

He Sees Me
Week Five

Fragile - Handle With Care

Baby girls should come with "warning labels" attached to the bottoms of their feet that read...

Daddy, please don't break me. No one has the power to break me quite like you.

Right now you are afraid that you will drop me, but when I need your grip to be the tightest, please be there.

Feeding time will become routine, but long after I have learned to maneuver a fork and spoon, I will hunger most for you.

You will give me shelter from the cold, but your embrace will be what warms me most. When I act as though I do not need a hug that is when I will be most desperate for it.

The way you study my face today is the way I will long to be seen by you all the days of my life. Others will compete for your place but you will forever be My First Love. Please remember - the way you see me defines me. The summation of my worth, my significance and my beauty is found in your eyes.

Don't be intimidated by me. I am trying to find my way in this great big world and in my pride I think I have all the answers. Dare to stand up to me because I do not have a clue.

I will never tell you this but your voice will drown out all other voices. I will hang on your every word. Choose them carefully.

Right now you are willing to fight for me. There will be bullies at school and monsters under my bed and against all of these you will be "my hero." I need a superhero. Please fight the real fight for me. Battle the monsters that war for my soul. Do battle for me on your knees.

*I need you to teach me about this great God for Whom I was created. Right now you are God to me and that is pretty scary for us both. Tell me a story with a Bible on your lap. Show me my worth by spending time with me. Listen to my dreams and dare me to dream bigger. Teach me about God's love for me by loving me without conditions. Teach me about His mercy by giving me another chance. Teach me about His grace by never being ashamed of me. Teach me about my purpose by giving me over to Him day after day after day. Teach me about His patience by admitting that **you** have failed. Allow me to witness your humanity as you call out to "our" God in prayer. Ask Him to forgive you when you break me. **We** will always give you another chance.*

Day One - Father Abraham

The Fall and the subsequent curse that followed marked Eve's self-image and the self-image of *every* woman (and man) with the desire to regain the Father's love and approval. *We substitute the Divine with the fallen.*

The marriage relationship was most certainly affected by the Fall but we would be remiss to narrow the curse as affecting *this* relationship alone. The Fall and sin's curse affects *all* our relationships. The effects of sin's curse is felt in the relationships we have with our parents, our siblings our mate and our friends.

The first *man* woman encounters is *her dad*. Enter - *fallen man number one*.

Daddy's Little Girl

These words have been used over time to describe every woman's desire. Every female lays claim to this description. It does not necessarily describe a reality as much as it describes a need...a longing of the heart. *This* desire goes much deeper than your heart. It reaches into your gut and is woven into every fiber of your being.

We fight for years to protect the longings of our heart. The hope that our dad will love us the way we need to be loved is a hope that never dies. We give him every chance to do right by us. We continue to crawl back to the gutter seeking to *redeem the gutter*. Maybe gutter is a strong word. Maybe yours is better described as a gully. Gutter, gully or somewhere in between, we hold out hope that *this* relationship, so vital to our well-being, will someday be all we need for it to be.

We reason, *the problem must be me*. If I were pretty enough, good enough, or promising enough my dad would love me, right? I wish my dad wanted to spend time with me. I have made all *his* interests sacred. I have tried to speak his language but he never wants to talk with me. Oh, he'll talk *at* me or he'll talk *around* me but *he does not value anything I say*.

The Desert of the Soul.

Some of us have experienced this father-daughter relationship to its fullest (howbeit fallen). Some of us have experienced delightful portrayals of this relationship *on occasion* which leave us longing for more. Some of us hold out hope that one day we will know the delight of being cherished in this way. And, some of us deny the need altogether. What significant men in our lives *did not do*...we decided *we did not need* (and we will even fight you over it!).

the cross has redeemed you to your original standing and you are not up for vote. That's right. No one else gets to decide your worth or your significance. The Lord has found you worthy and *He has chosen you to be loved and cherished.*

Your dad is fallen. He is under sin's curse and he is broken...just like you.

