grace becomes our nature and our standpoint – our home base: we have “right standing” with God. We receive Christ’s Righteousness which make us to be in right standing with God; having the legal right to stand as sons and daughters. Our responsibility is to now begin and always operate from a place of sonship and not slaves (performance).

When we operate from a son perspective, we see grace at work. Charisma is the grace upon each and every one of us which makes us Charismatic; making us to express the divine substance in Him. Jesus was full of Grace and Truth (John 1:14); He fully expressed the divine substance in him, living from a place of sonship. 1Corinth 15:9-10

I love you!

I’ll be honest with you. I do not remember my father ever placing his hand on my shoulder and saying the words “I love you.” I barely remember my brothers and sisters ever connecting deeper with me until I was an adult, so my wound was the absence of words that were never spoken to me. The message I received from this wound was that “you have no value,” so I ran through life doing whatever I could to create value and prove my worth. The lies were that I had to make it on my own, no one would ever be there for me, and the outcome and the results were completely up to me.

When I first heard the words, “I love you” from God, I found it hard to believe. I thought to myself, “Yeah, I do believe that You love me if I have been good and not sinned ... Yeah, I guess I can believe that sometimes”. Or, I would think, “Well, you don’t know how much I’ve failed you God”.

That one statement can reveal how much we’ve all been impacted by shame and our need to perform to gain love. Satan kept pouring on the lies that there must be something wrong with me and if I ever failed, I deserved to be punished. I felt like a small, beggar-child in life alone and vowed that no matter what; I would make it on my own, be self-sufficient and never let anyone get too close to me. If they did, they would only hurt, or reject, me and I’d be alone and let down. I soon grew into a young man and was not prepared for taking the world on all by myself; so, I became a distant self-sufficient man, bent on succeeding no matter what, and never knowing what intimacy and true love was.

In my own experience, I didn’t really believe God loved me without conditions. Part of me required me to earn that love. Our actions often determine what we really believe about God, don’t they? Our ability to see God as an unconditionally loving, Heavenly, Father is formed by many factors: our earthly father, the type of parenting we received growing up, and the wounds we received as a child. Even today I still long for that moment when my father would give me a call and tell me that he loves me. But thank God that He has helped me see beyond this and look to Him as the perfect Father who loves unconditionally – and I can rest in His love.

You are my beloved son, and I am well pleased with you!

If we do not receive words of validation and emotional love from our earthly fathers and our Heavenly Father, we will often seek that validation through our achievements and escapism such as sex, romance novels, shopping, and any number of pleasure-focused

activities. We will struggle with uncertainty in our core and will be ruled by fears and the opinions of others, hoping for someone to notice us.

One of the things plaguing our generation is people trying to figure out who they are; there's a gender identity crisis and a performance spirit, which is seen through trying to earn the rights to be called sons and daughters. In my own experience I tried earning my place in the family through my studies, I made sure that I passed with flying colours so that I could hear my dad saying I am pleased with you. When I went to University I failed for the first time, and I struggled to reconcile that failure. I took it as a failure to please my dad and I felt I had lost my spot in the family as a son. Little did I know I had become a slave to performance and self-sufficiency, and with that came a deep feeling that, 'If I could just prove my worth and make it on my own all would be well' – but that was not the case.

So, I ran to ministry for validation and to women for comfort. This combination, no matter how much I tried it, just never worked because the only validation I needed was from my dad. In the ministry, I went through an almost 10-year period of uncertainty and rejection. The relationships I went to for comfort created a lot of discomfort and emotional instability, which sabotaged everything I had in my life because all I had was fear of rejection and insecurity.

I drew some empowering lessons from the story of Jesus when He was baptized; the writer said a voice came from Heaven saying: "You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" What is amazing with this passage is that Jesus had done nothing significant, and his ministry had not begun. He had not performed any miracle nor healed anybody; but God was pleased with him. This revelation brought freedom to me because I knew deep down in my heart that God loved me irrespective of any credentials and achievements.

I am Disappointed with What You Did, But Not with You!

For years I struggled with the spirit of rejection; as teenagers growing up, we do many things that are not proper and we rebel at our parents, which spark up conflicts. My mother's parenting strategy was simple, you mess up, she spansks you and gets over it. But my father would just give you a silent treatment; you weren't sure whether he had forgiven you, or you will pay for your sins later. This obviously made me believe a lie that he was disappointed with me rather than what I have done. As I grew up in the faith, I noticed that I struggled with the same thing, reconciling my disappointments with God.

