

Dive! FBCD Women's Ministry  
*Dwell Differently* by Natalie Abbott and Vera Schmitz  
Chapter 3 (Truth When You Feel Unloved)  
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"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1a).

### A TREASURE-FILLED VERSE TO REMEMBER

#### "See..."

- **see** = to behold; to ponder or study intently; to contemplate habitually and devoutly
- Charles Spurgeon: "Pry into this secret!"

#### "...what great love..."

- "**what great**" (Greek *potapen*) = Of what country? Of what manner? Of what kind?
  - Refers to something exotic, **otherworldly**, or beyond what one has previously experienced
  - This Greek word is used 6 times in the NT and always involves **surprise, astonishment, urgency, or excitement**. It's the word the astonished disciples used after Jesus calmed the storm: "And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?'" (Matthew 8:27).
  - Alexander Maclaren: It's a "fanatical exuberance about God's love - a love so astounding you can hardly contain yourself, a love so earth-shattering that it changes you to the core."
- **Incomprehensible Love**: Paul prays that believers "may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:18-19).
- **What is love?**
  - "**By this we know love**, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16).
  - "**In this the love of God was made manifest** among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9).

- **"In this is love**, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).
- **"God is love"** (1 John 4:8).

**"...the Father has lavished on us..."**

- **lavish** = to bestow something in generous or extravagant quantities
- We do not initiate this love, and we do not earn this love.

**"...that we should be called children of God! ..."**

- The purpose and direction of God's lavish love was to make us his children.
- **called** = named
- We must be **born again** to become children of God. Regeneration is the spiritual birth by which we receive the nature of our Father. We should exhibit **family likeness**.
- *Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis: Screwtape, a senior demon, trains other demons in the art of guiding humans into hell, and he warns his understudy Wormwood that his job is all the more difficult because the "Enemy" (God) "has a curious fantasy of making all these disgusting little human vermin into sons."

**"... And that is what we are!"**

- This exclamation is similar to a hearty "Amen!" It's a **heartfelt response** to the truth he has just proclaimed. As one theologian says, "He turns doctrine into experience."
  - The truth is nothing to us unless we make it our very own faith.
  - We can excitedly say, "That's me! I'm his child! He's my Father!"
- John repeatedly calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:7). His **identity** was wrapped up in Jesus' love for him.

## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

1. "Everyone is a child of God"
  - **Truth: Everyone is made in the image of God, but not everyone is a child of God.**
  - Everyone is either a **child of wrath** or a **child of God**, and everyone begins as a child of wrath: "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work

in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

- Only through the “Spirit of adoption” (Romans 8:15) are we made children of God. Everyone is a neighbor, but not everyone is a sibling.
2. “God loves me just the way I am and wouldn’t change a thing about me.”
- **Truth: God loves us so much that he wants us to look more like him.**
  - “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning**, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:8-10).
  - “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:28-29).

### **APPLYING THESE TRUTHS WHEN WE FEEL UNLOVED**

“Think about how different your life would look (or just your day) if you walked around believing you are known and wanted and loved. What if you really believed it deep down in your bones and lived like it was true?” (Abbott, 2024, p. 47).

“It’s a love that draws you back when you wander because you long for it while you’re away, knowing it will always be there. It’s a love that only increases your love for him and your desire to follow him and become more like him” (Abbott, 2024, p. 52-53).

Questions:

- In what ways do you feel unlovable, unworthy, or unwanted?
- How are you trying to earn God’s love?
- Is there something that you feel so much shame about that you doubt God’s love for you?

If we are children of God, we can be confident in our Father’s lavish, infinite, and personal love toward us. We didn’t earn it, and we can’t lose it. We are perfectly loved.