Please refer to Genesis 16:1-6. I know that this may be a difficult exercise, but try to put yourself in Hagar's place. How much of her desperation was tied to her disappointment in Abraham (first as a representative of God, secondly as a spiritual Father and then as a husband)?

Are there men in your life who have disappointed you in these same areas? Please explain. Give this some time.

It was a huge mistake for Abraham to succumb to Sarai's plan. It was reckless. Taking our circumstances out of the hands of God is always dangerous. When we choose to do things *our way* not only do we pay severely, we sever other people in the process..

There was no one walking the earth at this particular time who was closer to God than Abraham. He should have been a spiritual father to Hagar. I am sure there were owner-slave obstacles to overcome, but even that does not excuse the way this girl was treated.

Hagar had no doubt heard Abraham speak of *His Great God*. She must have revered Abraham. She expected him to *be* godly and to *act* godly. When the plan to use her as a "baby-maker" came to light, I believe her greatest disappointment was that Abraham was not all she hoped he would be.

For a woman, there is no greater disappointment than to discover that *her* man (father, husband, etc.) is not all *she hoped he would be*.

In this context I usually choose to forego discussing my own dad. Over the past thirteen years of counseling I have discovered this one relationship to be the most painful for women. I never want to come across as insensitive but when I state that I had a wonderful relationship with my dad it sounds as though I am being horribly insensitive.

However, I believe that someone from my position (*one of the blessed little girls*) needs to state for the record...*at his best my dad still failed me. He still failed me!* He got so much of *the dad thing* right, but he got so much of it wrong! I fear that due to the primacy of this one relationship, we (women) believe that if we were broken *here* - we are broken beyond repair. NOT TRUE!!

Man's best efforts have never been enough to overturn the results of the Fall. For this we need a Savior!

Your dad is fallen. So was mine. He is under sin's curse and he is broken...just like you.

Girl, you know we need to dig this painful stuff up! Look! Jesus is holding the shovel! Come on! Let's dig it up! Right here in the shadow of the cross, let's lay it out before the Lord so that it cannot hurt us anymore. The reason we have already looked at forgiveness in such detail (the spoken message last week) is because forgiveness is *your way out* of all that your relationship with your earthly father has failed to be.

I cannot think of another time when I have felt more compelled to shout, so please read the following words and allow my scream to emphasize them.

WHAT WAS BROKEN AT THE FALL WAS REPAIRED AT THE CROSS!

WHAT WAS RUINED AT THE FALL WAS RECTIFIED AT THE CROSS!

WHAT WAS STOLEN BY THE FALL WAS RETRIEVED AT THE CROSS!

WHAT MAN CANNOT DO BECAUSE OF HIS FALLEN CONDITION, JESUS HAS DONE!

If you are a daughter of God and you feel broken, it is a lie. You are standing tall and whole. If you are a daughter of God and you feel damaged, it is a lie. You are repaired. If you are a daughter of God and you feel stripped of your royalty, it is a lie. There is no mistaking the daughter of God. If you are a daughter of God and you have been devalued, demeaned, forgotten, disrespected, rejected or made to feel insignificant by fallen man, Jesus came to rescue you from the hands of fallen man.

You **are** *Daddy's Little Girl*. Wouldn't you rather be defined on the arm of *The Perfect Father*. Take His arm. The God Who Sees, Sees Me! Listen as He speaks the words every girl longs to hear.

Put your hand in my hand. My grip is unmistakable. It is my presence you long for. I am the definition of You.

Your true worth, your significance and your beauty can be found in my eyes alone. I am not overwhelmed by you or by any situation that will ever touch your life. Learn to move toward the sound my voice.

*I will fight for you, I **have** fought for you. At Calvary I secured my superhero status.*

You were created for me. What a prize! I long to spend time with you. Let me tell you our story with an open Bible on your lap. I never tire of you. Dream again! I will encourage you to dream bigger still.

I will never be ashamed of you no matter what you do. You will forever be given another chance to prove your love for me. You cannot be disqualified. I will repair what others have broken in you. I have great plans for you my daughter, my bride.

