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Defined By Love

When **A** Man Knows He Is Greatly Loved **By** God

Written by Warren Mainard

DEFINED BY LOVE: WHEN A MAN KNOWS HE IS GREATLY LOVED BY GOD

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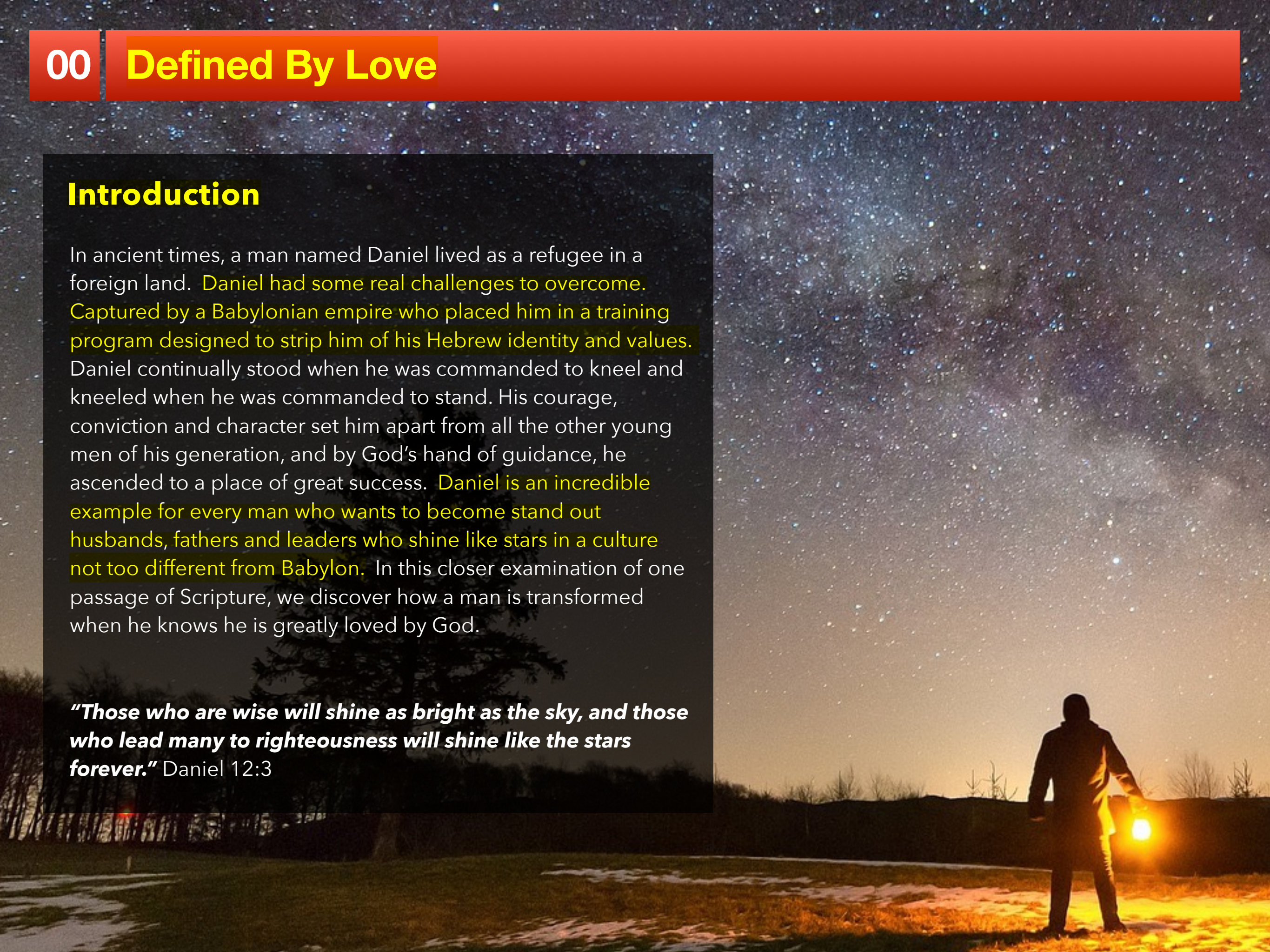
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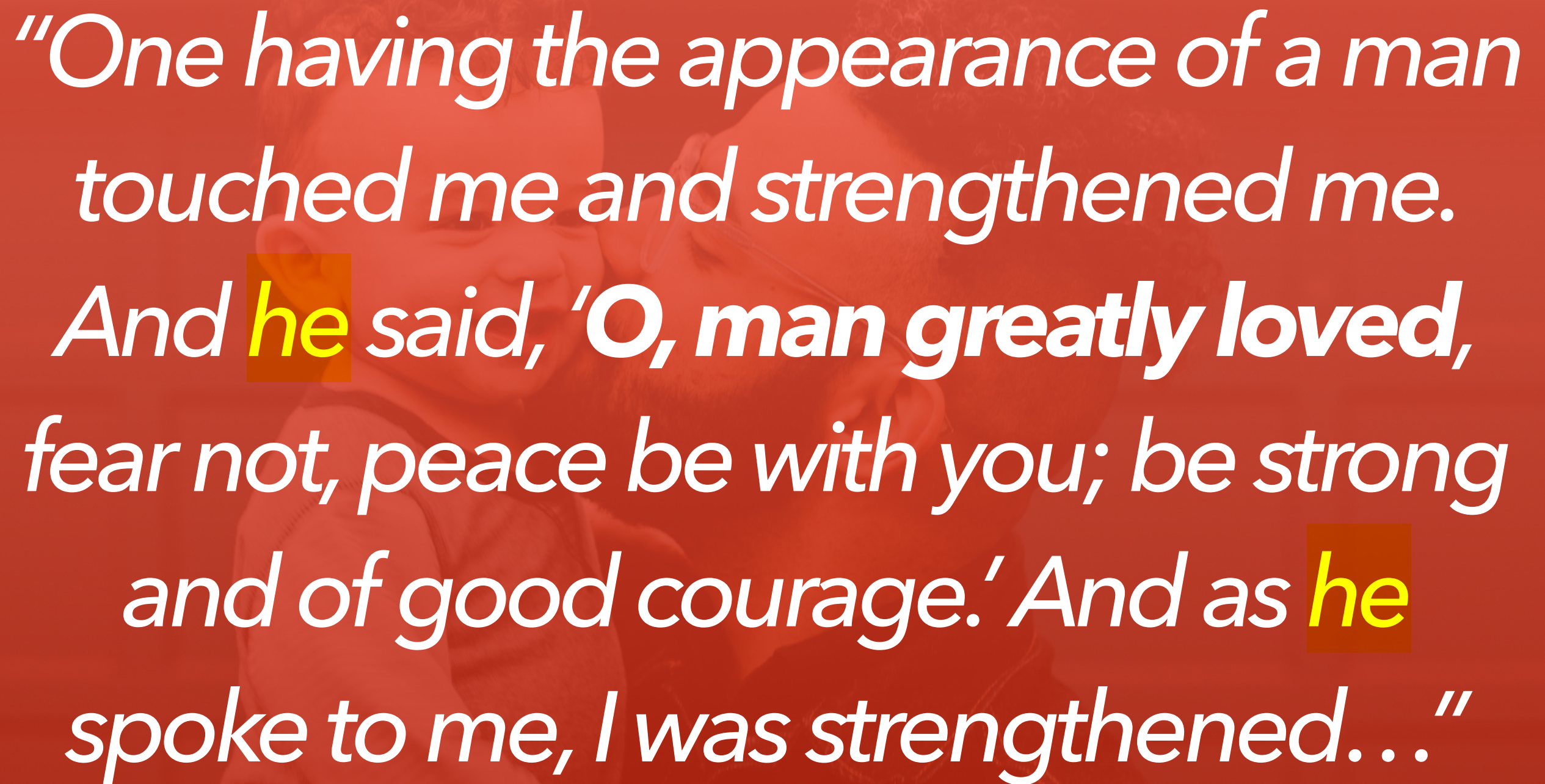
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Introduction

