

Anger and Eggshells

How to Live With an Angry
Spouse Until They Become
a Gentle Giant



By Gerri Taylor

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How To Live With An Angry Spouse Until They Become A Gentle Giant

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Cover Design by David Ingram, Innovated Graphix

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Published by Places In The Father's Heart, Inc. 2009
www.placesinthefathersheart.org

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~What Others Say About This Work~

This is a must read for all of us whose education in legitimacy and living as a victorious child of the living God is a bit lacking. Gerri takes us through its lessons with the authority and humor of one who has gone the distance and lived to tell the tale – in gentleness, humility, and the beauty of a transformed life. Its truth is timely and timeless, and related with such love as to bring its readers into the very presence of Father Himself.

~ Carol Bandi
Friend, Mentor & Editor

Anger and Eggshells is an open, honest look into the heart of a Christian woman who learned to love the Lord first, then her husband. Her submission to her Father opened the pathway for Him to work through her and allowed her to be part of Father's work in drawing an angry husband into His fold, saving him, and producing a growing love in his heart. The blessings and joy that result give testimony to the glory of our God. To anyone in a difficult marriage, this book should be an encouragement and challenge to submit to the Lord and allow Him to give the grace that He promises.

~ Jerry Gibson
Former Pastor
First Baptist Church
Jackson, Alabama

Forward

By

Roger Taylor

Once again, I have the privilege of recommending to you a powerful and encouraging work from the heart of my beautiful wife. In this new work, her gift of mercy reaches out to the hearts of victims with experiential truth and hope. Since I was the predator in her life, I know first hand the depth of victimization she and our children suffered. Gerri does not write looking for fame or fortune. That is not in her DNA. She writes purely from a heart of love for all victims of abuse.

After 13 years of marriage to a self-centered, angry and abusive husband, Gerri discovered my adultery. It was the last straw for her! As a Christian, she knew she had grounds for divorce; and, after all, no one in their right mind would stay in a marriage of abuse and betrayal! But then there was God! Even as a new Christian, Gerri turned to her Heavenly Father in her devastating circumstances. He gave her choices, as you will read later. She chose the spiritual high road, the more difficult road; but, also according to our Father, the most rewarding road. This is our story, but it can be your story. We believe that when we share with others truthfully and honestly our personal testimony of what Jesus has done in our lives, that the testimony carries the power to reproduce itself. Revelation 19:10.

Gerri and I have experienced the transforming power of God's unconditional love for us. Our love hunger has been satisfied. Our wounds are being healed. Our self-worth and legitimacy are now secure in our relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are growing in freedom to share Father's unconditional love for us with each other and our world, and it is life changing beyond our wildest dreams.

Although as I read this work it is heartbreaking to realize the depth of pain I have brought into Gerri's life, and although I know I will not live long enough or be able to love big enough to make up for the devastating years; I do know one thing. There is my God and He is faithful to accomplish far and above my desires. My wife is a treasure to me, a blessing beyond words; and I believe the power of her testimony can be a treasure to you and your world as well.

Roger

~ Chapter One ~

WHOSE ANGER IS IT ANYWAY?

“Father, is THAT what anger feels like?”

Living with an angry person, whether it is a mother, a father, a brother, a sister or a spouse, is never an easy thing. What I want to share with you is that it is possible. How we accomplish it will either be through our flesh or through the spirit of God - whichever one we allow to control our lives.

In my home growing up, anger was an emotion that was not allowed to be expressed. I was in my late 40's when I first discovered this emotion in my own life, after having lived with it in my husband for many years. I was well able to detect his, but mine was cautiously hidden. I so remember the first time I actually recognized that I was angry. Roger thought it was funny and cute. I was irate! It took me several hours to calm down enough to ask my Father God what that whole incident was all about. I was shocked and surprised when He told me gently, “Daughter, you are angry.”

My reply was, “Father, is that what ‘angry’ feels like?”

I had a rapid heartbeat and an upset stomach. I wanted to chop off someone's head, pour in some gasoline and strike a match! I wasn't just angry that day. I was VERY angry! What happened in those moments when I got in touch with my own anger was that God enabled me to see and feel just how awful it was for Rog when he was held captive and deeply entrenched in this hideous stronghold. For the first time in the history of our marriage, I felt what Rog felt. I experienced some of his pain. I sensed the tremendous fear that takes control of an angry Christian and a rageaholic. I could feel the fear that he felt when the ‘fight or flight’ anxiety took over, and how he battled panic that he would somehow hurt someone when he was out of control. I walked a mile in his shoes that day. My heart became broken as I realized how unjustly I had judged him; all I wanted to do was repent to him and ask him to forgive me for my hardened heart. It was one of the biggest revelations Father God has ever given me and one that has hugely changed my life. I finally realized it wasn't all about Rog. It was also about me!

Roger's anger was rooted in the abandonment and rejection he had received as a child. His birth father was killed in WW II, and his emotionally abusive mother, in her own grief over the loss of her husband, was unable to give the offspring of this marriage her love, affection, attention, and security. The seed of abandonment was planted when Roger was 10 months old and the telegram of the news of his father's death arrived. The abandonment was fed with large portions of rejection, and, by the time he was in high school, Roger was full of self-hatred and self-condemnation. I did not see these hidden roots and emotions. I was charged with passion from my own childhood pain of rejection. We married with all of our ‘stuff’ packed firmly in our bags and headed off to begin our lives together. Wedded bliss ended almost immediately when

I came face to face with his anger and rage, while, at the same time, perfectly confident that there was absolutely nothing wrong with me!

I became pregnant with our daughter, Lisa, one month into the marriage. We were young and very immature. The first major sign of abandonment and rejection in Roger's life appeared immediately after Lisa's birth. He became irate and controlled by jealousy, feeling that our new baby girl was taking his place in my life. It took me a long time to see the truth because I could only see his anger

It seemed he would get ticked off at almost anything! It wasn't long before I realized that I would have to learn to 'out think' him to keep peace. I would stand for hours in the grocery store trying to make simple decisions about which can of soup to purchase...if I picked this one, he might want that one; if I bought beef instead of chicken, he would surely want the chicken. He was angry if I did the laundry, and was angry if I didn't. Soon I felt it became my fault if I made the wrong decision about anything. "I'm sorry" were my chosen words. I took the blame for every angry outburst. I could not see that I was rapidly becoming the victim of his anger, and he, the predator.

