

## BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER

NOVEMBER 13, 2017

Welcome to part 2 of our 5<sup>th</sup> Sorrowful Mystery: Jesus is Crucified in our Healing the Father Wound series. Last week we looked at feelings of darkness and abandonment while Jesus was hanging on the cross and how that darkness surrounding Him was actually Him being embraced in the dark presence of God Himself. We're going to actually take a little deeper look at that today and we are going to try to discern where else God's presence was while Jesus hung on that cross offering the once-for-all perfect and eternal atonement for all the sins of every human being who has ever lived in the history of humanity. It is inconceivable to me, and I hope to you after last week, to think that God would have actually abandoned Jesus in that Passion, in that deliberate vulnerability we looked at a little bit last week. In fact, it is John of the Cross who taught me about that dark presence of God. He does that very well, beautifully, in *Dark Night of the Soul*. He is a Doctor of the Church. I have to just to tell you that bearing my own suffering, whether it was reparation for my own sin or when I offered it on behalf of other people, it became much easier to bear when I realized that darkness is actually God Himself. It's not that God even could have actually abandoned Jesus - He is omnipresent, so He is in all places all the time, so technically that's not even possible. But it also seems a weird thought just from the fact that Jesus's sacrifice was so supreme and so pleasing to God. We talked last week about how I had been considering this and how I would never put my own children in that situation, and God pretty much flat out told me right away, "I didn't put Him in that situation. He took it upon Himself for love of you and the whole world." That still just really gets me.

I want to share several things with you in this show. I have been stunned throughout this series at how deliberately God has led me in a deeper healing for myself. This always happens to me. I pick a series and I embark on researching it and planning for it, and lo and behold here come these pop quizzes that God offers me so that I can learn something beautiful and grow in my own healing and my own knowledge of Him, but also so that I can share it with you so that hopefully I can drag you along with me. There are so many things that happened this week, and I promise I'm going to get to the whole story about going to visit my dad, but I wanted to tell you this first: I don't know if I shared this with you, but for the last little while I have been complaining that John of the Cross, who is my confirmation saint, my patron, is so quiet. I mean, that makes sense. I bet I absolutely get on his very last nerve, to be perfectly honest. I was kind of complaining that in all these years now I have never heard from him at all except for reading his writings - and I guess that's the premier way you could hear from a patron saint is by reading their writings. It touches me so very deeply what happened this week. As I was teaching or offering that show last week on John of the Cross and that darkness being God Himself embracing Jesus on the Cross, wrapping Him up in his presence - a dark presence and a feeling of abandonment because it is dark, but that was Him, I believe. And I believe also that John of the Cross confirmed that for me.

I have, in all of these years of being Catholic - over a decade now -- never heard personally from John of the Cross and I was kind of complaining about it. I want you to know that after I recorded that show and before it aired for you on Monday I heard from him FOUR separate times. It was John of the Cross, it wasn't just "Saint John". I was so shocked. One of them was in a friend of mine that sent me a picture of a box of wine that had St. John on it - Becky, thank you for that because you had no idea at the time that was a confirmation! Also, when I was in Charlotte we had to be seated at the bar before

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we could sit down and have dinner when I arrived there on Friday night. Sitting right there was a coaster with a note on it and it said “St. John” on it. Then I was driving to the hotel and there was St. John Catholic Church. It just seemed like St. John of the Cross was saying “Well done. You got it.” The darkness is God. The feelings of abandonment and forsakenness and unprotectedness, they are actually part of the process. They are necessary, in a sense, in order to purify us from those images and those preconceptions that we have about God. God wants us to accept Him and love Him for who He is, not who we think He is. He strips all of that away in that purification, which Jesus obviously did not have to undergo for Himself, but He did that for us. He had that sense of abandonment and being left unprotected and the darkness and the weight of the darkness. He had a sense of all of that. I just truly think and feel very deeply that John of the Cross is patting us all on the back saying “Well done.” Keep an eye out for that darkness and when you start experiencing it, lean into it instead of resisting it and trying to run from it. Lean into it and let it do its work so that you don’t have to spend more time than absolutely necessary in that, because it is awful, is it not? It’s just terrible.