In ancient times, a man named Daniel lived as a refugee in a foreign land. Daniel had some real challenges to overcome. Captured by a Babylonian empire who placed him in a training program designed to strip him of his Hebrew identity and values. Daniel continually stood when he was commanded to kneel and kneeled when he was commanded to stand. His courage, conviction and character set him apart from all the other young men of his generation, and by God's hand of guidance, he ascended to a place of great success. Daniel is an incredible example for every man who wants to become stand out husbands, fathers and leaders who shine like stars in a culture not too different from Babylon. In this closer examination of one passage of Scripture, we discover how a man is transformed when he knows he is greatly loved by God.

"Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever." Daniel 12:3





*"One having the appearance of a man
touched me and strengthened me.
And **he** said, 'O, man greatly loved,
fear not, peace be with you; be strong
and of good courage.' And as **he**
spoke to me, I was strengthened..."*

Daniel 10:18-19

A Man's Identity Is Defined By Love

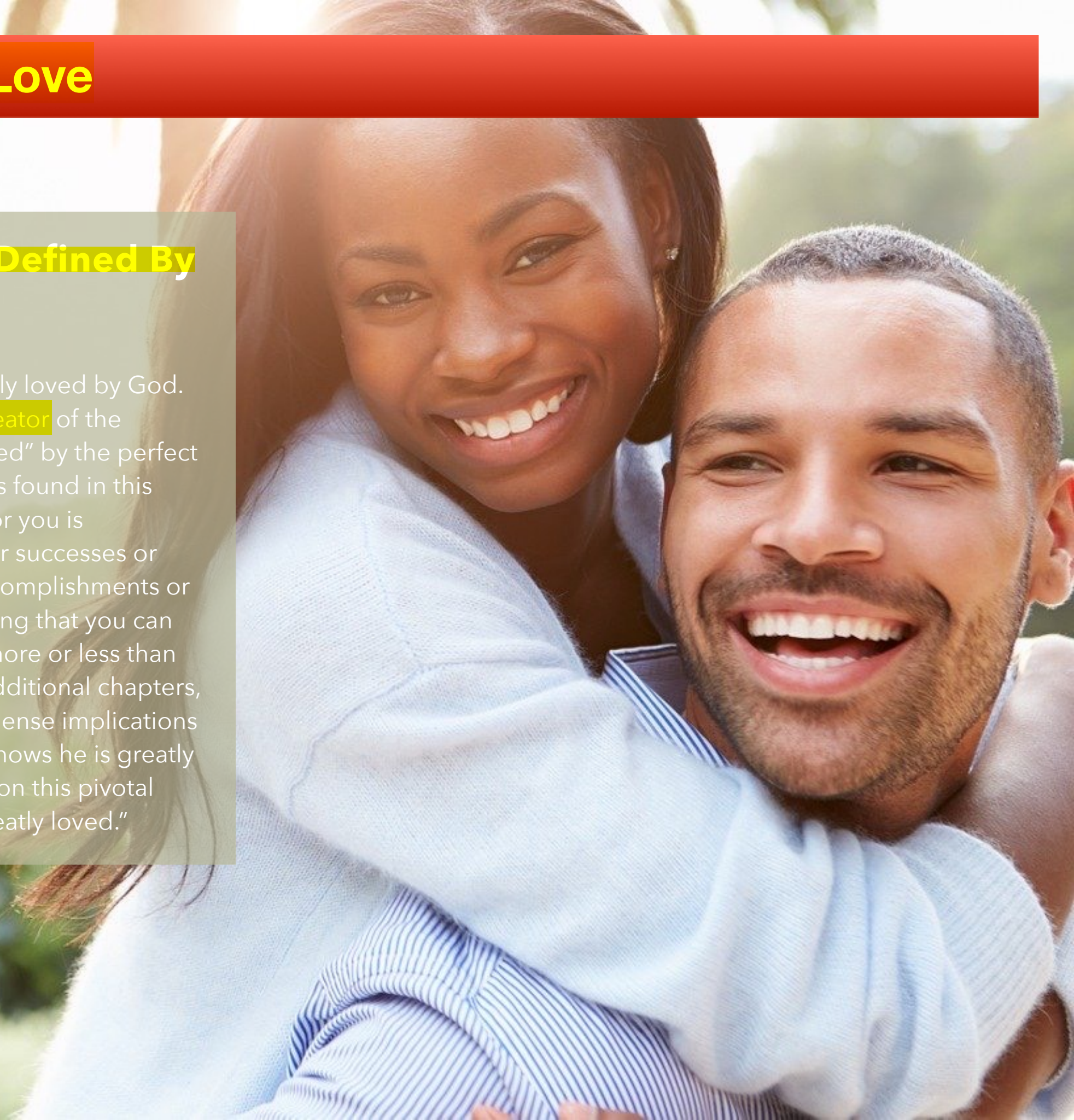
Daniel was weak and weary, discouraged and **despondent**- he had nothing left in the tank to give. He had mourned for weeks over a great conflict that had **shook** his world to the core. He had seen a glimpse of a bleak future for his **people** and he wondered if he could carry on another day.

Every man finds himself in moments of weakness and despair. Empty and a shell of what he used to be, he wonders if he has the power to find another **breath** let alone climb another step. In this kind of a moment, God shows up and **he** speaks a word we desperately need to **hear**- "O man, you are greatly loved."

Daniel had heard these words **before**, in fact, God had three times touched Daniel and breathed these words of life into his soul (Daniel 9:23, 10:11&19). Sometimes, we need to hear a word of God repeated in order for its truth seed to deeply take root and grow in the soil of our hearts.

A Man's Identity Is Defined By Love (continued)

Man... hear this... you are greatly loved by God. You are greatly loved by the **creator** of the universe. You are called "beloved" by the perfect Heavenly Father. Your identity is found in this reality, that God's infinite love for you is completely independent of your successes or failures, good works or sins, accomplishments or unrealized goals. There is nothing that you can do to make God love you any more or less than He does right now. Over four additional chapters, we will dig deeper into the immense implications of what happens when a man knows he is greatly loved by God. Rest and reflect on this pivotal truth today, "O man, you are greatly loved."