We spent the next 13 years of our marriage trying to emotionally kill each other! Most of the time I would retreat in hurt and rejection at his angry outbursts. Sometimes, I just could not help myself and I would strike back, emotionally spent and tired of all the abuse. I was always sorry when I reacted in this way, but my flesh had no other alternative or option, or so I thought.

I remember well one particular incident when I was very sorry for 'pushing the envelope' with him. Lisa was just a babe in arms and I was in the kitchen preparing her formula. Rog was sitting in the living room watching TV. We began what we would call today an 'intense time of fellowship.' In those days, it was known as each 'wanting our own way' about something. To be honest, I can't even remember what the discussion was about, but I do remember leaving the kitchen and crossing the living room toward him. I looked down on him (bad move!), stuck my finger out at him and began my comments with something like, "Don't you ever....." That's all I remember. He was up out of his chair in a flash and while my mouth was open yelling at him, his reaction was 'whap' across my jaw. I staggered backwards all the way across the living room until I hit the front door and slid down, landing on my backside and still cradling little Lisa in my arms. I was out cold, but I never dropped her!

Rog panicked, which broke the 'fight mode' in him. He gently took Lisa from my arms and put her in her crib. Then he rushed back to me, and, while still dazed, picked me up and wrapped his long arms around me, and we wept together. We both learned a huge lesson that day. Although there have been many other times of much more 'intense fellowship' between us, never again has he struck me physically. We revisited that time with the Lord many years later, giving and receiving each other's forgiveness for the events of that day. Today it is a glory story that we use to encourage others. We are certainly not an unusual case. Incidents of domestic

violence are on an incredible rise in our society. If you don't believe this, just ask any local police officer or watch almost any cops show on TV.

After I was born again and began my spiritual pilgrimage, I thought things would surely get better. After all, God was on my side, right? Much to my amazement, our situation at home worsened. Now we had added the spiritual element into the mix of our marriage. I was for Christ. Rog became violently angry when the name of Jesus was spoken. Rage now took the place of his anger. I was absolutely mystified at the dynamic taking place. Then it all became too real.

One evening after the kids had gone to bed, he asked me to join him in the family room. I could feel the tension, but I had no earthly idea what was coming. Then the most hurtful words of our entire marriage began to pour out of him. He confessed his adultery. The most powerful spirit of rejection a wife can experience occurs when she hears the words, "I have been unfaithful to you."

I sat absolutely stunned and in far too much pain to be angry...yet! I could do nothing but just listen. I had been born again only a few months when this staggering news came. Finally, when he finished, we both just sat there in silence. My spirit wanted to reach out to him with my redemptive gift of mercy. My soul (my mind, intellect and emotions) wanted to stab him in the heart along with all his other women and cut them to shreds so that they could feel the heart pain I was experiencing. What happened next was a total surprise to me.

The Holy Spirit gently rushed to my side with a level of comfort that was simply amazing. Tumbling around in my head were all the questions I wanted answered, coupled with all the revenge I so desperately wanted, but what came up inside me was purely and simply the Lord's command. "Forgive him."

"God," I said silently, "are You completely nuts?"

"Forgive him, Gerri," was the only response I heard ringing over and over in my head.

Finally, after what seemed like hours of sitting there in utter silence, I surprised myself by saying, "Roger, I forgive you."

I had absolutely no idea where we would go from there, but I made the decision to forgive. We went to bed and neither of us slept a wink that night.

The next morning, he left for work as usual. It was so hard to see him leave the driveway and head for the office because those other women would be there, working with him five days a week. I called my pastor and asked to meet with him, explaining that it was an emergency.

In the pastor's study that morning, I poured out my pain. My heart was broken, my mind clouded. Making a rational decision about anything was impossible for me at that time. Wisely the pastor led me to the Scriptures, giving me two options. I could stay in the marriage, or I could go. I had Scriptural grounds for either road, but which would I choose? Pastor Bruce said, "Gerri, the decision must be between you and the Lord." I left his office still heavy in heart,

but I knew I must get alone with God. I knew in my heart that I could not rightly make this decision. I was sick of all the anger. I was exhausted emotionally and physically from always trying to 'out think' Roger; and most of all, I was sick and tired of walking on eggshells and trying to teach my children to do the same.

I returned home that morning and plopped down in my huge red living room chair with my Bible in my lap. "OK, God. What now?" I said.

I was too tired to pray, so I just got quiet. This was amazing for a totally engaged mercy woman who always needed her 25,000 words a day to sense any fulfillment!

In the stillness of those next few hours, this is what happened.

"Gerri, you can have My permissive will, or you can have My perfect will in this situation," He said.

"What do you mean, Lord?" I asked.

"You can take your children, seek a divorce and begin your life all over without Roger. That is My permissive will according to My word. I will not require you to stay in a marriage where adultery has been committed," He said. "Or, you can have My perfect will. This pathway will be much more difficult. It will be like climbing the rugged mountainside of life barefoot. There will be huge obstacles in your path, storms that will seem impossible to bear and pain sometimes beyond what you feel you can endure. BUT, I will be with you. I will remove the obstacles at just the right moments in time. I will calm the storms that seem to engulf you. I will apply the Balm of Gilead on your wounds and your hurts, and I will heal your pain. Then you will experience a transformation in your own life, and you will watch as I work in Roger's life to enable him to treasure you and love you more than you could ever ask or imagine. The choice is yours: My permissive will or My perfect will. Which will it be?"

It didn't take long to make my decision. I wanted more than anything to serve the Lord with gladness and joy, but I wanted my husband to walk alongside me. I wanted to see him saved, forgiven and healed. I wanted to see him serving the Lord with all his mind, soul and strength. Yes, I thought, this would mean choosing the difficult road up that mountainside of life. I would learn in the weeks and years ahead what it meant to really forgive, and to receive healing, discovering that forgiveness and healing are two completely different things. I would learn, with His help, not only to forgive, but also how to get my painful memories healed so that the Lord could use my testimony to comfort others who needed the same kind of comfort.