Whenever I failed, I felt like God was angry at me because I did something wrong, or I did not do something He expected. Every time I struggled with a certain area of my life, I would immediately attribute it to myself: "maybe something is wrong with me, or God is not happy with me, why is He giving me a silent treatment? Why is God silent at the time I need Him the most?"

The first example of a spirit of rejection operating in the Bible was in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. When Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord, God rejected Cain's offering. The reason was that Cain brought his offering out of duty, but Abel offered his from his heart. God judged Cain's motive and rejected his offering. However, God did not reject Cain as a person. It was here that the spirit of rejection began to influence Cain: he believed the lie that God did not love him and had rejected him.

"Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So, the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it'"-Genesis 4:4-7.

God tried to warn Cain that what he was doing was not pleasing, but Cain believed that God was rejecting him personally, and he became angry. This led to bitterness toward God, and envy and jealousy toward his brother. This root of bitterness grew to murder. God warned Cain that “sin lies at the door.” Cain sinned by believing a lie about not being accepted by God. Shame (his countenance fell) tells us that we are not acceptable; guilt says we did something wrong and need to repent, but we are still accepted by God.

For many of us, the Christian life has been more about avoiding sin, performing, and judgment rather than about knowing that God deeply loves us despite our successes or failures. He loves us no matter what our performance has been. I state this not to give license to sin, but to recognize that the central character trait of God is love, not judgment. God only gave two primary directives in the Old Testament and repeats them in the New Testament: “Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself” (Deut. 6:5; Matt 22:37-39).

You will fulfill all other things by fulfilling this command. In order for that to be a reality, you must believe that you are loved, and you must love yourself. You cannot love God or others if you don’t believe you are loved, and you don’t love yourself. We love in response to perceived love. We become vulnerable enough to be loved. Yet from the beginning, humans rejected this in favour of what they perceived to be freedom. This resulted in being separated from the intimacy of our Heavenly Father.

God created us first and foremost, for relationship and second for mission; He desires our companionship. His heart longs to connect with our hearts. He reveals this in one of my favourite passages from Jeremiah 9:23-24, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving-

kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord'.

After screaming out at God, "Why did you abandon me?" I finally heard His voice, "I have been here all along." I had accepted Christ 10 years earlier but continued to wrestle with trusting Him and trusting that His heart towards me was good. I could only relate to Him as I related to my earthly father: "You're on your own, figure it out with nothing but silence and absence".

I now share my story at men's weekends/camps, and whenever others mentioned their similar stories, like, "Even though I grew up in a home, I still feel like I am literally an orphan," these words still bring tears to my eyes. And we would pray for one another and break agreements with shame and rejection. The good thing is that now every day and night; I am awakened to the truth that God says to me: "You are my son, I love you and I'm proud of you."

What Happens When We Live as Sons and Daughters of God?

- We believe and experience the unconditional love of Father God.
- We experience sonship as heirs based on our position in the Father.
- We rest in the security of our Father's provision.
- When we fail, we are still loved.
- We are stewards of what our Father entrusts to us.
- We love our Father's character (unconditional love).
- Value is totally based on our position as His sons and daughters.
- We experience His love fully.
- We receive gracefully.
- We recognize our sins and repent.
- We live from the heart and connect deeper to God and others.
- We believe we are loved.
- We operate both in the inner and outer court as both king and priest.

- We live a Godly Kingdom lifestyle defined by grace and redemption.
- We live under God's authority

Resting in God as a Father

When we experience God's love as a Father we rest: we stop performing to be accepted and we stop laboring hard to provide for ourselves, but trust in His leading and gracefully receive all that He gives to us. I always thought that resting was only related to a state of physical activity until I realized later in life that it is more than that. When I encountered God as my Father I realized the following about being rested in God as my Father:

- The magnification of His revelation as my Father.
- The innocence of a child knowing that I have a Father and He will take care of me because it is within the paternity of a Father to take care of his children.
- I am not entitled to wealth/riches, but my Father entrust wealth to me to advance His purposes in the earth.

