

1

Separation

But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Genesis 3:9

In the midst of a glorious afternoon, a sharp pain entered the heart of God. The arrow flew effortlessly. Past his magnificent surroundings. Past the worship of those continually adoring him with cries of "Holy, Holy." It penetrated deep, slicing through his garments before finding its mark—the center of his heart.

He arose to go in the direction of the intrusion. Down, down he descended, searching for the object of his affection: The one to whom he had given his all, to whom he had imparted his very spirit when he breathed into him the breath of life. This man that he had lovingly caressed as he molded and shaped him into his own image.

Yes, God had given Adam all that He was and all that He had. It was an incredible investment of His omnipotent heart and soul. But something was wrong. Something had changed between them. So God came down to confirm face-to-face what He already knew.

The garden was strangely silent as all of nature held its breath, waiting to see how this drama would unfold. They, too, were aware that something had changed. The atmosphere was pregnant with foreboding. God's countenance suggested that the sweet fellowship and communion He usually shared with the man and woman were not to be this evening. And why were Adam and Eve hiding? Adam usually awaited the Lord's visitation anxiously, as one awaited someone passionately beloved. Yes, something was truly wrong.

The air cooled as if the sun was holding its breath. God spoke, calling gently to Adam. And Adam came forward with the look of an unfaithful lover caught in the act, struggling to shield his guilt from the One who had always been faithful. The moment that Adam had chosen to sin by partaking of the fruit that God had warned against, he chose to snatch his heart out of God's hands and to separate himself from the One who loved him most. . . .

[DESIGNER: INSERT DESIGN ELEMENT TO BREAK PARAGRAPHS (SEE ATTACHED COPY FROM PREVIOUS BOOK)]

Nothing hurts as deeply as when the one you love chooses to wrench his heart from your grasp, turning his back on the love you so freely gave. Oh, the pain of it to find that the one you loved prefers another. You have poured out your heart like liquid for another to drink, only to have this valuable libation spilled onto the dust. You offered your choicest treasure, not realizing that your diamonds would be cast to the wind or crushed underfoot, leaving you scrambling to recover the grains and pray for restoration.

This one assurance remains, that God is well acquainted with our grief. He was the first to experience this deep wounding, this tearing separation. He knows how deep the pain can go, and He is prepared to touch our pain and heal it. For while our hearts bleed when those we've loved turn away from us . . . it was Jesus' heart that originally bled. Because his heart was broken, ours will mend. As we become vulnerable to his touch, as we learn to trust his advances, we miraculously find that we recover. Though we thought it impossible, we are able to love again.

[DESIGNER: SEE ATTACHED COPY FROM THE PREVIOUS BOOK FOR THE FORMAT OF EACH OF THE "PRAYERS"]

Dear heavenly Father, it is so costly to love. I find myself bankrupt after having spent so much of myself. The one I loved has hidden himself from me, leaving me to search for the shattered pieces of my heart. Help me to recover them from the dust. And as my spirit weeps over my emptiness, please catch my tears and refresh me with them.

*I feel naked and ashamed in the face of such rejection. Please dress me with your love and warm me from the cold of my disappointment. As I shiver in my fear of the future, grant me your reassurance that it is You who truly holds the fulfillment of my tomorrows. Help my unbelief and free me from my despair. Restore my deferred hopes and direct my gaze back to You.
Back to the center of where true love abides.*

When another does not love me as I had hoped, help me to find myself in you. Forgive me for preferring another, for greedily consuming fruit that is not as sweet as You. Heal me and join me to yourself, that I might once again be whole, in Jesus' name. Amen.