He comforts us when we are troubled so that we can comfort others with the same comfort He has given us." 2 Corinthians 1:4 NLT

I would learn the power of a praying wife, and I would learn that there is absolutely **nothing** impossible with My God. I would discover the power of my testimony to reproduce itself as I shared it with others. I am always amazed when a woman comes to me with her painful story and tells me, "You have given me hope to carry on." Thank You, Father!

From God's word, I discovered another promise. I have paraphrased it to make it personal to me.

"And I will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; I will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irrefragable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). I am faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to My promise, and I can be depended on); by Me you are called into companionship and participation with My son, Jesus Christ." Father. I Corinthians 1:8-9. Amp.

In the days to come, I would learn that the abandonment and rejection brewing within my husband since childhood required an outlet. Anger and rage became that outlet. It was like the juggler on the top of a pressure cooker sitting on the eye of a stove set on high. When the pressure from his sin and the abandonment became too much for him to bear emotionally and physically, it had to have an outlet. Angry outbursts and fits of rage became his release. The sin of adultery was only a symptom of a much more deeply rooted issue. God would teach me how to get my eyes off the sin and the sinner and to look at the heart of the man I had pledged my life to in marriage. The vow I spoke, 'for better or for worse,' had now become stark reality.

The choice I made that day in my red chair, while certainly not the easiest to walk out, is with absolute certainty, the best decision of my entire life. It stands right alongside my decision to give my life to Christ. I will be eternally grateful to the Lord for taking the early days of my walk with Him and giving me the opportunity of a lifetime. I'm glad I chose His perfect will for my life even though it was the more difficult path. In the years to come, I would learn much about my angry mate; and, in the process, I would learn much about myself. I would win some battles and I would lose many. I would learn the meaning of the Scripture,, *"The righteous man falls seven times and each time he gets up to begin again."* Proverbs 24:16 Amp

I have not arrived by any means, but I have learned so much about walking on eggshells. I have learned that when I do, the only thing produced is calluses on the bottom of my feet. Since my feet represent my spiritual walk, I don't want anything about them to be hard and calloused. I want every part of me to be soft and pliable unto the Lord, and, most of all, I want my feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel. I want to be ready always to share His love and my testimony with the world. Wherever He leads, I want to follow. I never want to walk on eggshells again. I want to walk on water!

~ Chapter 2 ~

EARLY LESSONS

*“When you’ve learned your lessons well,
You will have the right answers to the right questions!”*

One of the first and most important lessons I learned about walking on eggshells is that I am not responsible for all of Roger’s anger. This was a step I would learn in my own maturing process, because, in the beginning, all I wanted to do was point the finger at him, judge his heart and condemn him. I would say over and over, “If he would only change, everything would be OK.”

The Lord began my Anger 101 class by teaching me how to discern when his anger was mine to own and when it was not. In each instance I would have to honestly face myself and then face God with the question, “Father have I done anything at all to cause or provoke this situation?” Then I would have to carefully listen for the answer. Sometimes I would hear the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit say, “Gerri, this is Roger’s to own. Don’t be a victim.” Other times, I would clearly hear a soft rebuke about my actions or words. If it was mine to own, I quickly learned to repent to the Lord and then look for a good opportunity to face Roger and ask for his forgiveness. At first, it was very difficult to humble my pride and go to him, but each time I obeyed the Lord it became easier. What I did not realize at the time was that the Lord was using each one of these times of humbling me to chip away at Roger’s pride too! What an incredible God we serve!

Another big lesson I learned was when mentor and counselor, Al Ells from Leaders That Last Ministries™, confronted me with my codependency. This was a very deeply entrenched stronghold in me and it has taken years of healing to gain insight, understanding and knowledge of what it looks like and how it works in my life. Codependency is simply loving people, places, or things more than God. Plain and simple, codependency is idolatry. It is loving too much for the wrong reasons. Codependency is love with a hook on it. When you are rejected and unhealed, love hungry and needy, it is easy to love for all the wrong reasons. That was the story of my life. My parents hugely failed to meet the four basic needs of my life; as a result, I was very love hungry and went after many counterfeit affections trying to get the need for unconditional love in my life met. Love hunger demands satisfaction and it will drive you to do things you find horrid, yet you are unable to stop the process. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 7:18-19 Amp, *“For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out. For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am ever doing.”*

In the process of unraveling the codependency in my life, I had to ask myself tough questions. What it really all boiled down to in the end was that I hated pain. I especially hated emotional pain from any source, and I would do almost anything to keep from experiencing that pain. If my kids hurt, I would always stand in the gap for them. If they don't hurt, then I don't hurt, I reasoned. The truth is that sometimes Love permits pain. Consider Jesus' example in the New Testament when Mary and Martha sent word to Him that their brother, Lazarus, was sick unto death. I can almost sense the panic in their voices as they pleaded with the Lord Jesus to come and heal their brother. What shocked me is Jesus' reaction to their request. I would have saddled my donkey immediately upon receiving the sisters' request and made haste see Lazarus. However, as I checked out the story more closely, Jesus didn't do that at all. What He did do was check in with Father to get His orders. WHEN He went was the critical point in this story for codependents! We want to fix everything NOW, when what we really need to do is check in with Father to see what our marching orders are! Father knew in this situation that the Kingdom would get more glory doing it His way. And so it is the same with us today. To keep from hurting in a situation, we will race in our flesh to DO something and somehow fix the situation so NO ONE, especially ourselves, will experience any pain! The problem is that Love sometimes permits pain because Father God knows what is best and sees all from the big picture.

I remember distinctly, in one of our counseling times with Al, his admonishment to me about a situation concerning our son, Matt. I asked Al for permission to leave a ministry session to call Matt to remind him to set his clock back for daylight savings time. When Al asked why I wanted to do that, I responded with surety that I was acting very responsibly and making certain that son wouldn't be late for work the next morning. Al just roared in laughter. My pride was greatly challenged and I didn't see a single thing funny about this situation! Then Al wisely said to me, "Gerri, from this day forward, I would suggest that you do absolutely NOTHING for Matt that he can do for himself. He is 23 years old. Let him grow up!"