I found that so cool. I was walking into the situation. I know I left you hanging but I just really wanted to process it before I shared it with you. Long story short, I’ll just say this: I think I made it much direr than maybe it needed to be. Or maybe it was your prayers that buoyed me through the whole thing. I have to say that I had a moment of panic when the conference was over, and I was sitting there Saturday, and it just hit me that I was about to be on my way to see my dad for the first time in 2 years. I had a sheer moment of complete panic. Thankfully Jessica (Hi Jessica!) was there. We have a similar story and we sort of talked about that some. All of you in Charlotte were so good to me, and I thank you for that. I knew you would be. I hope was able to love and lift you some. All of you on the discussion community on Facebook, all of you who have listened to the show and were praying for me - I just thank you so much. Also, John of the Cross because I know he got me through it. He was kind of just letting me know he was there. The takeaway for me was it wasn’t easy. What I realized is it’s not ever going to be easy with my dad. It just isn’t. There is too much water under the bridge, and his personality is difficult for me anyway. I think that was probably part of my woundedness as a child. His personality is just very difficult, plus he’s a man. Men are not usually as sensitive as we are. They are often not very intuitive and so they say things and they don’t know how they sound to us. If you have a wound on top of that it just makes you more sensitive. I think there are just a lot of things that make me dread seeing him even though it’s probably unfair to him to feel that way. I just can’t help it. I’m just being honest. I pushed through it and I went, and I am glad I did. It was a very good weekend. He was on his very best behavior. I saw him serve his wife in ways that I haven’t seen him do before. He had a gentleness, a softness about him that I think he was trying to offer me, which I found endearing. We were all on our best behavior. We weren’t saying anything that could be construed whatsoever as anything inflammatory, which was nice. It was also just a nice visit. He did things like make my bed. They had been gone all day and they had to put the sheets on the bed because they had been washed but not put on, and he did it himself. He gave me 3 pillows. Just little things that I think were his way of trying to say “I do love you and here’s about the only way I can show it.” That part was good. The whole visit was good.

I want to just mention that it’s not ever going to be easy with him. It’s just not, partly because of personality and partly because of my woundedness. It may be the same for you, and that’s why I’m pointing it out. That’s okay. We have to go out of our way to try to love them anyway as best we can. That was really what I was trying to do. You know, because I shared it with you, that was my goal. I think I was able to do that and I think he was too. It was a really good visit. I think that sometimes where he is concerned I make a mountain out of a molehill when I am anticipating having to see him because I worried. I just never know when something is going to come out of his mouth that is going to

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send me over the edge. That's fair because he's been known to do that. The other thing that makes me nervous being around him is that I - and I know some of you are thinking "man, she sure does say stuff about him that I hope he doesn't hear", and honestly there are times I hope that too. I know, though, after this visit that he has absolutely no idea about what I do or anything I've written or said. That's probably a good thing. I think he's just not interested. It's sort of a take it or leave it kind of thing. He received me well with gentleness and I did the same, so all in all I think it was a really beneficial experiment. Am I going to go running over there every so often? I don't know. We'll see. That was a great first step for me, I think, in a very long time. I think that as my children get older it gets easier for me. It was a whole lot easier for me being by myself because I didn't feel like I was having to monitor every situation all the time where my youngest son is concerned. Dad says things that are insensitive and rude about other people. You all know those kinds of people, so I don't want to belabor that point.