Debriefing Questions:

1. In which area in your life do you feel you have disappointed God?
2. Do you often feel that God is silent when you need Him the most? And why?
3. What is your understanding of "resting in God"?
4. Does the presence of challenges in our lives mean that God has forsaken us?
5. What is the spirit of adoption? Give specific Scriptures and use them as memory verses for today.

SESSION 5

Re-Discovering Family

“God places the lonely in families” – Psalm 68: 6.

Discovering Spiritual Family

God birth us and joins us into families. Families speak of identity, loyalty, boundaries and above all, purpose. We are called to be part of the body of Christ. Rick Warren said: “As Christians we’re called to belong, not just believe, we are not meant to live lone ranger lives; instead, we are to belong to Christ’s family and be members of his body.”

1 Corinthians 12:12-27, ‘For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ but as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ as it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it’.

Once you understand the importance of this truth, connecting to the body of Christ becomes crucial. There are two ways God joins us into the Body. He births us into one or grafts you in after you’ve been saved. Obviously, “we are baptized into one Body” when we become believers. So, we are part of the universal family of God when we are born-again. However, the concept of spiritual family is a matter of discerning what part of that body you are specifically joined to. It is not enough to say, “I am part of the universal body of Christ” without a connection to a specific local church or household. God has designed the local households as a place of commitment for every member of a larger body. The other truth is that when you discover spiritual family and find those you are called to walk with, you end up discovering your destiny as well.

Finding A Spiritual Family

Finding a spiritual family is a little different because it is a matter of the working of the Holy Spirit who “has set the members, each one of them in the body just as He pleased”. What may be needed is more insight into the work He has already done. Though the process shouldn’t be that difficult, many people spend years searching for the right place to fit into the body of Christ. **For them, finding the right place can be a pretty experience.**

Rick Shelton, Senior Pastor of Life Christian Church in St. Louis said, “All my life I was looking for where I belonged, where I fit. Sure, I had a successful ministry and a larger church, but I knew that God wanted me to find a larger family in order to realistically change the world.” I personally found myself in the same position or less; I have always had a successful team for missions and ministry in the marketplace. However, all my life I have been looking for where I could belong and fit so that I can be part of a bigger family and part of God’s larger story.

And now I have found that. Many like me face emotional challenges of having been separated from their natural families. They spent so much time trying to figure out who they are, where do belong and if there is significance in their lives. This becomes a recurring effect even when they are Christians; they go from one church to another searching for their spiritual family. Rice Brooks, in his book *“Recovering the Apostolic Mandate”* said: “It is one thing to simply say that you belong to a church, it’s another to have a rock-solid conviction about being part of a spiritual family”. That kind of assurance doesn’t come from just going to the church of your choice; it comes by revelation of the Holy Spirit as to where He has placed you in the body of Christ. This kind of assurance infuses the relationship you have in the church with a sense of purpose and calling. If you are still not clear on this, check your “spiritual DNA”, in other words, in which church do you feel a sense of oneness in vision, faith and devotion to Christ? That is your family.

The Power of Spiritual Family

When we work together in the context of spiritual family, we can accomplish amazing things. There can be a pool of resources for advancing God’s kingdom. We can establish bookstores, hospitals, television networks, movie studios and so on. All this can be accomplished when we come together in divinely ordered relationships.

One of the deepest desires underlying shared vision is the desire to be connected to a larger purpose and to one another. Family and vision are linked together. In the end you can't have the one without the other. People who talk about family but sit around and do nothing will not keep people together for long. On the other hand, vision without family is not only a lonely road, it's a road that in the end goes nowhere. When we walk together in a spiritual family, it helps keep the vision burning bright.

Benefits of Being Part of Family

- Relationships for life
- Discipleship and accountability
- Team learning
- We become a model for great organizations
- Exponential impact in the society.

Protecting Relationships from Offenses

Satan is constantly attacking relationships in the body of Christ. He knows that a people divided lose the power and effectiveness to accomplish the mission. We have to speak the truth in love to one another, according to the principle of Matthew 18. We don't backbite; and we don't say anything about people in their absence that we would not say in their presence. If there is an offense between us and another person, we go to them privately. If it does not work, we take someone else with us, not just someone who agrees with us so that we can gang up on the other person; but a mature and mutually respected Christian who can mediate and help work through the differences.