I remember the stabbing pain I felt in my chest when he spoke these words to me. Fearful thoughts raced through my mind as I reasoned that Matt would no doubt lose his job the next day if Momma didn't intervene! Deep down inside I knew Al was right, but my stronghold was kicking up its heels big time. I would spend many months actively seeking the Lord for help concerning this particular issue. When God began to work this stronghold out of me, I took a long look around in my life relationships and saw how many other times I had had applied my unsanctified mercy to a situation when the Lord was speaking justice.

The best thing I did to help myself in this situation was to give Roger permission to speak into my life anytime he saw codependency at work. This was another death blow to my pride, but I speak from very personal experience. This method works! Today, I rarely catch myself wandering off into unsanctified mercy and codependency. It is a rich victory that I treasure and a lesson well learned.

With the codependency with my kids tucked neatly away, it wasn't long before Father began to peel away another part of this onion. This time He dealt with my codependency with Roger! I had become the classic enabler with his anger. I was the queen of eggshells around him. I had now learned how to dodge the speeding bullets of his outbursts well and I was teaching my children to do the same. I would work very hard in the afternoons to make certain that everything Rog had asked me to do during my day was finished along with all the expectations I had placed not only on myself but on the children as well. When he arrived home, I was exhausted and so were the children. Then we had to face this giant of a man coming through the door who would often proceed to unload all the frustrations of his entire day on us. It usually didn't take much to cause an eruption even before meal time. Dinner was often the most stressful time of day for all of us. We resorted to eating most of our meals in front of the TV to avoid having to look at or communicate with each other. If there was a glass of spilled milk or a wrong comment, the rage was on, and I immediately went into 'fix it' mode. Fear ruled in our home, and by this time the children and I had very tough feet...from walking on those proverbial eggshells!

It was now necessary for me to deal with my enabling attitude towards a rageaholic. Father is faithful! He began the long, arduous recovery process by first revealing my sinful reactions to Roger's anger,, then leading me in repentance and forgiveness, and finally bringing healing to this phase of my codependency.

I learned that every time anger appeared I needed to recognize it, not run from it or walk on eggshells. I needed to stop and pray. I needed to ask if the anger was mine to own or if I was being victimized. Once again, I had to employ the power of the Holy Spirit to help me make quality decisions. I'm sure I missed it lots of times; but through the years I became more and more skilled at righteously checking it out with Father, then applying the guidelines for taking ownership of only what was mine, allowing Roger to own what was his. Codependents usually want to take unrighteous ownership of most toxic emotions so that 1) they won't hurt, and 2) others around them won't hurt. Again, sometimes Love permits pain and for good reason. When we attempt to circumvent the Lord's use of pain, we only get hurt and prolong the problem and, in the end, become part of the problem.

To facilitate this learning process, I asked several close friends to help me see any thing in a circumstance that might have the slightest hint of codependency about it. I used trusted, Holy Spirit led friends...those who would help me, while not judging my heart. I thank God for placing these kinds of people around me to help me walk out of this stronghold.

Somewhere early in my journey to become free of codependency, I received the following. I share it with you here and pray that it will be an encouragement to you.

Letting Go

To let go doesn't mean to stop caring
It means I can't do it for someone else

To let go is not to cut myself off
It is the realization that I cannot control another

To let go is not to enable
But to allow learning from natural consequences

To let go is to admit powerlessness
Which means the outcome is not in my hands

To let go is not to try and change or blame another
I can only change myself

To let go is not to care for
But to care about

To let go is not to fix
But to be supportive

To let go is not to judge
But to allow another to be a human being

To let go is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes
But to allow others to affect their own outcomes

To let go is not to be protective
It is to permit another to face reality

To let go is not to deny
But to accept

To let go is not to nag, scold, or argue
But to search out my own shortcomings and to correct them

To let go is not to adjust everything to my desires
But to take each day as it comes

To let go is not to criticize and regulate anyone
But to try to become what I dream I can be

To let go is not to regret the past
But to grow and live for the future

To let go is to fear less
And love more

Author Unknown

Today, it is very easy for me to discern codependency in others. I have to laugh often at myself because I say, “there but for the grace of God go I.” I share the lessons I have learned in walking out of this sin today in prayer ministry to help others see how God has worked in this area in my own life. I’m able to comfort with the same comfort I have received. It’s awesome to help someone else become free in this area. This should be the goal for us all.

Another very important lesson that Father has taught me about anger and eggshells is learning to corral my soul. My soul is just like yours. It demands attention and will scream to get it if necessary. Your mind, your intellect and your emotions are the devil’s playground. He loves to have your soul’s attention. The only way to corral the soul is to strengthen your spirit. For me, using the admonition from God’s word to pray often in the Holy Ghost edifies my spirit. Our souls are like Sumo wrestlers and our spirits resemble skinny little stick men. We need to build up our spirits so that they rule over our flesh (our soul). We also must choose to walk in the spirit rather than in the power of the flesh or soul. Being grounded in God’s word will help us discern the difference in the voices of our spirit and soul. Making righteous decisions sometimes requires looking at ourselves in the mirror and telling our soul to SHUT UP! I know the men in white coats would probably lock me up if they could hear me screaming at my soul. Laugh if you will, but sometimes this is the ONLY thing the flesh understands! All flesh is alike. It stinks! The fragrance of Father’s love is found in the spirit that is wholly and completely surrendered to Him and to His will for our lives, and it is the *spirit* that is legitimized solely by Father.

There were many times when Roger’s anger and rage were so offensive to me I’d just have to turn my back and walk away. I would go to the bathroom and have a talk with my soul.

“Soul,” I would say, “you have a choice here to strike back or to shut up and pray for him. Which will it be?”

When the Lord prompted me to be still and know that He was God over the situation, that’s what I would try to do. When He prompted me that I should speak the truth in love and trust Him, that’s what I tried to do. Father never intends for us to be victims of a predator spirit. Likewise He never intends that we become the predator and victimize others. We need to know the heart of the Father in EVERY situation and circumstance. Jesus did only what He heard the Father tell Him to do and He said only what He heard the Father tell Him to say. To become proficient in knowing Father’s will takes practice, patience and obedience. This comes with spiritual maturity. The key is prayer. I don’t mean quick ‘bless me’ prayers. I mean practicing the art of praying without ceasing, learning to stay in constant communication and intimacy with Father throughout your entire day so that you are ready in season and out of season.