Here's my other point: We have to go first. There will come a time, possibly, in your healing. We talked last week about having to put boundaries in place, and that is absolutely necessary to give us the space and the room to heal. If we continue in that journey long enough, there may come a time that God asks us to re-engage with that person. If He does, He will probably ask you to go first. I say this in part because John Paul II told us that God gave humanity uniquely to woman because of her particular sensitivity to the human person and because of her motherhood. Because of that we have to go first. That's what I was trying to do. That's the pop quiz God offered me. That's the one I accepted, and I think I did it both for me and my dad and you and your situation to possibly - I hope - encourage you to push through the fear of it. The fear is really the enemy trying to keep us in that disunity and that brokenness. I don't know how comfortable my relationship with my dad is ever going to be. It is probably going to continue to be pretty superficial. I don't know, and I don't have to know. I just have to follow God at every step and be willing to do whatever it is He asks me. So far, I am. I pray for that grace continually and I pray that for you as well.

Some other really interesting stuff happened this week while I was in Charlotte. I have taught my kids Latin since they were in the second grade. My oldest is in his second year of college and my youngest has been studying Latin for a couple of years now. He had a question for me about a week ago. It was last week just before the trip. His memory phrase for that week was "Stabat Mater", which means Standing Mother. He asked me what that means. And I had no idea. I knew that was probably Marian but I didn't know. I didn't think about doing the research on it at all. I was really, to be honest, consumed with the anticipation of what was going to happen the next weekend, so I didn't think about it much more. But we had an Adoration time in Charlotte at St. Anne's Catholic Church, which was part of the women's conference that I was helping to offer and facilitate. One of the pastors there gave us a little talk and he mentioned Stabat Mater as Standing Mother. He was talking about how Mary was standing at the foot of the cross. It was so cool because my son had just asked me and I didn't know. Then here is the second piece of the puzzle. God gives you the next piece. I thought "Oh my gosh I can't wait to tell my son about what I learned". I came straight home and shared it with him.

Another thing that I have been working on is someone asked me to contribute to a book on motherhood. It's a gift book and it was supposed to be a reflection on motherhood. I found it very, very difficult. I have a great relationship with my mother but something that has bothered me a lot about my relationship with her is a strange lack of vivid memories of her. I have memories of her but they are not that vivid. They're not really strong memories, and I find that odd. This is what I wrote about in my reflection of my own mother: A time she attacked me with a hairbrush. It was in the dark

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wee hours of a school day and my younger sister and I were in the bathroom primping and getting ready for school. It never failed, almost every single morning we got into an argument or a fight over something. Part of what always made me so angry about her was that she was constantly lollygagging. She was the slowest to get ready. As we got older it would make me mad because she would make me late for school because I had to drop her off first. We were whispering really ugly things to each other in the bathroom as we were getting ready, and I took the hairbrush I was using and I whacked her with it. She let out this full-throated howl of injustice that brought my mother up out of a dead sleep lumbering to the bathroom. She threw the door open and snatched the brush out of my hand. Looking back on it I think it's funny that she would have known automatically that I was the one who had done it, but she probably recognized my sister's voice too. She grabbed that hairbrush out of my hand and started whacking me on the arm. I've got bony arms! She was whacking me on the upper part of my arms. She did it so many times. I glared at her in the mirror and I told her "You better not do that anymore or I'm gonna hit you back." I never made that threat again because I think she would have killed me. She looked like not only was she daring me to do it, but I knew if I did she would probably just kill me. I just think it's funny that is probably my most vivid memory of her. I see her all the time. It's not that I don't know who she is, and I can't see her in my mind now. I'm really talking about when I was younger. I know things about her. I know she cooked us dinner all the time. I know she washed our clothes, because I had stuff to wear. I know she bought our clothes. I know she cleaned the house. I remember that she would cut oranges into sections for me and peel the peelings back on the corners. She showed me how to eat it. I bet I was only 4 at the time because of the house we lived in. I have that scene in my mind. I know she was there, but I don't see her or her face in my memory. That bothered me a lot. I was never afraid of my mother. I mean, she hit me with that brush, but I was never afraid of her the way that I was of my dad. That might be true for a lot of people.