The Power of a Praying Family

It is an immutable law in the spiritual world: families that walk-in unity is effective in prayer. Those that don't aren't. Stormie Ormertian, in her book, *"The Power of Praying Together"*, observed that one of the most important things about being in a spiritual family is finding power in prayer through unity. Jesus said if two of us agree concerning anything, it will be done for us by our Father in heaven. Stormie's books on prayer may have sold millions, but the greatest thing about her is the example of her own life. She and her husband, Michael, live what they write about. Their mentor, Jack Hayford, attested to this and to the fruit of their lives when they were members of Church on the Way.

A House of Prayer for All Nations

¹⁵ Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple *area* and began to drive out those who were selling and buying on the temple *grounds*, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; ¹⁶ and He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple *grounds*. ¹⁷ And He *began* to teach and say to them, "Is it not written: 'MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a DEN OF ROBBERS'" (Mark 11:15-17 NASB).

If there is any doubt as to what should be the primary focus of the spiritual family, Jesus made it clear when He entered the Temple in Jerusalem. We must be a church that responds to that call to pray and become a house of prayer for all nations. Everywhere I travel, I meet Christians crying out for revival, for the Lord's manifest presence to come in the midst of their societies, cities and nations. Only in our human pride could we think that we can accomplish anything or change the world without prayer, fasting and internal transformation.

There will never be a major societal awakening in our country without united, corporate, prayer.

Jesus is looking for people that will deny themselves and be at the center of His will – praying and then working to fulfill the Apostolic mandate. His desire is that the life, beauty and order of heaven be brought to our world right now, in our generation. He promised that: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land,” 2 Chronicles 7:14.

God is not expecting all the citizens of a nation to repent before He begins to heal the land. He begins by looking for His people, the Church, to humble themselves, repent and pray. The condition of our cities are laid at the doorstep of the Church.

Debriefing Questions:

1. What do you think family speaks of in the Kingdom of God?
2. Why is it important for God to place people into families?
3. What is a healthy family?
4. What is your understanding of a spiritual family?
5. Are you part of a spiritual family?

SESSION 6

Turning The Hearts of Fathers to Their Children

“Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. ⁶ His preaching will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse” – Malachi 4:5.

God has always been interested in a Father-son/daughter relationship with us and out of that love and romance comes a passion to serve and reach the lost. This was demonstrated by the lives of Adam and Eve before the Fall. They were God’s sons made in His image. It is important to note that the word image came first before purpose was given; “Let us make man in our image and likeness, so that they may have dominion” (Gen. 1:26). There is no dominion over creation without the image and likeness of God. When Adam and Eve fell, they lost the image of God, the nature and very essence that made them sons. They lost dominion over the created order and were cast outside of the Garden of Eden and became the first orphans. They no longer had a direct relationship with the Father, they now had to work hard to provide for themselves and take care of themselves. They suffer from the trauma of no longer having a father to take care of them.

The Need for Family Revival and Reformation

The angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias and prophesied of his son, John the Baptist, and his unique ministry: “And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:16-17).

John the Baptist did not come as a political reformer. He did not organize a Clean-Up-Israel campaign. This mighty prophet cut through the peripheral and got down to the core of the problem. The angel said he came to “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” He came to restore the hearts of the young and old to holiness. John the Baptist’s mission was to turn the stony hearts of the children back to the godly hearts of the patriarchs. He came to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers.

Sin has ruptured family relationships and brought division between the generations. One of the great needs in our day is the turning of the hearts of parents to their children. Before there was a state, a church, or a school, the home was ordained by God. God commanded the first couple to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue the earth, and rule the world for God. Home is where husbands and wives submit to one another in the fear of God. Home is where parents rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Home is where children honour their mother and father. The home is a church within a church, a world within a world, a kingdom within a kingdom.

Millions of middle-class families are not houseless, but homeless! Countless homes in South Africa can be described as a snack bar, a parking garage, and a holiday inn. It serves as a place to eat, a place to park, and a place to sleep. Parents are more concerned about building a house than establishing a home.

Parental authority has not disappeared. It has merely changed hands—the children have taken it over! The time has come for parents to take the ownership of their own children. During the past years, millions of parents resigned and handed their children over to the government. Andrew Murray said, “Many children are ruined by parental weakness.”