Corralling your soul is a learned skill. It requires much practice. You won’t get it all right on the first try, and you need to understand that. When you miss it, there is an easy solution. Just repent, telling Father you are sorry for your actions. Be specific. Then receive His

forgiveness, and begin again. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Sometimes I had to say, "This moment in time is the first of the rest of my life. With Your help, Lord, I will make it!"

The next lesson I was to learn is recognizing and dealing with my own self-centeredness and selfish desires. I remember well very early in my healing process something the Lord did that, at the time, I thought was totally foolish.

Not long after I was born again, I discovered Bible book stores! Oh how I loved to just browse the aisles of these stores enjoying the huge new legacy before me: books, tapes, CD's, study helps, and, oh yes, the home décor! It was like a magnet to me. I began purchasing pieces of Christian wall art. When I brought an item home, I would immediately hang it in a very conspicuous place so that Rog would certainly see it. I was sure that it would be the thing that turned his heart to the Lord! Then to my absolute surprise, Father said to me one day, "Take all that stuff off the walls. Stop trying to be his God and his Holy Spirit. Gerri, I am fully able to save the soul of your husband. Your selfish, self-centered motives will do nothing but drive him further away from Me."

I was immediately convicted and raced around the house, removing everything that remotely had a Christian influence. I remember very well crying tears of pain as I lovingly removed each piece and packed it away. When I finally finished crying, packing and complaining about finding a safe, secure place for my treasures, Father gently spoke to my heart and said, "Gerri, some day I will allow these treasures that you love so to be a part of your home. For today, all I ask is your obedience."

Today, over 30 years later, my beloved Rog is a talented artist, gifted by the Holy Spirit; and, not only do I enjoy many of my old treasures that were put away for several years, but I also have his beautiful paintings hanging all over my house. They are strong reminders that Father never takes away that He doesn't replace with something better. What an awesome God I serve!

Another significant lesson in the dying-to-self process is allowing Father to birth in you the art of learning to unselfishly serve, not because you have to, but because you want to. I made the choice to honor and respect Rog as my husband long before he deserved it. Galatians 6:7 tells us that we reap what we sow. I continually made it a practice to sow what I wanted to reap. In the beginning I really had to make a solid determination in my heart to do this; but, as I practiced, it became easier and easier. Soon I was enjoying serving him and watching him become defenseless against my expressions of love towards him. I distinctly remember a time after he'd been saved for awhile that he confessed to me how before he met Jesus he would leave work and begin the 45 minute drive home, all the time trying to figure out some way to make me angry with him when he got home. He actually would work at it! What he didn't know was that at the same time, the Lord was teaching me the art of sowing and reaping, and I was making the choice in my heart to love him to life no matter what he threw at me! Later we had a good laugh over this as we shared our hearts together. Learning to serve

the angry person a hearty helping of love, even when they are trying to provoke you, will take you a long way on your journey of healing and theirs! It also scatters eggshells! I am not speaking of codependent love here, but the Father's genuine love that comes from the heart that has experienced that Love and then gives it away.

A good example of what I am sharing comes from the writings of the famous evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth. It seems that before Smith was saved he was quite the scoundrel. He often treated his saved wife with anger and dishonor. One snowy night he became angry because she was going to church. He yelled at her, "If you go down to that church, I will lock you out of the house." She blessed him and went to church!

When she returned home, she found the door locked, so she sat down on the stoop and spent the cold night there. In the early morning, Smith opened the door to find her huddled on the doorstep. She stood up and as she passed him in the doorway she lovingly asked, "What would you like for breakfast, Smith?"

This is a rare example of a spirit-controlled person whose flesh had been frozen into inactivity! It clearly demonstrates how Father wants us to **respond** to our circumstances instead of **react** to them. You will never **respond** if your soul is in control. When your soul and flesh are in control, you will shake, rattle and roll in reactionary outbursts, repaying evil for evil, and the devil will win the skirmish! When you allow your spirit to be in control, a gentle answer will turn away wrath and you will be successful in allowing Father to win your battle for you. Achieving success in this lesson once again takes practice, practice, practice! Don't give up. Seven times a righteous man falls, and each time he begins again!

Yet another very valuable lesson Father taught me was when to speak and when to just shut up! I am, by redemptive gifting, an outgoing, mercy-oriented person. Father usually puts those like us with the redemptive gifting of prophet! As John and Paula Sanford explain it, "God will put you with those with whom you are designed to grind!" This is certainly true for Rog and me. In my gifting, I love people. I love to be with them, to fellowship together, and I adore my 25,000 words a day! In Roger's gifting, he would rather be alone on an island with His Bible (and me, of course!) than in a room full of people. He will most likely be the one who wants to leave the party early at 8 pm - the hour that I am just getting warmed up for the entire evening! Rog often said that the Lord surely had lost some wisdom when He called him to be a minister *to the people*. He said he'd rather kill the sheep than feed them! I have always assured him that God knew what He was doing and that He never makes mistakes! You can see how very differently we are gifted in the Lord. Often I thought I needed to speak into every situation using an ample supply of my 25,000 words for the day. What Father taught me was that, more often than not, He wasn't calling me to speak anything, but rather to wait on His Spirit to prompt me to speak when it would answer Roger's question about a situation. This was a tough one for me. I ALWAYS had something to say, but it was a rare occasion that God has something to say through me! The key here was learning to wait for the question to come. Then, when it did,

Roger was usually ready to listen and hear what I had to say. The Lord summed it up with this verse of Scripture:

“Sanctify (honor) the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (respect).”

1 Peter 3:15 KJV.

As we have both matured in the Lord, we have learned to honor the gifting that Father has put in each of us. Sometimes he endures the party long after he would like to leave in order to honor me and see that my needs are met. Other times I honor him by willingly giving up my need to remain until we are the last to leave, thereby honoring his need to move on to a quieter, more contemplative place, usually with his Heavenly Father.

As I matured in all of these lessons (and this is by no means an exhaustive list), I began to walk less and less on eggshells. As my heart was softened before the Lord, my feet became more and more accustomed to my newfound freedom. I was beginning to walk on the water with Jesus. I was learning that in almost every instance it was more about what the Lord wanted to do in me rather than what He wanted to do in Rog. Now isn't that an interesting concept!