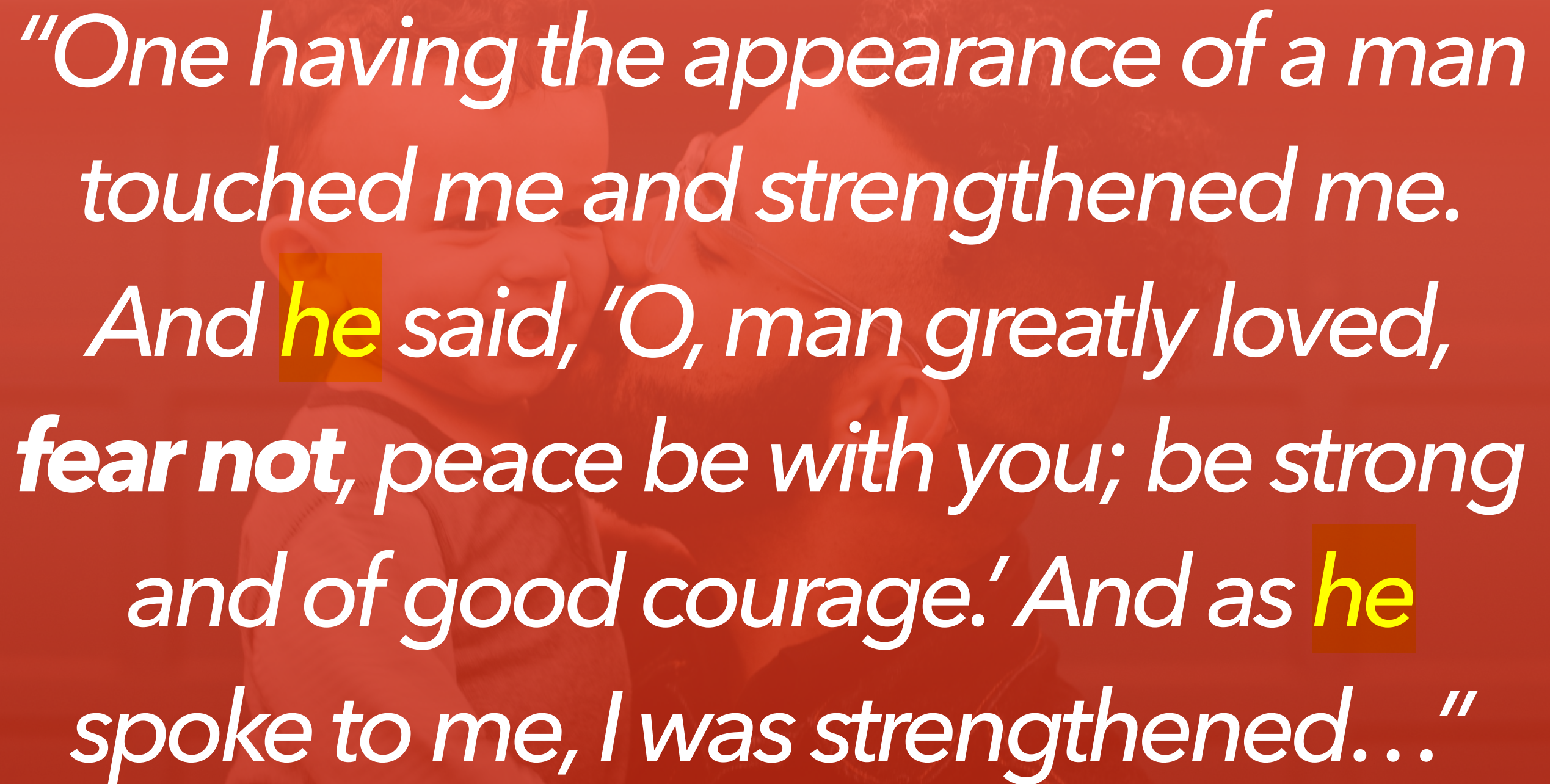
01 Defined By Love

A Man's Identity Is Defined By Love (continued)

REFLECTION:

- ❖ What is a truth from God that you need to be continually reminded of?
- ❖ How **is** your identity and self-worth shaped by a love that is not measured by your own performance, success or accomplishment?
- ❖ How does being loved unconditionally and infinitely by God help you love your spouse, children or loved ones differently?

"Sometimes, we need to hear a word of God repeated in order for its truth seed to deeply take root and grow in the soil of our hearts."



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Daniel 10:18-19

He will... Fear Not

Fear is a wicked master. The fear of man can cause even the most gifted, powerful and influential leaders to crumble in compromise (1 Samuel 15:24). Fear drove Adam to hide from God after his sin in the garden (Genesis 3:10). Indeed, extinguishing an unhealthy fear is at the top of the list for God's **commandments**- "Do not fear" is the most repeated command in all of **scripture**. Yet, Solomon also teaches that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning **of wisdom.**" Proverbs 9:10

To be fully known and **to be** fully loved is the true antithesis of fear. Most men believe that if all of their warts, weaknesses and wickedness were exposed, there would be no way that anyone could love or respect them. So in fear, men push down insecurity and try to cover it up with accomplishment, bravado and self-aggrandizing behavior.

When a man knows he is greatly loved by God, he understands that God has seen him both for what **He** is and what **He** will be in **in** Christ. To truly love a man means to recognize his problems and realize his potential.

He will... Fear Not (Continued)

This is God's perfect love for every man; it is all **encompassing and** in its light it casts out every shadow of **fear. (1 John 4:18)** When a man knows that God is for him and not against him, he can be strong and courageous (Romans 8:31 **&** Joshua 1:8). When a man knows that God is not waiting to beat him down, but rather lift him up, he can be confident and secure (Romans 8:1). When a man knows that God is his protector and provider, he will be unflappable and self-sacrificial in his role as protector and provider for his **family. (Matthew 6:26-33 and Ephesians 5:21-33)**. When a man knows he is greatly loved by God, it completely transforms him and blesses those around him.