Eli's children were rebellious from childhood (1 Sam. 2:13-36). This man Eli was a judge, a priest, and a father. Yet he failed to use his authority to govern his sons. Eli failed to direct, discipline, correct, punish, restrain, and challenge his children. God charged Eli that he honoured his children above God. He let them have their own way instead of enforcing God's ways in his home. Good-natured weakness is a sure path to wickedness. Since he refused to put his house in order, he was to blame for its destruction.

This is not to say that every wayward child is because of parental failure. God had two children in Eden and they both made wrong choices! Strong character is generated where parental authority is strong. God said of Abraham, “For I know him that he will command his children after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord” (Gen. 18:19).

It is imperative that parents take control of their children. The main thing missing in child-training is the trainer. The fact is, rightly or wrongly, parents are training their children. Lawlessness in the nation gets its start in the living room. If a child doesn't respect the authority of his parents, he will not respect God's authority or the-powers-that-be when he comes of age. “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Prov. 29:15). Children need boundaries.

Creating a Culture of Honour

Dr. Joseph Umidi in his book titled 'Transformational Intelligence' wrote:

"We need an upgrade of relational honor, a download of transformational behaviors that will result in significance, productivity, loyalty, unity, identity, courage, and tenacity at home and at work. In short, we need our homes and work environments to become cultures of honor"

So, what is this honour we are describing? Honour is a relational or social term that identifies how people in any society evaluate one another. How we evaluate one's worth effects our attitude and behavior towards that person. That is why at the root of most cultures there is an expression of giving honour to God through ways that represent worth. The Hebrew word "*kabod*" means "weighty", or to give weight to someone. It is a word that grants respect, value, importance and even authority in our lives. It is translated "glory" in English and is the primary call to give God glory, or honour, as the first priority in our lives. This then enables us to have a lifestyle of giving honour to others.

Creating a culture of honour is so critical to avoid falling into a trap from Satan; we can easily become so ungrateful and critical over our parents, leaders and authority. My pastor used to say, "Honour is a gift and respect is earned". We honour people because God has placed them in our lives, either as our parents, leaders and government. Even though they also have a responsibility of earning our trust and respect by the attitude they give us and things they do to us; we do not stop honouring them. The word of God commands us in Exodus 20:12: "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long and full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you". The word of God also commands us to honour all the brotherhood and those in authority. 1 Peter 2:17, "Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

Debriefing Questions:

1. Why is it so important for God to have hearts of fathers turned to their children and children turned to their fathers?
2. What do you think is the main reason we have disciplinary challenges at home, school and as a nation?
3. What is a culture of honour?
4. Do we honour people even when they don't deserve it?
5. What are the practical actions that you will do after this session to honour you parents or leaders?

Reflections and Notes:

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SESSION 7

Restoring The Culture of the “Blessing”

*“The blessing of the Lord brings wealth without painful toil for it”
– Proverbs 10:22, NIV.*

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ²and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

God's plan has always been to bless every family on planet earth; you can clearly see it from the above passage of scripture, foretelling the blessing to come through Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham. It is also key to notice that God uses family to bless, and He bless families – not just individuals.

What is the Blessing or Curse?

In our society, blessing is often connected to receiving money or gifts, while cursing is often associated with witchcraft, or casting a spell – sometimes using profane or obscene language. While that might be partly true, there is a greater meaning for these terms.

According to Craig Hill, ‘Blessing’ means God is using a human to impart His message, image of identity and destiny to the heart of another person. Cursing means Satan is using a human to impart his message, image of identity and destiny to the

heart of another person. God's message conveys love, value, respect, and purpose; while Satan's message conveys shame, lack of love and lack of purpose.

Parents in most times are positioned as agents of God to bless their children, or agents of Satan to curse their children. Parents can impart either God's message; "I love you; you are precious, valuable, and worthy of my time and energy". Or, they can impart Satan's message: "You are unlovable, unwanted, and not worthy of my time or energy".

In Hebrew, the phrase "to bless" is the word "*barak*", which literally means, "to kneel before and to empower to prosper". Blessing comes from an attitude and posture of humility. When most people think of blessing, they usually think of someone standing over another and blessing him from a superior position. However, Jesus blessed us by humbling himself and taking human form. From a posture of a despised criminal, He gave His life to pay for our sins.