~ Chapter Three ~

MOVING ONWARD IN MATURITY

Throw your heart over the fence. The rest will follow!

There have been many milestones in our walk with the Lord. Without exception the biggest one was when we were introduced to the message of Father's love through the late Jack Frost. The year was 2001 and we had been living virtually on a spiritual plateau for some time. When we received the tapes Jack recorded on Performance Orientation and the Orphan Spirit little did we know what a giant leap we were about to take. We certainly know that we have not arrived, but the revelation of Father's unconditional love was by far one of the most powerful revelations we had received up to that time in our marriage. I was very excited. I knew in my spirit we had come upon something that was going to be life-changing for us. I was not disappointed.

The revelation of Father's love began a part of our healing process that has gone deep, very deep within both of us. In a prayer ministry session I was encouraged to ask myself the following question when Roger's anger would surface:

"Gerri, what is it in you that draws that behavior out of him?"

At first, I was offended! Remember, offense is the bait of satan! I had to make a choice in that instant to stay offended with the question, or move into the Spirit and honestly examine my heart. What I found when I did was that there were times when I needed to own my sinful reactions to Roger's angry outbursts. He may have gotten mad, but often I **reacted** to the anger instead of **responding** out of the heart of Father's love. Remember now, that at this point we had only received the revelation of Father's unconditional love for us, but we had not yet had His love activated in our lives. We meet so many people today who assure us that they have experienced His love; however, the evidence in their lives proves that they only know ABOUT His love, but have yet to experience it.

In 2004, while attending the Imparting the Father's Heart School of Ministry, we had our first actual encounter with the Father's love. After that experience, our lives dramatically changed. Roger's anger gradually lessened. We were, at this point, still going after a root of anger, not realizing that it was a root that wasn't there! His anger was rooted in abandonment. This was what we would need to pursue until it was finally, once and for all, uprooted in his life.

As we continued in our experience of Father's love, almost daily there would be huge revelation in our lives about our love hunger. I learned something here that became very valuable to me. Father God creates every human being with four basic needs. They are:

1. unconditional, expressed love
2. affirmation and attention

3. safety and security
4. purpose and destiny.

Learn these well. Learn how they work in you and how they work in those around you. Learn where they are present and where they are absent. Wherever they are absent, love hunger resides. Love hunger DEMANDS satisfaction.

Because the enemy of our souls actively pursues our downfall, he has set up counterfeits for each of the four basic needs. For example, in the absence of unconditional, expressed love, we can seek the counterfeit of **passion**. This can include, but is not limited to, sexual sin, fornication, adultery, pornography, masturbation, and homosexuality.

In the absence of affirmation and attention, the counterfeit will often be **position**. We will strive in our occupations or ministries to get to the top and remain there at all costs. We will fight for position in our church, on the worship team, and in leadership situations. We must have position to feel legitimate.

In the absence of safety and security, we can find the counterfeit of **possessions**. We see this in people who cannot stop spending. Their counterfeit demands more - more money, more things - and is usually demonstrated in compulsive spending and shopping.

Finally, in the absence of purpose and destiny, we regularly find the counterfeit of **power**. We all know people who demand power. They strive to control and manipulate in order to reach a place of power, driven by their own flesh.

Passion, position, possession, and power: in each one of these counterfeits, the love hungry person will try desperately to find legitimacy. Do you know anyone like this? I began to see that Roger had never received the four basic needs of life from his earthly parents. As a result, he was operating in many forms of the counterfeit. Remember, you cannot point one finger at another without pointing three back at yourself! When I looked in the mirror, I saw myself walking in all four counterfeit areas as well! As I prayed about how this revelation was affecting us both, Father gave me a heart of compassion towards my beloved Rog. I was beginning to see the bigger picture of his anger, and my heart melted. I longed to be part of the solution. I wanted Father to use me to help us both move from the counterfeit to the real deal. What I learned was that Father's unconditional love was already at work moving and changing our lives and our hearts from the counterfeit to the real. Hallelujah!

Father's love - it is all we need. ALL! I could see that, but how, Father, do we get there? He began to reveal the answer a little at a time. First, He began to peel more of the onion in **my** healing process. I determined to focus on MY healing and not Roger's. I told Father to work on me and I would let Him work on Roger. Great decision! Now things really began to move in our lives. The more intimate I learned to become in my relationship with Father, the more my legitimacy grew. Love in, pain out. I discovered at a much deeper level that Love permits pain. If we do not embrace our pain, we do not receive the depth of healing that Father desires. So if you think you can learn to walk on water and not on eggshells without

pain, think again! Embracing pain is really tough, but it is absolutely necessary if you are to succeed in this journey.

I also learned in this long process that there would be times when Father would deal very heavily with my dearly beloved Rog. In those times, I was to honor him more, respect him more, and be more loyal to him. I was often called to lay aside my own need and focus on what Father was doing in him. There would be other times that he would do the same for me. I had to be willing to permit him to endure his own pain and to go through the painful process of healing without rescuing him. This was so difficult for me, but ALWAYS the most productive.

I mentioned to you that the root of Roger's anger and rage was ABANDONMENT. The anger and rage were only symptoms of the true problem. For a long time the enemy kept us both focused on the symptoms rather than the root cause. Webster's dictionary says that abandonment is: *to give up with the intent to never again claim a right or interest in; to withdraw protection, support or help from.* When we are abandoned by our earthly parents for whatever reason, it becomes the foundational lie that we live by unless we are healed by the Lord.