We talked about how mother wounds are so much different partly because mothers are supposed to be nurturing whereas dads we sort of expect to be brusque and sometimes even harsh, because they're big and strong and manly and all that. Mother wounds are harder when our mothers are not nurturing, although we expect our fathers to be sometimes harsh. Maybe not that we expect them to, and it's not that it doesn't hurt us, but we can let them get by with it a little more than we would a mother. Mothers are supposed to be nurturing, right? That's the way it was in our household. I was not afraid of my mother. She spanked me with fly swatters and spoons and whatever she could grab at the time - hairbrush, whatever - but she was the glue of sanity that kept our dysfunction from spiraling out into the cosmos. My dad was teaching me how to be and it was not good. I was learning how to manipulate and lie to get my way. I talk about that in "Fearless". I was learning how to make people do what I wanted by manipulating them. That's what I was learning. It was my mother, really, who kept some of that at bay just by her presence.

She divorced my dad when I was 13. It was like a bomb went off in our family and in my life. It was devastating. It absolutely just totally devastated me. I remember driving up into the car port the day that he left. I couldn't believe he was actually gone. I was so angry at my mother. It was so hard for so many reasons. But I know looking back on it that if she had not left when she did, I probably would have been in jail. I should have been anyway. And most probably, I would have been a raving lunatic, the kind that is in an institution. I was that close to total insanity. I'm not exaggerating. I felt and was so out of control emotionally, I'm not sure I would have made it. He gaslighted so much. I really thought I was crazy, and at some point, I was learning how to do it so I kind of was crazy. He was instilling his own neurosis in me. Because I was the oldest and I had the most exposure to him as a child, I learned it like breathing. It wasn't even something that I had to work at. I just instinctively

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knew how to do it. She truly did save me from a long and certain death spiral, if not my sister who was 4 years younger, and even herself because I think she would have been crazy too if we had been there even one day longer.

You know if you've read any of my books, heard any of my talks, or if you have been with me on the Bible Study Evangelista show for any amount of time, you know that I have spent my entire adult life working through this mushrooming fallout that my dad imprinted in me so early and so deeply. As I'm trying to write this essay for this gift book and I am thinking about my relationship with my mother, it is disturbing to me that I don't have stronger memories of her as a child. It seems really unfair. I remember my mom heard me talking about my father wound and the father wound part of my ministry and she wished aloud that she had left Dad sooner. I realized at that time that Mom doesn't see my father wound the way that I do. I see it as a triumph. I see it as, not that I have arrived, but that God has been healing me and that wound is my path to sanctity. Hidden in Christ's own wounds, which is why we are doing the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary, my confidence and hope has always been that this wound would be completely resurrected in Him, and that my relationship with my dad will end up being a good thing - as good as it can be. Praise God, by His grace we're on that road. My mom doesn't see my father wound in that way. She sees it as an indictment. I think when she heard the events from my point of view, I think it made her feel guilty that she left us in that stew of fear for as long as she did. I know that she had to in order to make sure that she was doing the right thing, both for her and for us. I don't think it was all that long. I was 13 so I think they stayed together 14 years. You know if you've done it, some of you have wounds from your husbands and your wives. You know how hard it is to stay married, period, but certainly to have this sort of thing going on. I don't blame her, but I think she blames herself, and maybe I contributed to that by sharing it. I didn't want her to, though, and I've tried to explain.

I think I have found a new way to explain it. As I was trying to write this article something absolutely unbelievable happened, and it's the essence of the point of the show today. I honestly can say that I have not thought about my relationship with my mom in any depth until I started doing the series on the Magnificat. When I started thinking about Mary as our spiritual mother, I started thinking about my mom some. That's when it really started to bother me. I realized it and I noticed that I didn't have any really strong memories of her. I was surprised and discouraged that it was that hairbrush thing, that attack, and otherwise she is sort of in the background. I felt like maybe I took her for granted. I'm sure I did. We always do, don't we? But it bothered me a lot once I realized it and acknowledged it. I can't see her face. I can't hear her voice. I just know she was there. I know she was there like my own breath. Everything I know of her as a presence in my life is soft around the edges and kind of blurry, you know? She's more of a feeling to me. It's almost as if, as I was thinking about how to write that article, it was almost like still being in her womb. She was there all along but I don't have any real clear sight of her. It seems so unfair that all this pain and all this agony that I experienced in my relationship with my dad eclipsed her, like he had seared my memory in a way that just left me too numb to feel her. I have memories of her but every valley has been exulted, every mountain and made hill made low, the crooked is straight and the rough ways are plain, as the Bible says in Isaiah 44.