When you bless someone, you kneel before him or her in humility, and literally empower that person to prosper in all areas of life. If you bless someone, you empower them to prosper in every area of life: spiritual life, physical health, emotional wellbeing, finances, career and ministry. To curse is to do the opposite: you cripple, disable, or disempower from prospering in all areas of life.

In Greek, the verb "to bless" is the word "*eulogeo*", which literally means "to speak well of someone and to cause to prosper". This word is similar to an English word *eulogy*, which come from the same root and carries the same meaning; to speak well of someone. Unfortunately, our society usually speaks well of people at their funerals. Good words will not empower the deceased person to prosper. In order to

empower someone to prosper, a blessing must be spoken while that person is living and can receive the blessing.

It is so unfortunate that in our modern, Western, culture, ceremonial blessings and weekly parental blessings at certain critical times in life have been virtually eliminated in most families. The understanding of a parent's blessing has been systematically stolen from our culture. Craig Hill identified six critical stages in a child's life when he should receive a blessing from God through his parents, and the seventh time at which children are meant to bless their parents.

The Hebrew culture was structured in a way that both ceremonial and day to day blessing occurred naturally in most families. This resulted in spiritual, emotional, physical, relational, and financial health for families who practiced the blessing regularly. Most of these are ancient paths, universal principles that are tried and tested, so they must never be applied as a ritual or a law.

These are the seven critical times for the ceremonial blessing:

1. *At conception*
2. *In the womb*
3. *At birth*
4. *During infancy and early childhood*
5. *At puberty (in a rite of passage ceremony/adoption ceremony)*
6. *At the time of marriage and,*
7. *In older age children bless their parents.*

The Father's Blessing

The blessing of the Father is so important that even Jesus Christ Himself did not perform one miracle or preach one message until He had publicly received the blessing of God, His Father. In the Gospel of Luke, we read:

And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in a bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased" (3:22).

In the Jewish culture, it was common for Jewish fathers to speak those words over their sons when releasing them into adult life and calling. It is important to also note that this was common culture even at the Shabbat Dinner. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday, and families would have a family dinner later in the evening. The husband would sing *Eshet Chayil* to the wife. *Eshet Chayil* is a poem from the book of proverbs extolling the virtues of a good wife and mother (Prov. 31:10-31). And He would kneel and bless his wife. After that is done, the father and mother bless their children one by one. Starting with the oldest, the parents will put their hands on the child's head and give the child a blessing.

For boys, the introductory line is:

"May you be like Efraim and Menashe".

For girls, the introductory line is:

"May you be like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah".

For both boys and girls, the rest of the blessing is:

"May God bless you and guard you.

May God, show you favour and be gracious to you.

May God show you kindness and grant you peace".

Once they are done parents give each child a kiss after they are blessed. *"The blessing of the Lord brings wealth without painful toil for it" – Proverbs 10:22, NIV.*

Debriefing Questions:

SESSION 8

Thinking and Creating Legacies

“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous” – Proverbs 13:22.

Jasper Cloete, in his book titled *“Legacy”*, mentions that the book of Proverbs was written by Solomon and was a collection of principles that have been tried and tested in society regardless of nationality or religion. The principles have been observed by many people over the years. Solomon wrote them down so that they can be used to construct functional societies for generations to come.

“A good man leaves an inheritance [of moral stability and goodness] to his children’s children, and the wealth of the sinner [finds its way eventually] into the hands of the righteous, for whom it was laid up” – Proverbs 13:22, AMPC.

Cloete paraphrases Proverbs 13:22 in the most amazing way: *“In any society where there is a family that dedicates their lives to construct an inheritance/legacy (built on the foundations of morals and values) that will last throughout the lifetimes of the parents and children and still be there for the grandchildren, then that family will become like an economic magnet that will pull towards it all the unused and unutilised resources (wealth) from those families that failed to build an inheritance/legacy. And these unused and unutilised resources will end up being productively used by the generationally minded families doing the right things (the righteous).”*

Having a multi-generational plan of training our children to be Christian thinkers and practitioners is the most important calling a parent has! Unfortunately, most parents rarely take time to pray and teach their children the Bible. Even when they do, it is not enough to

nurture them to be world-class leaders. To nurture world-changers, as a general rule, young children between 3-10 years old should be immersed in scripture memorization. Once children are in middle school and preparing for high school, parents need to begin to teach their children how to understand and apply their scripture knowledge in regard to evolution, history, education, government and business. They should also encourage them to excel in school and to attend the best universities and colleges available. In this way, we are not just teaching our children how not to backslide; but how to take the lead in culture and society.