A spiritual father we had at that time gave us some really valuable wisdom concerning abandonment. I want to share it with you here. Look with discerning, spiritual eyes (not through the eyes of judgment) at a person and yourself, and if you see some or all of the following characteristics, you will know that person has a root of abandonment – usually from earthly parents. The five characteristics are:

1. Loss of basic trust – especially in God
2. Independent/Orphan attitude
3. Self Survival
4. Self Destruction/Self Hatred
5. Anger

All five of these characteristics were operating in Roger's life; and he, himself, could see them all! That was a major breakthrough for us. We then began, in prayer ministry, to deal one by one with these issues. Some were easier than others and required less time, effort and prayer. Others were like giant spider webs that had built huge fortresses of lies and became massive strongholds in his life. I knew, though, that with Father's help we had identified the primary root issue in his life from his childhood. It was like a huge tap root that went to the very foundational core of his being. I prepared for the long haul. At one point we reached an impasse. It seemed we'd hit an impenetrable wall that could not be climbed or gone around from any direction. It was then that Father was about to show up and show out! It was at that very moment that He provided the miracle. Along this particular part of our healing journey, Father had been dealing with all the secondary roots, one issue at a time; but now it was time to deal with the tap root. As I sat quietly with Father early one morning in my time of intimacy with Abba, He spoke to me and allowed me to know that soon we were going to deal 'with that little

boy' inside my beloved Rog. In those moments of quiet and journaling My loving Father gave me just a clue, a slight hint, of what was to come. I didn't know in those moments that it would come just a few hours later! If you had asked me if I was ready, I would have told you, "absolutely not"! But, by the Spirit of God, I was ready. It seems that this is the way Father has chosen to work in my life over the years. Just when I think all hope is completely lost, when the deep darkness of the wilderness looms largest, when the soul is engulfed in loneliness, THAT is when breakthrough is just around the corner. It is also when most of us who walk on eggshells give up. Then it becomes necessary for us to board the merry-go-round and travel yet another mile or two barefoot on the eggshells! It is much easier to embrace the wilderness and the dark, difficult night of the soul; and the sooner the better. The sooner we embrace where Father has us, the sooner breakthrough comes!

You may argue that a loving Father would not allow such circumstances. I tell you by my many years of experience, "Oh yes, child, He will. And it is always for your good." Love permits pain. He loves us so much that He will permit those dark hours, those that we call endless hours of the wilderness, to invade our space because He knows what will cause our flesh to die. He knows what will circumcise our self-centeredness. And He knows what will remove the hindrances in our lives so that we can walk more intimately with Him day by day. If you have ever prayed one time in your life something like, "Lord, take all of me. I surrender all. Yes, Lord. I give you my life, Lord. Use me, Lord," and you meant it, then you can rest assured He has taken you seriously and He will begin the good work of purification in your life! We often blame the devil for what is really the work of Father in our lives and the very answer to what we have prayed. How utterly stupid we are sometimes! How absolutely childish we are! Why would we ever think to give the devil THAT much credit? Sometimes I look in the mirror just to check myself out and see if I have "stupid" written across my forehead! When it comes to commitment, we cannot talk out of both sides of our mouths. Either we are in, or we are out. There is no middle ground here. If you are trying to walk the fence, watch out! You are about to encounter the Creator of the Universe Who will knock you off your sweet little white fence. Remember, God's fences are white picket fences and you can't walk very long on pickets! Neither can you walk very successfully on eggshells. I desperately want to get rid of all those eggshells and WALK ON WATER WITH HIM! How about you?

~ Chapter Four ~

KINGDOM THINKING

If you can dream it, think it or imagine it, it is from God and you can possess it!

I was goofing around with some calligraphy at one time in this journey, and I wrote something that I put on my refrigerator. It says, "*When you give up, you never know what might have been.*"

Often in my journey to see the gentle giant emerge, I would think about giving up. Then I would quickly be reminded by the Lord that I had made a pledge to Him to embrace this mountain in my life and continue on until I saw my dream come true - Roger loving and serving the Lord with all his heart, and then loving me with the same passion. I came to learn in this process of healing that my dreams were God's dreams and the bigger my dream the bigger I would prove my God to be. I tend to really dream big - I am, by the world's description, a cockeyed optimist! I believe if I can dream it, think it or imagine it, it is from my loving Father who wants the very best for me; and, in His own good time, He will allow me to possess my dreams. I have seen this time and again in my experience with Him. He ALWAYS thinks bigger than I do even though I am a person who thinks and believes big! My thoughts have trouble keeping up with the 'bigness' of His thoughts. I have learned that He always has a bigger picture and it is always best to obey Him because that leads every time to His perfect will for my life. He says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts and My ways are not your ways." There have been many, many times when He would lead and direct me in something concerning my relationship with Rog that seemed absolutely crazy; but, when I followed His lead, He always made it come out right - in spite of me!

If you want to operate in Kingdom thinking, then you will have to decide to do things His way. You will have to daily 'give up control of your universe.' For months and months that was the first statement I made as I brushed my teeth in the morning. "Father, today I give you complete control of my universe. I choose today to let you lead me, and I freely give you permission to control everything in my life this day." What that often meant with respect to seeing my dreams come true for a gentle giant of a husband was that I had to place his desires before mine. This was difficult at first. For example, I might be tempted to grumble because of the size of the laundry. Then I would stand at the washing machine as I sorted dirty socks and underwear and be profoundly thankful to God because Rog was still living at home with the children and me, and that there were clothes of his in the dirty laundry to sort! If I caught myself 'thinking' and 'focusing' on the negative, I quickly attempted to change those thoughts into Kingdom thoughts. I began the fine art of blessing Roger.

Speaking blessing over someone who is still operating in the flesh can be a real challenge. In conversation one day with Him I said, "Father I know that you tell me to bless my husband, but I can't see any way to do that when he continues to act like he does."

Immediately Father spoke to my heart and said, "Gerri, you don't understand the art of speaking a blessing."

Knowing I was about to get a lesson in Kingdom Communication 101, I listened carefully as the Lord continued speaking.

"Gerri, to begin with, just pray and hold Roger up to me. Then simply ask Me to bless him in the way I know he needs to be blessed. I can answer your prayer and deliver to your beloved Rog all he needs to come into the Kingdom, all he needs to develop into the gentle giant you want him to be. I may bring hard, difficult times to break him in an area where he needs it. I may shower him with tender love and affection when he is the biggest stinker. The point is if you will just ask Me to bless him, I'll get the job done and accomplish it in just the right way at just the right time."

For a long time I continued to pray this way, and then one day Father opened up a teaching to me about the prayer of blessing. He shared with me the power of what happens when we pray a prayer of blessing over someone *from the right heart*. Therein lays the key. Our hearts have to be honoring to the Lord before this prayer of blessing is sanctified. When the heart is right there is a spiritual power and anointing that is released to the one being prayed for that changes a life. As Gloria Gaither so aptly puts it, "I have seen sin hardened men and derelicts transformed simply at the name of Jesus." I adopted a favorite scripture that has meant a lot to me. It says,

*"My word is like a hammer that breaks into pieces
the rock of the most stubborn resistance." Jeremiah 23:29 Amp*

Prayers of blessing can have profound effects on hearts that are stubbornly resistant to the things of the Lord.