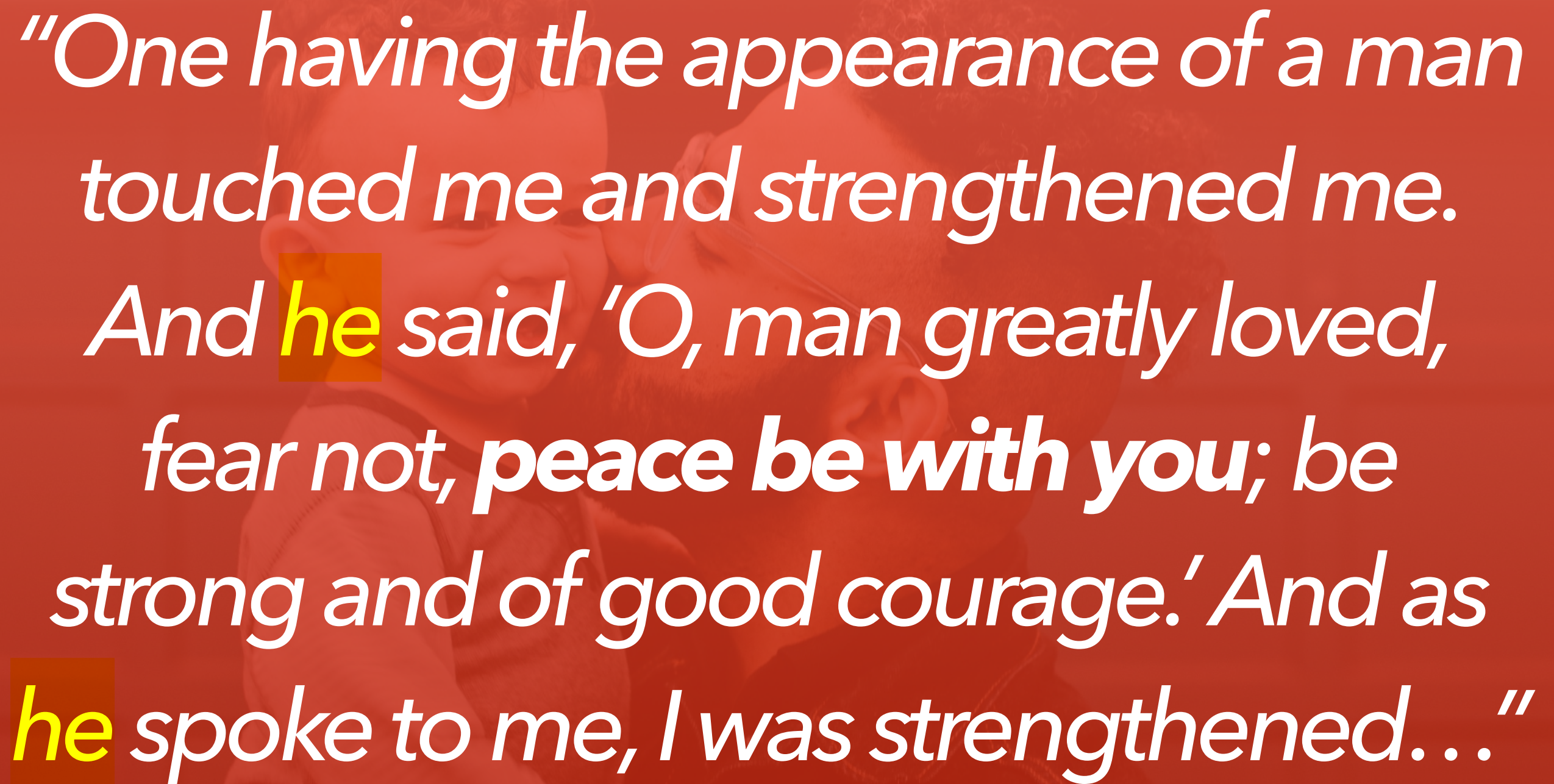
He will... Fear Not (Continued)

REFLECTION:

- ❖ What does it mean to be “fully known and fully loved”?
- ❖ If you were “exposed” for who you really are, what would happen?
- ❖ How would entering into an honest, authentic relationship with God help you overcome fear?
- ❖ Why is it important to have friendships **with other men whom** you can have this kind of authentic, honest relationship?

*“When a man knows he is greatly loved by God, he understands that God has seen him both for what **He** is and what **He** will be in **in** Christ.”*





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Daniel 10:18-19

He will... Experience Peace

When a man knows he is greatly loved, he carries with him a calming sense of peace. Just as Jesus was able to sleep soundly on a ship in a storm, so **to** a man who is fully aware of his Father's loving and protective embrace will experience a "sweet sleep," devoid of fear and anxiety (Proverbs 3:24). This "peace that surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) is built on the affirmation of two **questions-** 1. Is God powerful enough to handle all of my anxieties? 2. Does God love me? When a man determines in his heart that the answer to both of these questions is a resounding "yes," he cannot help but conclude that whatever storm he may be encountering at the moment will not result in a sinking ship. God is a good Father and **he** will protect and provide for His children accordingly (Matthew 7:9-11). Consider this, even the discipline we endure from God is born out of a heart of love and a commitment to our well-being (Hebrews 12:5-7).