(There is no Father like this Father!)

Day Two - This Man is Making Me Crazy!

When I was in the sixth grade I had a crush on Ricky Pitts. Ricky Pitts and I did not attend the same school but my brother dated his sister. My poor brother - I begged him and his new girlfriend to let me tag along with them everywhere so that I could be near Ricky Pitts. His girlfriend must have felt sorry for me because even though my brother was thoroughly opposed to my existence he allowed me to come along.

It was a typical sixth-grade crush. I was so nervous whenever Ricky Pitts was around. I did not dare to speak to him. What if I said something stupid? I stared at him obsessively though. In all my eleven years he was the most beautiful boy I ever saw.

I wrote his name on everything and would dream of the day we were to be married. My new name would be Donna Pitts. I wrote my new name over and over again so as to get used to the sound of it.

I followed him everywhere. Even though sixth grade boys hate sixth grade girls, his dad insisted that he be nice to me. He teased me and tortured me and punched me and terrorized me. It was wonderful.

After two years of this "never-ending love" Ricky Pitts reached his limit. He called me one day and when I answered the phone I was shocked to hear his voice on the other end of the line. His message was short and to the point. He said, "Look, I don't like you. I like another girl. Okay? Bye."

I hung up the phone. I couldn't believe it! It just couldn't be true!

Ricky Pitts had called me!!!! 😊

The men in our lives start calling the shots very early.

Please allow me to repeat from yesterday:

The Fall and the subsequent curse that followed marked Eve's self-image and the self-image of every woman (and man) with the desire to regain the Father's love and approval. We substitute the Divine with the fallen.

The marriage relationship was most certainly affected by the Fall but we would be remiss to narrow the curse as affecting *this* relationship alone. The Fall and sin's curse affects *all*

our relationships. The effects of sin's curse is felt in the relationships we have with our parents, our siblings our mate and our friends.

We all approach our wedding day with substantial baggage. Even if the relationship we had with our father was a great one, we are still broken by the Fall and sin's curse. I have often wondered about the day I stood before God and Reggie, robed in white, veiled by the excitement of the day. If he had known all that he would suffer as a result of *my* brokenness would he have run screaming from the church?

Last week on Day Four I challenged you to look closely at the effect sin's curse had on Sarah. I also encouraged you to have *a little compassion for Sarah*.

When you consider your parent's relationship have you ever wondered what effect your mother's relationship with your father had on your mom? Sometimes dealing with the men in our lives is maddening.

The Fall and the curse spoken over Eve (and you and me) states that we will desire to please man and man will rule over us. Before the Fall it appears that Adam and Eve ruled corporately over creation. Because creation was at peace with no sin present their rule was one of stewardship.

*"Let us make man in our own image...and let **them** rule. In the image of God he created him; male and female he created **them**."*

After the Fall it became necessary for man (Adam) to rule from a governing position. The Fall gave birth to suspicion and distrust. How frustrating to desire to please a selfish someone who will not receive your selfish endeavors to please them. It is like spinning your wheels in mud.

Is there something about your spouse, your fiancé, your father or your brother that really frustrates you? Can you articulate it? How would you fix it? Why won't they let you? Do you come to an impasse when you discuss the situation with them? Do you ever feel as though they would listen to you if you were a man? Speculate on this for just a moment.

Whatever situation you discussed in the above exercise you can be sure, your impasse is a result of the Fall.

Men are maddening sometimes, aren't they?

Please remember, man is not our Enemy. Sin's curse is our Enemy. Satan is our Enemy. Men are also under sin's curse.

The particulars of the curse on man (male) is a bit different from the curse on woman. Please write the particulars of sin's curse on man (males) as a result of the Fall. (Genesis 3:17-19)

In essence God cursed the work of man's hand. Before the Fall Adam and Eve ruled over creation in harmonious cooperation. Everything they needed was supplied for them before sin's curse affected the earth's supply. After the Fall man was required to hunt it, slay it and drag it home. Not good.

Can you recall a situation in which a man you love suffered as a result of this curse?