I remember well one day when I was ministering to a young wife who was about to throw in the towel on her marriage of 9 years. She said to me, "Gerri, I'm not like you are. I am not superwoman."

I laughed as I responded, "I am not superwoman either, but I know a super-God Who can do the impossible and accomplish it with ease. I am just like you, honey. I am human and have two feet of clay. I can't tell you how many times I repeated these lessons, sometimes over and over and over. The neat thing, though, about serving the Lord is that if we keep trying He never flunks us. If we keep pursuing Him we always pass the class!"

I have determined in my heart that I am much too far into this journey to turn back now! What would I turn back to? The world? Not on your life! I am beginning to enjoy the fruit of my labor of love and I want to enjoy this gentle giant the Lord has given me! It has all been the

result of seeking the Kingdom first, and now the reward is that I am seeing His righteousness being poured out on both of us through this incredible love gift from our Daddy!

~ Chapter 5 ~

WHAT A GENTLE GIANT LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE

They look and feel like Father!

Roger, the now gentle giant, is THE most important person in my life except for my Heavenly Father. He will ALWAYS hold that place. The same is true for Roger. Father God is first in his life. Neither of us is jealous of the primary relationship of the Lord in each other's life. In fact, if it wasn't for Father working so mightily in our lives there would be no gentle giant to adore and I would have remained wounded and unhealed in many areas of my life.

As my beloved Rog has allowed the experience of Father's love to permeate his life, I have received the overflow. And that overflow is MORE than enough! As I have permitted Father's love to engulf and change me, Rog gets that overflow and it is more than enough for him.

So what is it like to have a gentle giant in my life? Well, let me see if I can begin to describe it. It is the warmth I feel when he turns over in bed at daybreak and whispers, "I love you." It is the tenderness I sense when I know he is watching me when we're alone just because he can! It is the absolute thrill of knowing that his eyes are following me across a crowded roomful of people as if I were the only one in the room. It is the fragrance of his aftershave lingering in the bathroom after he has showered and shaved. It is the comfort I feel when he pulls me into his lap and we just sit quietly together. It is the power I sense when he prays over me. It is the security I feel when he prays the scriptures over me and takes authority over the works of the enemy that might dare to harm me. It is the affirmation I feel when I am leading worship from a platform and I look into the congregation and see him with arms raised high in adoration of His Lord. It is the special attention I feel when he speaks or teaches from the pulpit and he publicly pays me a compliment. It is the gentle way he chooses to treat me both when we are alone AND when we are in public. It is the unconditional love I feel coming from him when I realize I have totally blown it; yet he chooses to stay married to me! It is the expressed love that covers my heart when we crawl back into bed at the close of our day and he gently kisses me good night and once again whispers, "I love you" with such conviction that my entire world shakes. It is all of this and much more. It goes far beyond words that can be written on a page or any lyrics that might ever be sung. It is one heart giving unselfishly to the other heart, always longing to put the other's needs before your own...not because we have to, but all because we want to. This kind of love is never fully developed outside of Father's unconditional love at work in our lives. We can never, ever give away what we don't have. The entire key to the loving heart of a gentle giant is experiencing and being totally immersed in the love of our Heavenly Father. Then we cannot help but give it away. Many will say that they have experienced this kind of love, but their lives do not demonstrate it. I would say to them,

“My friend, you have a revelatory knowledge of Father’s love, but you have yet to experience it. When that experience truly takes place, you will give it away without thought or effort. It simply rolls out of you because of Who He is, not because of who you are.”

~ Chapter 6 ~

EPILOG

Do you want to see your angry spouse become a gentle giant? Experience Father's love and give it away!

Are you an angry spouse that wants to become a gentle giant? Experience Father's love and give it away!

The revelation of Father's love is really quite simple. Walking out our journey to receive that love may be a bit more difficult, but the results will be more than you could ever ask or think...more than amazing and more than miraculous. I encourage you to begin now by praying this with me:

Father I desire to receive the matchless gift of your extravagant love for me. Work in me until it becomes reality. I don't want to walk on any more eggshells. I want to walk on water with You just like Jesus did. Help me, Father, to surrender every area of my heart to you. Enlarge my spirit so that I can fully recognize and accept your gifts of love into my life. I surrender all to You now, Father, in the name of Jesus, Your Son, and in the power of Your Holy Spirit.

Amen and Amen.

~ Chapter 7 ~

A Final Note & Word of Encouragement

One final note and word of encouragement, if you are being physically, sexually or emotionally abused, seek counsel at once. In these situations you need extra eyes looking at the situation with you to help you determine how to wisely move forward. Please seek the counsel of your pastor(s), spiritual mentor(s), or prayer partner(s). Do NOT deal with abuse alone. Do NOT remain in a victim mentality. If there is a predator in your life, you must learn to walk in dominion. Father does NOT desire that you walk in victimization. You are His child and He loves you too much to allow that to continue. If this is your situation, ACT NOW.

Contact Information

The Taylors are available to pray about coming to your location to share in times of teaching and impartation of the Father's love in relaxed and informal settings where everyone is free to fully participate in the discussions. They will speak with openness and transparency sharing many of their own testimonies and move toward creating an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit is free to change hearts and lives.

Possible events topics could be:

- ~ Experiencing the Father's Love
- ~ Love Hunger – The Unseen Force
- ~ Hindrances to Experiencing Father's Love – Prayer Ministry
- ~ Spiritual Rebellion
- ~ Slavery to Sonship – Performance Orientation
- ~ The Mother Heart of Father God
- ~ Communion with Father – Hearing His Voice
- ~ The Heart of Marriage

If you would like to discuss the possibility of the Taylors to coming to share with your group, please feel free to contact us by email at info@placesinthefathersheart.org. or by phone at 843-365-6994.

Other Recommended Reading From Roger & Gerri

The Heart of Marriage by Roger Taylor

Father's Love by Roger and Gerri Taylor

You can download these eBooks free of charge at www.placesinthefathersheart.org.