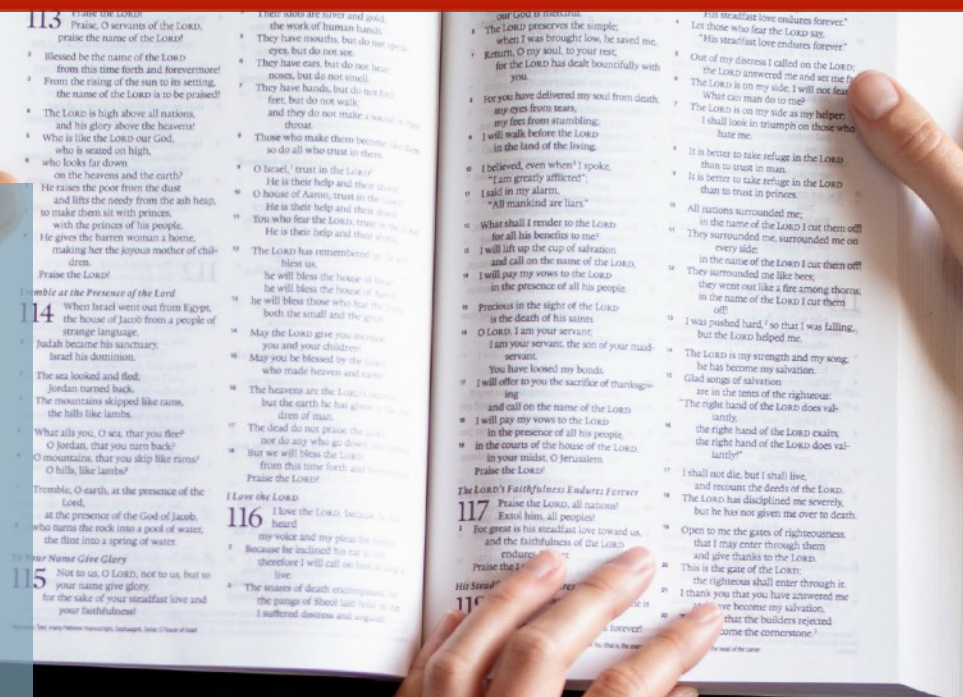


He will... Experience Peace (Continued)

Additionally, modern psychologists agree that boundaries and blessings contribute to positive mental health and internal peace in the lives of children. A father's loving discipline is a way to pass on peace to his children.

Furthermore, the peace of God is a direct outpouring of peace with God (Romans 5:1). When we abide in God's love and embrace the loving commands of God, an overflow of joy and peace flows from our hearts (John 15:9-11). We receive the peace of God from the God of peace "at all times in **every way.**" (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

A man who knows he is greatly loved by God is not devoid of struggle or suffering, but he has come to a place in his heart where he can confidently echo the words of the hymn writer Horatio Spafford who wrote, "When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to **say, It is well,** it is well with **my soul.**"

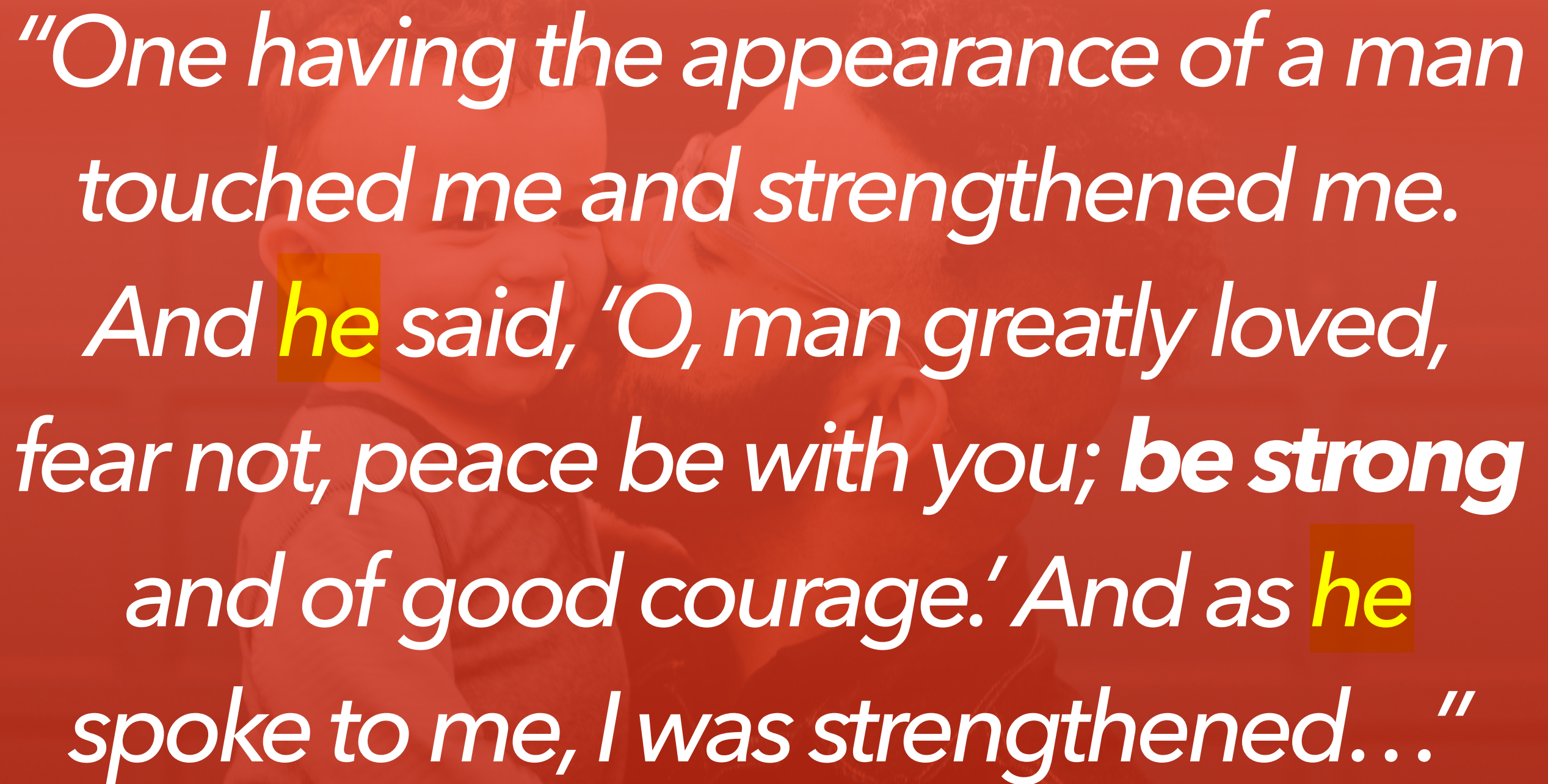


He **will... Experience Peace** (Continued)