So I asked God about it when I was doing that series. I felt her presence in the background but I felt like it was a disservice to her because she was the one constant in all of that pain and fear and all of that negative part of my upbringing. I felt like she should figure more prominently. I felt like I should have very strong memories of her. I asked Him, "Why does she seem so ambient?" Occasionally I would think about it and I would ruminate on it some in God's presence, but He left me unanswered for a long time until this week. I got my answer this week. I don't even know how many times I have

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heard and read therapists or spiritual directors who say if you have a wound and if you have memories that are painful and difficult, those times when you felt abandoned or dark or unprotected, go to God and ask Him where He was present at that time and in that wound. I have heard that I can't even tell you how many times. I have said it, because I know that is what we are asked to do, but I want you to know I have never done it. I don't know why. I think maybe I was afraid to ask. I had never done it until this week. When we were talking about that darkness and that abandonment, I said "You know what Lord? I think I'm ready. I'm ready to ask you - where were you?" Honestly, and He knows this is true, it doesn't change anything for me. Maybe that's another reason I didn't ask. I didn't ask because I didn't think it mattered. I had dealt with my anger toward God for allowing some of that stuff to happen to me. I had dealt with the unfairness of how he treated me and taught me to be. I had dealt with all that so I didn't think it was necessary, but He knew it was necessary. In mentioning it in last weeks show I thought about it a lot, so I asked Him. "Lord, where were you?" I have to tell you, I cried, and I still cry every time I think about it because it was so healing. When I was writing that meditation I realized - it just hit me like a ton of bricks. He said to me very clearly, "Sonja, I was with you with that darkness and that feeling of abandonment every single second in your mother." It just absolutely slayed me. As soon as He said it, I knew it was true. She was always there. She had to have been. The reason I can't remember her that way, I think, is just that she was always there. That comfort, that safe place, that nurturing, that presence. I wasn't afraid of her. I felt safe. I felt safe and loved with her. I did take it for granted, but I think we're kind of supposed to. I think that's the point. We don't run to our own children every second and say "Are you taking me for granted?" You want them to. You want them to feel that safety. I have just been so overwhelmed all week.

Listen, this all came together in this show. We're talking about Beholding Your Mother, because Dear One, God was present in Jesus's mother at the foot of that cross. The Standing Mother. He was present with His son. As He offered all that agony, she was there. She was there for Him and she's there for you. That was the other thing that just rolled over me. As I was sitting there thinking about how God was present in my mother all that time, I was struck by how I feel the same way about Mary, our Blessed Mother. All those years as a non-Catholic I paid her no attention whatsoever. I've shared with you how very, very difficult it was for me to consider her in that way. I didn't understand it because I have a great relationship with my own mother. It just seemed very odd. But she was present with me in the same way that my own mother was all that time. She's always there. She's the one doing the facilitating. She's the one making sure we have what we need. She's the one who is nurturing us along the way. She takes no credit for it at all. She's constantly referring us back to Jesus and back to God the Father. She never makes herself visible. She never makes herself known until we go to her and ask her to if it's something we've never encountered before.

I'm sorry to be bawling on you again. This series has been such a healing and an upheaval and a craziness for me too. I just want you to know that. I know that some of you have really dug your heels in and done a lot of work. I'm so proud of you, you have no idea. I want you to know I'm right there with me. Listen to me! I bet y'all are thinking "I am going to be glad when this is over so we can be done with this!" And I'll tell you in a minute, but I've already selected our new series. You're not going to believe that story either. So much has been happening spiritually, I can barely keep up. I pray that's happening for you too.

