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## *Fresh Glimpses of the Embrace of God*

*~If Heavenly Father Is So Good, Why Am I In So Much Pain~*

**Battle Creek Tabernacle**

**February 24, 2007**

**WELCOME!** The Embrace team is so glad that you have joined us this evening. We have been praying for a year that Heavenly Father would completely direct and abundantly bless this series. And He has been doing exactly that! Please join us in thanking Him for what He is accomplishing in each of us. Remember, as we look at Him, we are changed to be more and more like Him.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

- **Marguerite and Leslie Samuel** are from Edmore, Michigan, where they teach at Great Lakes Adventist Academy. Marguerite, vocalist, conductor, and teacher, was born on the sunshiny island of New Providence, Bahamas. Leslie, pianist, teacher, and composer, was born on the beautiful island of St. Maarten. As the years passed, Heavenly Father cultivated passions, talents, and gifts within each of them. After meeting at Andrews University in 2002, their friendship grew and so did their musical ministry. Marguerite needed an accompanist and Leslie fit the job perfectly. They enjoyed working together and soon their friendship blossomed. They were married in May of 2006 and have continued to share their musical ministry. Leslie says, "God is still writing our love story and the great plans He has for the rest of our lives."

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

When this Embrace series ends, there will be more opportunities to continue the process of getting to know Heavenly Father better and better. **We want to encourage you to join one of three different small groups.** Please study the following outline and decide which one most interests you. Then mark the appropriate box on the card you were given. You will be telephoned by the group facilitator in the next couple weeks to establish the best time and place for your group to meet. Here are the groups:

**1) The Bible's Picture of God**—This small group will focus on the picture of God presented throughout the scriptures. Many Christians see the God of the Old Testament as having very different traits from the God of the New Testament. This Bible study will explore the harmony of all scripture. This fascinating study will be lead by a Bible student and Bible teacher, Ken Wilson.

**2) Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing The Will of God** is an inspiring workbook that was written by Henry Blackaby and Claude King. This study has been widely used and has deepened thousands of Christians' relationships with God. This scripture-based study will encourage you, strengthen your faith, and help you know the will of God.

**3) The Embrace of God: Fresh Glimpses of Our Nurturing Heavenly Father** is the book, written by Dr. Erickson, that is the basis of his nightly presentations. The book contains a study guide that will give this group a starting point for more in-depth discussions of each chapter. This small group will explore many other aspects of Heavenly Father's beautiful character that we weren't able to cover in this series.

A beautiful memento of the *Fresh Glimpses of The Embrace of God* series was given out as you entered tonight. This memento is suitable for framing or as a bookmark and will remind you of Heavenly Father's permanent and passionate love for you. If you didn't receive one, they will be available at the book table.

## **NEXT WEEK' S PROGRAM**

The last presentation in this series, "The Father Who Loves Without Strings," will explore two very important topics. 1) Heavenly Father's love truly has NO conditions attached, and 2) What type of response does this type of love deserve? What does Heavenly Father want from me? Where does obedience fit in? This presentation is the "icing on the cake!" Our mini-concert will be given by Linda Sears, a talented, dedicated pianist and vocalist. She has been singing with groups and solo for years throughout Michigan and surrounding states. Linda says, "It is only through Jesus that I have this gift. And that's what it is. A sheer gift. And I have Him to thank above all." You simply can't miss this special conclusion to "Fresh Glimpses of the Embrace of God."

## **THOUGHTS FROM TONIGHT'S PRESENTATION—"IF HEAVENLY FATHER IS SO GOOD, WHY AM I IN SO MUCH PAIN?"**

This is a difficult question and there are no easy answers. But there are factors that can contribute to our understanding. Here are a few of them.

1. Heavenly Father's laws tell us about the kind of Person He is. His actions are always in harmony with His character. Ps 19:7, Romans 2:17-27, 7:12-14, 13:8-10, I Tim 1:8, James 2:10
2. We live in a war zone. Rev 12:7-9, I Peter 5:8, I John 5:19-20
3. Satan and sin are the real cause of pain, suffering . . . . Job 1+2, Luke 13:16
4. There are natural consequences for certain actions.
5. God respects the gift of freedom with which He endowed us. Gen 3:1-24, John 13:10-30
6. As with any good parent, Heavenly Father lovingly disciplines. Heb 12:7-11
7. There is not always a reason or purpose for each specific pain. Ecc 9:11-12, Luke 13:1-4
8. Heavenly Father can bring something positive out of tragedy (but don't interpret that to mean that He caused the tragedy). Romans 8:28, Is 14:12-14, Ezek 28:12-17, Nahum 1:9
9. Like all good parents, Heavenly Father suffers when His children suffer. Ps 34:18, John 11:35
10. Try as hard as we might, sin and its consequences are not totally explainable or understandable. II Thes 2:7, Is 40: 28
11. No pain, tragedy, or heartache can separate us from Heavenly Father's love. Rom 8:35-39

## **NOTES**

**PLEASE NOTE: If you should ever wonder if a program is being cancelled due to "wintry" conditions, call 269-962-1132 or check our website: [www.embraceministries.com/battlecreek](http://www.embraceministries.com/battlecreek). Unless the message says otherwise, the program will proceed as scheduled.**