I attended Liberty Baptist University after High School and I loved it there. I thrived there.

In my second year I received a call from dad and he told me that he had lost his job. He did not ask me to come home, but he made it clear that he could not afford to keep me at Liberty. I returned home and went to work.

Every week I signed my check and gave it to my dad. This was not a grandiose gesture on my part. *My dad would have done anything for me.* I was more than willing to help him in any way I could.

This was a very difficult time for my family and it lasted about two years. I would be awakened many mornings to the sound of my dad sobbing.

This was a very difficult time for my mom. I am sad to admit that I did not have a lot of compassion for her. My dad was broken. My mom was bitter. She was angry with God. Nineteen year old kids do not know very much do they? Their perspective is so skewed, so judgmental, so lacking in compassion.

I know that you are aware of the differences between men and women. Name some differences (the ones that particularly frustrate you).

Have you ever given much thought to the differences that resulted due to the Fall?

*You think your husband broke you. **He is broken himself.***

You know me, I am BIG on personal responsibility so it is NEVER alright for us to blame our sin on the Fall or even the Devil. However, it does help me when I realize that my husband is under the same curse I am under even though we are affected in different ways.

Abraham had known great wealth so he was not frustrated by the curse of sin on the work of His hands. He was frustrated by His relationship with the Lord. God had promised him particular blessing and had not yet delivered.

In our selfishness we tend to fixate on that which is broken. Abraham fixated on promises unfulfilled and Sarah fixated on Abraham. Abraham tried to manipulate God and Sarah tried to manipulate Abraham. *Under sin's curse - the Desert of the Soul. **The delirium of the desert can drive us to entertain the dangerous.***

What do you think Hagar was fixated on?

It is time to get honest. What are you fixated on? Most likely it has something to do with a relationship.

If Abraham, *the friend of God* could not get it right as a husband and if he could not get it right as a father, who can? The weaknesses and differences of man are many. Humanity is quite frail. Your husband has failed you, but you have also failed him. You give yourself tons of grace for your bad behavior but would never consider giving him an ounce. Have you ever considered your husband's broken heart? Have you ever considered his dreams unrealized? He has feelings to. Your words sting. The dramatics we (women) succumb to in order to get a reaction from our husbands leave lasting scars.

Over twenty years ago my husband began to have back trouble. He played baseball from the age of five and he pitched all through high school. The years of constant turning from the waste left him with disc problems in the lower regions of his spine. He has had some horrific episodes over the years. Several years ago he had the worst episode I can remember.

He came home early from work one day and I knew right away that he was in trouble. When he has one of these episodes his body is contorted in a way I cannot explain. It is a horrible thing.

He tried to get undressed as much as he could but the spasms had already started. The muscles try to adjust to whatever is going on in his back and the spasms come in waves much like labor pains. You can almost time them. When he is in the midst of a spasm he cannot move until the spasm passes.

He had walked into the kitchen to take some medicine when a spasm stopped him in his tracks. He groaned. No he hollered, (and my husband does not holler). He gripped the side of the counter and leaned in such a way so as not to move his legs. He was standing there against the counter in his dress pants and his white t-shirt. His t-shirt was soaked with sweat. I was helpless.

The scene was somewhat surreal as I stood there praying for mercy. I saw all the emotional and physical pain that my precious husband had endured over the years. Things he has

Day Three - Holy Men

Abraham was God's representative on the earth at this time. That is not to say that there were no other *Holy Men* on the earth (Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18) but Abraham held a special place in God's hierarchy because it was Abraham's story that the Lord chose to be a part of His (God's) story.

The influence Abraham had with Hagar was as father, husband and *Holy Man*. To Hagar *Abraham was God*. Watching him worship his Great God allowed her to experience God. This was a very serious responsibility that God placed on Abraham. Did he handle it well?

There is nothing worse than letting someone down who you did not even know you had influence over.