Your Stabat Mater was standing there with you every single second too. If you did not have a good relationship with your own earthly mother, or you do not, then you're probably thinking what my sister said one time a long time ago, "Listen, I need somebody with skin on." Our dear and precious mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, is our Stabat Mater. She is there in the darkness, the abandonment, the

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feelings of being unprotected...she is present. She was there for Jesus and He gives her to us. "Behold your mother." I pray, as part of one of your action items this week, that you would spend some time beholding your mother in that way. I know that is going to be difficult for some of you because some of us haven't had good mothers. Some of us have been wounded very, very deeply by our mothers. Those feelings of rejection and abandonment are often the root, whether they come from our mother or father or someone else. Wherever they come from, that can provoke oversharing.

I'm mentioning this because this was actually a question in the Ask Me Anything thread that I wanted to be sure to get to. Oversharing comes from that root. It is an addiction to feeling of acceptance and love by other people. You share because you want to bring them in close to you, but then you overshare in a way that pushes them away. That is a lack of boundaries. We have to learn boundaries, we do. I want to share something with you that has helped me a lot. It's out of Psalm 27:10. "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me." It doesn't matter. There is a verse that talks about "even if your mother and father forsake you I will never leave you." That's in Isaiah that God said to His people through the prophet Isaiah. Even if we have been completely abandoned by our parents, even if we have been abused, if we have been completely forsaken, it doesn't matter because God is there and the Lord will receive me. That's the part we are going to begin learning in the next series.

I have chosen as our next series "The Fruit of the Spirit." It absolutely blew me away when Candace, in her video, tied the fruit of the spirit to those attachment traumas and wounds. I just thought "Wow, what a confirmation!" Then, someone else was talking about how that's all they've seen. Miss Julie has said that several times is that is all she has seen in the last week. I found that to be a second confirmation. I was looking for something that could help lift us out of this difficulty. The Sorrowful Mysteries are hard. It is hard to meditate on them for as long as we have done it. I just want to tell you how proud I am of you for hanging in here for this whole time. I got a whole lot of new signups but there were a lot of people who were regular listeners who kind of dropped out for this. Maybe they don't have wounds or maybe they're just not ready. You have been one of those that has been willing to suffer it with me, and not just me but all of your brothers and sisters who have joined in and also with Christ on the cross. What we have really done is an in-depth meditation on the things that He suffered. We've been watching Him to learn how to relate to God as our Abba Father. That is a process. It will probably take us our whole lives. As I said last week, we can't get in a hurry because that purification has to be slow because we're just dim. We're dim and dull and we just don't have the capacity to move a whole lot faster sometimes. God knows that and He doesn't rush us. He lets the darkness and that feeling of abandonment do its work of purifying us.

I know that's hard to hear but that's the truth of it. If you have a hard time of that concept I encourage you to try to get a hold of John of the Cross and try to read his Dark Night of the Soul. A lot of people say he's difficult. I just have to say he saved my life. I can't thank him enough. To have him so involved in that last show and that part of the series of that darkness, it was beautiful. Thank you, St. John of the Cross! Pray for us!

If you struggle with mother wounds or father wounds, it doesn't matter where your wound comes from; if you struggle with boundaries, that's what I want to talk about. Boundaries are of the Lord, Dear One. We have to have them. We have to have them in order to teach people how to treat us. It is necessary, and I want to reiterate this because I spent some time talking about how God might want us to re-engage later on down the road, but I want to point out that may be many years down the road. What we have to learn to begin with is how to erect proper boundaries. That is difficult. It is difficult