REFLECTION:

- ❖ Consider the two questions mentioned **above- 1) Do I** believe God is powerful enough to handle all of my anxieties? 2) Do I believe that God loves me?
- ❖ If you answered "yes" to both of those questions, what worries or problems do you need to release back to God?
- ❖ How do God's boundaries and discipline bring you peace? How does that inspire you in your role as a father?
- ❖ The hymn writer **wrote...** "Thou hast taught me to say, '**it** is well, it is well with my soul.'" How does God teach us to experience peace in the middle of a storm?





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Daniel 10:18-19

He will... Be Strong

Going to the gym can be an intimidating experience for a “regular guy.” Struggling to curl 25lb barbells while the Rock’s stunt double beside you is bench pressing the Titanic can leave you feeling pretty flimsy. Traditionally, men are expected to “be strong.” True strength, however, is not revealed in a gym, but in a trial. Daniel knew what it meant to be strong. He had stood strong in his resolve not to compromise his obedience to God in his dietary restrictions (Daniel 1:8-16). Daniel was strong in his faith that God would give him the wisdom to stand before the King and interpret his dream (Daniel 2:17-49). Daniel was strong in his conviction to pray no matter what the consequences might be, even being thrown into a lions’ den would not stop him (Daniel 6). Now, in this moment, Daniel felt weak, “for now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.” Daniel 10:17.

In this moment of weakness, we get a glimpse into the source of Daniel’s immense strength. Daniel recounts that God “touched me and strengthened me” (v.18), “he spoke to me, I was strengthened” (v. 19). What words did the Lord use to impart strength to Daniel? “O man greatly loved...” (v. 19).



He will... Be Strong (Continued)

The strength to stand and endure with conviction and compassion is not rooted in our own personal **will power**, but in the sufficiency of God's love and grace. God did not tell Daniel to "try **harder**," or ask him to prove his love for God. Rather, **he** told Daniel, you are "**greatly loved**" and because of **my** incredible love for you, you can "be strong." When a man realizes that it is in weakness he is made strong, the charade of self-will is replaced by the sincerity of divine love.

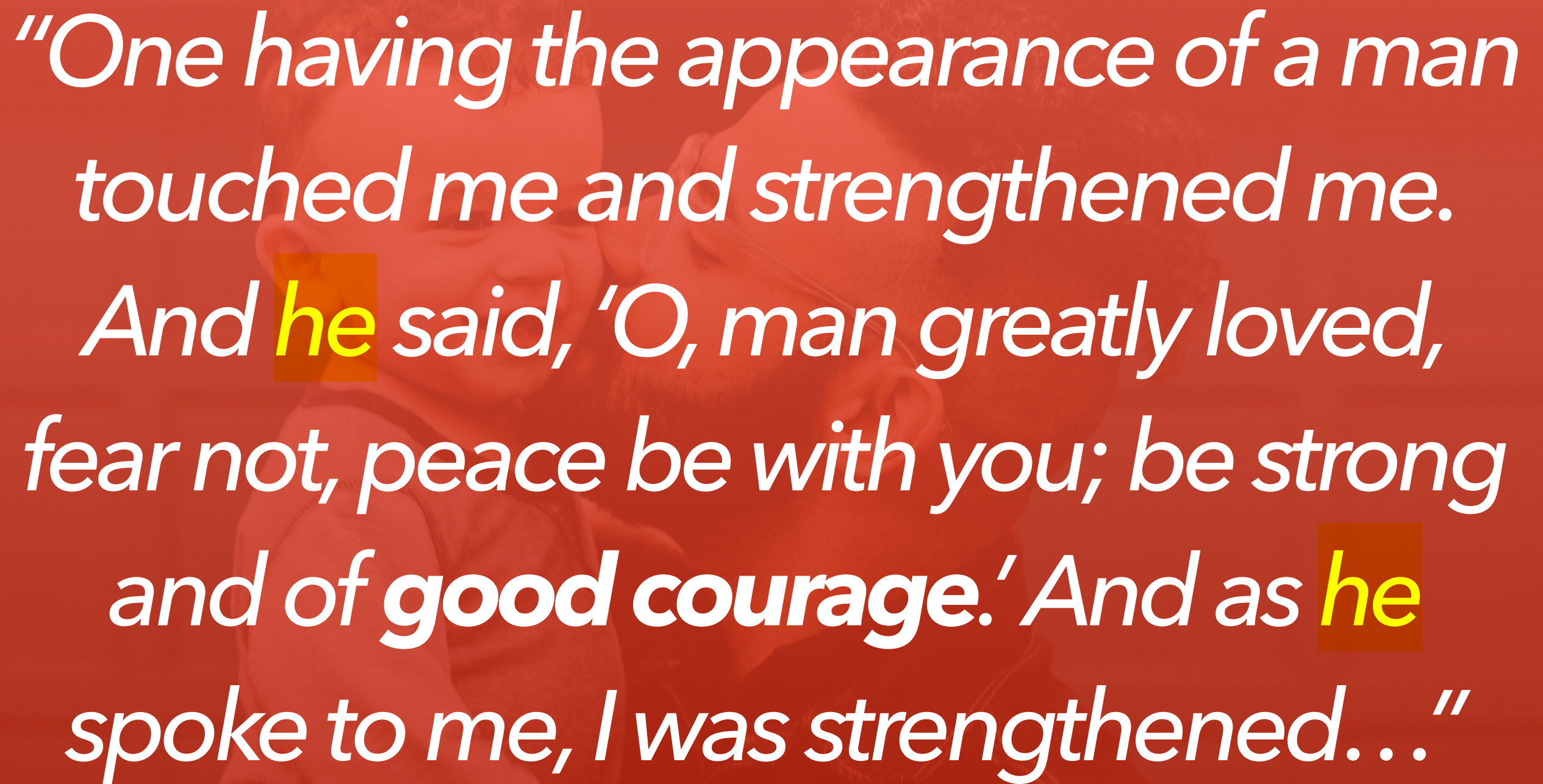
*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you **go**."*



