

WEEKLY REFLECTION

It's Father's Day weekend, and I don't think I know the Father's heart for me.

Like Jonah, I know that He is gracious and merciful. I know that He is slow to anger and that He abounds in steadfast love. I know that He relents from disaster. But whereas Jonah knows these things, and yet doesn't know God—I know these things, and yet I don't. I know God, I know about Him—and yet, I don't.

In Jonah 4, Jonah is *furious*. "Isn't this what I said when I was still home?"

"That's why I ran away to Tarshish, because I knew it!

"I knew that You're gracious and merciful, that You're slow to anger! That you abound in steadfast love, and that You relent from disaster!"

It's interesting how Jonah conveniently forgets that God is a God of righteousness and justice, when most of us forget that He is a God of mercy, grace, and forgiveness. I swing between the two ends of the spectrum: I conveniently forget God is a God of righteousness and justice when I am demanding my own form of justice, and I forget that He is a God of mercy and grace when I think that He will never forgive me.

I don't think that I know the Father's heart for me at all, when all I want to do is run away.

I don't think that I know Him at all, when there are days where I want nothing to do with Him.

But I know that as much as I feel like I don't know what love is, I do: that while I was still dead in my sins and His enemy, God the Father sent Jesus the Son to die for me.

It's up to me to accept, and it's up to us to receive.

I might not know the Father's heart for me, but I want to know. I want to try and receive.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Does your family have a habit of celebrating Father's Day together? How would you celebrate? Share, if you are able to, one of your favorite memories with your father, or with a father figure. If not, feel free to share other thoughts on the subject.

QUESTION TWO:

What do you think is the reason behind Jonah's attitude towards the Ninevites?

Are there any similarities between him and the older brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son?

Go through the Parable of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, and share any insights or takeaways about the Father's heart from these three parables.

QUESTION THREE:

What do you think the Father's heart for us looks like?

What does it mean to be resting in and receiving the Father's heart for us?

How might your life look different if you were to fully accept God's grace, love, and mercy towards you?

Break off into small groups and share your answers to the questions above.

End with prayer for one another, as you minister to and cover each other with love that only the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can give to us.