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because we feel guilty because of those attachment traumas and those trauma bonds that were malformed. They keep pulling us back. We have to really struggle against those, but we have to do it. You cannot heal if the scab on the wound is constantly being ripped off. This is why I got so angry at my mother for allowing my grandmother to live with her even now and continue to do this to her. We must have boundaries in place in order to be able to heal. If we don't have boundaries then people continue to transgress against us and sin against us, and we let them so we are complicit in that sin. It is necessary and it is charitable. It is a lack of charity, as I've said, to treat others badly but also to allow others to treat us badly. We have to be self-aware. We have to be able to look at the landscape of our lives and discern where am I anxious and afraid? Where do I feel resentful?" That's a big key one right there...where are we feeling resentful? Where do I feel like I am doing this all myself? Where do I feel overwhelmed? Those are the places where we really have to start looking for how to put boundaries in place. Then we have to set the boundaries. We neglect to do that because we don't want to confront people. Honestly, that's hard to do unless we've practiced it. Part of my anxiety all week last week was trying to figure out what I would say when some difficult questions come up that my dad could ask. "Where have you been for 2 years? Why haven't we spoken?" My answer to that is "Well, where were you for the last 2 years? Why does it have to be me? Why do I have to be the one always to initiate a relationship?" The truth is, I don't. I wanted to open that door and let him know and make sure he knows that the door is open. I welcome his engagement but if he doesn't want to engage I'm not going to go chase him down and beg him to be involved in my life. I'm just not. That is a boundary that I have put in place because I have to do that. You may have to vent your strong emotions with people but find a safe place to do it. Don't do it on that person. We talked about that when we talked about judging. We have to be careful about that.

When we're trying to set up boundaries we want to use very simple, direct language. You don't want to try to do it when you are emotional. That is why, for me, I was trying to get ready as I went. I didn't want him to catch me in a situation where I was caught off guard and then I'm either hurt and crying and bawling or I'm angry and I lash out. I didn't want to allow him to push through my boundaries, because anybody who tries to push through your boundaries, Dear One, that's abuse. I think that may have been Candace who told us that. Is it abuse? Well, it's abuse if they won't listen to you when you erect a boundary and they keep trying to push in. You have to use very simple, direct, and unemotional language. If you look at a judge in a courtroom, the judge doesn't get crazy angry and start screaming and crying and yelling. He just says how it's going to be. That's how we have to be. This works with children, too. You have to get to a point where you're unemotional about it, and that means separating from the situations in which all of that volatile emotion is present. You don't have to defend yourself. You don't have to debate. You don't have to overexplain your feelings. Just be firm and gracious and direct, and when you're faced with resistance, just repeat it. That was one of the things that I loved about meeting Jessica in Charlotte. She confronted her father, who is narcissistic. She had mentioned that she was advised by her therapist that she should never do that. I didn't know that - I had never heard that. That is my own father's issue. What I loved about it is that she said she did confront him. She said "When you say this, that's called gaslighting. When you do this, that's called projecting." She laid it out. "When you do this kind of behavior, that's what you're doing and that's not allowed. I'm not going to allow you to do that." The more you do this - and I know it's uncomfortable to begin with - and the more you practice it, it allows you to really grow into your own identity and your own sense of who you are apart from that person who is abusive.

That's what you really need to look at and I encourage you to, now that we are coming to the end of the study. We're going to look at the fruits of the spirit, and we are going to look at fruit doesn't strain to bring forth itself. Fruit is not about forcing yourself to do the things that are virtuous. We

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just have to abide in Christ, Dear One. As we walk with Him step by step, He produces the fruit in us. That's what we are going to look at. We are going to look at them individually: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We're going to spend 9 weeks looking at the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We're going to do that because we need now the time to get away from all of the hardness of all the work that we've done. Now we are going to start contemplating the happy parts, the good things. What is love, truly? What does it look like? What does God want me to have?

We're going to start with love. We'll do that January 1. That's when the new series starts. I beg you, please, share and try to get the word out so that with this new series we can get as many people involved in learning about the fruits of the Holy Spirit as possible, because it all amounts to getting rooted in God's word. That is whole point of my ministry. That's why you are a Friend of the Show and why you support me in your prayers and your Adoration time. Please share the emails. Tell everybody you know about it. Get them involved. All of it is free.

Thank you, Dear One. I am going to offer up one more wrap up show to summarize the whole series. That will be next week and then I will see you January 1 with our new series, the Fruit of the Spirit.