He will... Be Strong (Continued)

REFLECTION:

- ❖ Growing up, what did it mean to “be strong?” Has that conception changed for you at all as an adult?
- ❖ When you feel weak, depleted and exhausted, how do you regain your strength?
- ❖ How does admitting our personal weakness unlock the door to acquiring God’s spiritual strength?



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Daniel 10:18-19

He will... Be Courageous

The most courageous displays of bravery are always motivated by love and for love. Courage is summoned when the love we have for someone else or the love one has for us is greater than the risk, danger or sacrifice that lies before us. Christ is the ultimate exemplar of courage. Knowing that the cross was **his** destiny, Jesus came to this earth, lived humbly as a carpenter's son and spent three years as a misunderstood itinerant preacher who was reviled by the the religious establishment. In **his** final moments preceding **his** arrest, trial and execution, Jesus was so stricken with anxiety, grief and sorrow, **he** experienced a rare clinical phenomenon known as hematrohidrosis, which is the sweating of blood from intense anxiety. "Being in agony **he** prayed more earnestly; and **his** sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the **ground.**" **Luke 22:44** In this enfeebled state, Jesus prayed **his** most courageous prayer, "Father, if **you** are willing, remove this cup from **me.** Nevertheless, not **my** will, but **yours,** be **done.**" **Luke 22:42.** Here we see that in spite of the great suffering that stood before **him,** the love that Jesus had for us was far greater than the cup of agony which Jesus bore for our sins.



He will... Be Courageous (Continued)

Courage is more than the absence of fear. Fear can paralyze, but courage will catalyze our faith to action. When we are courageous, we are continually scanning the horizon to discover where God would have us “take the land” (Deuteronomy 1:8) next. The courageous man is willing to take on new spiritual endeavors, step out of his comfort zone and live with confidence in God’s sovereign promises.

Since Christ laid down His life for us (Romans 5:8), we too can find a courage that is motivated by our love for Jesus and others. **Love inspired courage** leads us to lay down our lives for one another (John 15:13). **Love inspired courage** leads us to live sacrificially for our wives and children (Ephesians 5:25-27). When a man understands he is greatly loved by God, he can become a man greatly used by God for His Kingdom purpose.



US COAST GUARD

He **will... Be Courageous** **(Continued)**

REFLECTION:

- ❖ How did Jesus' act of **love inspired courage** bring you your salvation and eternal life?
- ❖ What **is the difference between the commands, "do not fear," and "be courageous"?**
- ❖ How does it require courage to be a great husband or father?
- ❖ What is one courageous step you can take to love others more sacrificially?



"Fear can paralyze, but courage will catalyze our faith to action."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WARREN MAINARD

A Pacific Northwest native, Warren grew up surrounded in competition and sports. Pursuing a lifestyle of popularity and selfish gain, the trajectory of his life was radically shifted when his family moved to Florida and he had a transformative encounter with God. Since then, his priorities, passion and purpose have been fueled by a desire to “magnify Christ, multiply His Kingdom.”

Warren has spent over 25 years in ministry, serving in a variety of roles all over the nation. He is currently the Executive Director of Impact Players in Seattle, WA. Impact Players is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring men to become great husbands, fathers and leaders.

Warren and his wife Leah have been married for over 24 years and have a daughter and son in High School. He loves meeting new friends for coffee, snowboarding, writing and playing tennis. Interested in talking about your goals as a man, husband and father? Reach out to Warren at- warrenmainard@gmail.com



THANK YOU!

I hope you enjoyed this free resource written for men who are striving to become great husbands, fathers and leaders! IMPACT Players is a 16 year old ministry dedicated to building multi-ethnic, intergenerational communities of men who are passionate about their growth in their homes, places of work and communities. We are a Christian organization that believes in empowering men to fulfill their full potential in the relationships that matter most.

FIND OUT MORE:

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