What Holy Man has been an influence on your life, and why? (good or bad)

I have been in church my whole life. Because my ministry is under the umbrella of the church, I exist in a world of pastors. My training was amidst a sea of *Holy Men*. I have been taught through scripture to revere the anointed. I have always held to King David's words in reference to the anointed, "I will not cut off a corner of his robe." I love my pastor and the pastors I minister alongside. I am very loyal to them.

My upbringing was in a legalistic church so I have heard (experienced) many strong opinions in reference to women, especially "women in ministry". Over the years I have wrestled with the approval of *Holy Men* or the lack thereof.

I have had brothers (spiritual brothers) who were used for my good and brothers who were used for my harm (decades of harm). These men, so wise in their own eyes, so sure that they knew God's will better than I did or worse, better than my own God-seeking husband. (The challenge to my husband's authority and headship was the most offensive.)

Because they were "men of God" the Enemy used them to cause me to doubt my giftedness, my call and my significance to the Kingdom. A lot of years were spent asking the Lord to assure me that I was not *stepping beyond my place*. This wrestling was God-ordained. I am His creation and I must be defined by Him.

Jesus' appearance to Hagar trumped Abraham's definition of her.

If our study has shown us anything it has surely taught us that *Holy Men* are men - sinful men.

I appreciate them all, the good, the bad and the ugly. I have learned from them all. Please do not mistake passion for anger. The wrestling was necessary for me to learn to seek the approval of God over the approval of men - even *Holy Men*.

Please look at Hebrews 5:1-4. In verses 2-3 what are we reminded of with regard to the holiest of men?

They are still human.

Every true *Holy Man* deserves your honor and your respect - not your worship. We are to bow to the One High Priest Whose Name is Jesus.

If you have been mistreated by a *Holy Man* let's dig that up and forgive it. Nothing can hurt our relationship with the Lord more than this. The *misunderstood Jesus* met Hagar in the desert. Meet him here, confess and forgive.

Day Four - Sarah & Hagar - Rivals

Now, I want to propose a line of thought that we will develop together. I have long been burdened by women's treatment of each other. I do not have any deep theological treatise on which to build this line of thought, but I think that it will benefit us to consider...

Could it be that the curse is to blame for the way we (women) treat each other?

If the original design was that woman would complete man, could it be that we are born looking for the man we are to complete?

Has the curse set up a competition between us? Are we rivals for man's choosing?

(My head hurts!) 😊

You can watch this rivalry play out between a group of seventh-grade girls. Little girls will be the best of friends until they start competing for the attention of a little boy. Some little girls would never put themselves into the running for male attention. The jeering from peers would be too much to bear.

The exploits played out for us on nightly television also support this line of thought. Have you witnessed a bizarre display where a woman demeaned herself for the approval of man? Recall that here.

You may be years past caring what any man thinks, but surely you can recall a season in your life when a man, significant to you, had power over you, (even if he was not even aware of it).

Some of us are so broken over *the choosing process*. We have decided we will **never** let a man have that kind of power over us again. Men make us CRAZY!! *The desert of the soul.*

If it is within the heart of fallen woman (you and me) to desire man (complete him, please him, wrestle for his attention) could this be what has put us at odds with each other?

At the very least we must admit that there is a competition between women in the arena of relationship (friends, children, in-laws, etc.). Depending on our ages this competition may be at fever pitch or simmered to a dull roar.

Would you deny that this rival existed between Sarah and Hagar?

The word despised used with regard to Hagar toward Sarah actually means *belittled, demeaned, made light of*. Does that sound like any female interaction you have ever experienced?

What grieves you most about Sarah's treatment of Hagar?

Is there a sister with whom you are at odds?

Okay, this is a big assumption but is there a man at the center of this misunderstanding? (a son, a brother, a husband).

If you are married, what kind of history have you experienced with your mother-in-law?

If this has been a bad experience, have you ever heard her speak of her relationship with her mother-in-law?

If it has been a good experience is there something extra special about her that made it so?

If woman has been cursed at the relationship level, shouldn't this bring revelation as to how our relationships can be blessed. Enter King Jesus.

Just for thought. 😊