The Bible teaches that we need to have an intergenerational approach in which we catechize our biological and spiritual children with the slogan to *"think biblically and speak secularly"*, so they will always be trained to apply the Bible to everyday life. By doing this, we will nurture the greatest leaders the world has ever seen, just as the church of old did with the greatest artists, scientists, writers, politicians, and educators that transformed Europe and North America!

Up until the mid-1800's, the church not only cared for the down and out, but also nurtured the "up and in" cultural elites that became the mind molders that influenced culture. Nowadays, instead of starting world class universities like Harvard or Yale, the church shuns higher education and encourages emerging leaders merely to attend their little Bible institutes! As long as we are afraid of higher education, we will never ascend to the head of culture. It is time for believers to become the cultural elites of society so that we can lead our communities with wisdom and justice!

Generational Wealth

Generational wealth is about preserving your family name. To build generational wealth occurs over many lifetimes. If you were asked, "What is your great, great, grandfather's name?" many of us would say, "I do not know". The reason is because they did not pass on a

family legacy. The reason they could not pass on a family legacy is that they either did not think generationally, or their hearts were not turned to their children and vice-versa. When there is a disconnect within families and generationally the inheritance stops flowing, then the curse of poverty begins to flow from one generation to another.

To build wealth is about building on the financial success of the past generations. That is why it is so important to have families speaking as one and fathers' hearts being turned to their children and children's hearts turned to their fathers so that the blessing and the inheritance can flow from one generation to another. The Medici's, Rothchild's, Rockefellers, Kennedys, Marriott's, Ruppert's, Oppenheimer's and Hiltons (known as old family money) are examples of how generational wealth is passed on. These multigenerational families have passed on several successful businesses known as dynasties.

Generational Wealth begins when you erase the poverty mentality thinking and replace it with the financial education of the wealthy elite. This information has been hidden for decades. In the battle against multi-generational poverty, growing evidence has supported asset building as an increasingly important means to provide upward financial mobility and pathways to passing on wealth for a positive economic future.

Generational Wealth is on the minds of young people. Money is by far their most important problem as it relates to handling financial concerns, living expenses, college education, careers and jobs. Young people today may earn more than their parents did, but their money buys less. This may make them feel poorer, which means a lot less economic security. They are going to have a harder time because the amounts they'll have to come up with to even do as well as their parents are going to be harder to achieve.

The Paradigm Shift

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”⁷ The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender” – Proverbs 22:6-7.

Most of us we read the part about the rich ruling over the poor, but we don't read where it begins by saying, “train up a child in the way he should go, so that when he is old, he will not depart from it”. We often think it talks about just teaching them to pray, read their bibles and staying out of sin. I thought that too until I realised that Jewish parents taught their children about the five jars principle of money, and that is why they became the best stewards of money. We also need to teach our children and youth about generational wealth, becoming rich and what it takes to become rich. We need to teach them about money, credit, debts, savings, investing and generosity. This will give them a head start in life and they will have an unfair advantage in life. We have a choice as parents to ensure that our children will be on the ruling side, or on the slavery side being subject to lenders. Most of our young people are heading that way and we can change all that.

As a family, we must have wealth education nights with our children where we talk about purpose, destiny and wealth. We teach our children about money from an early age. As a family, we have been running a number of financial literacy talks, seminars, conferences, and coaching as the Mahlobo Foundation business. Our focus has been young people in high schools, colleges and universities. We now also provide financial coaching to professionals and small business owners. We also use games like Monopoly and some of Rich Dad Education materials of financial education. We integrate all our content with biblical teachings and values.

Here are some of the financial words that will increase your family's financial vocabulary, as you learn them during your wealth education nights:

1. **Income:** There are three basic types of income; ordinary, portfolio and passive.
2. **Expense:** Expenses, or liabilities, take money from your pocket. The number one expense for most people is taxes. Other typical expenses are housing, food, clothing, medical aid, education and entertainment.
3. **Assets:** Assets put money in your pocket. There are four basic assets or asset classes:
 - Business
 - Real estate
 - Paper Assets
 - Commodities
4. **Liabilities:** Simply said, liabilities such as a mortgage, school loan, credit card debts, and car payments take money from your pocket on a regular basis.
5. **Debt:** Debt can be a Liability. Debt can also be an asset. If you lend someone R10 at 5 percent interest, that debt is your asset and the borrower's liability.
6. **Capital Gains:** Capital gains occur when the value of an asset increases in value. For example, if a stock you purchased for R10 a share is trading at R15 a share when you sell it; there is a capital gain of R5 per share, which is taxed at the capital gains tax rate.
7. **Cash flow:** According to Rich Dad Education, the words Cash and Flow are the most important financial words of all. Until you learn to

see cash flowing on a financial statement, you may have a difficult time determining assets from liabilities, and expenses from income.

Using The Law to Protect Your Assets and Wealth for Future Generation

In one of the books, we wrote as a family titled, *“Awaken the Financial Genius in You”*, we wrote about first deciding on what type of Investors we wanted to become, and then we decided to become *inside and sophisticated* investors. Sophisticated investors understand fundamental things like analysing books and financials of any company they invest in or buy. They also are clued up on the whole commercial and business law environment. They always abide by the law in everything they do. They hire experts and professionals who ensure that there are no loopholes in everything they do.

We learned this the hard way; we made so many deals over mutual agreement based on trust, and they turned sour. We signed legal contracts that had loopholes and ended up losing everything. We had everything on our names and when judgments came, we lost it all. What we then learned was that we must never put anything on our name but use legal structures like company and family trust to keep and protect our assets and wealth. In case of judgments and people suing us, not that we go around wanting to be sued by people, our family assets and wealth will not be lost. We had to ensure that there is a proper will and estate planning to make it easier for our estate to be wound up when we are no longer alive. This will make sure that the next generation has wealth to continue their lives. And you will rest knowing that you have left a legacy (a good name and wealth). Leaving a good name without generational wealth for ones’ children’s children is not a real legacy.

Make a decision today that as a father you will not leave a good name and a lot of debts like the prophet who died and left the widow with so many debts in the book of 1 Kings 4:1-7. The poor widow lived her

life threatened by creditors until Elisha intervened and gave her wisdom to break the generational poverty. Refuse to be remembered as a religious man, a professional, or a young man who lacked knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Build a real legacy.

Debriefing Questions:

1. What comes in your mind when you hear the word 'legacy'?
2. What were the names of your great, grand parents? And what did they do that was significant?
3. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your business and financial education?
4. Do you have a 3-4 generational plan for yourself and family?
5. What are you doing at the moment to ensure that you will leave an inheritance for your children's children?

WRAPPING UP

A Letter to My Children

Dear.....

You may not know this but, I LOVE YOU!

For you are my offspring, you are not a mistake.

For all your days are written in God's book and He determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live.

You are fearfully and wonderfully made; God knitted you together in your mother's womb and brought you forth on the day you were born.

I am not distant and angry, but I am in love with you.

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you, simply because you are my children, and I am your father.

You are the very good and perfect gift I have received from my Father.

I have great plans for your future filled with hope because I love you with an unconditional love.

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore and I rejoice over you with singing. I will never stop doing good to you.

You are my treasured possession and the apple of my eye.

I want to be your greatest encourager, the one who will be there to comfort you in all your troubles. When you are brokenhearted, I want to be close to you.

I am your father and I love you.

And nothing will ever separate you from my love, I am coming back home, and I promise that I will never leave you and abandon you ever again. I will no longer choose my work over you.

I will always be a father to you.

My question is: "Will you draw closer to me and be my children?" I am also waiting for you.

Debriefing Questions:

1. What sort of emotions does this letter bring up in you?
2. If your dad had a chance to write a letter to you, what would you want to be included in that letter?
3. Write a letter to your child/children, or future children.

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10. Moving Forward!
11. The African Dream
12. Coach Thabo's Philosophy in 15 Lessons
13. Parenting Made Easy: Love and Discipline
14. Mommy, Please Don't Hurt Me!

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THE FATHER HEART PROGRAMME

