



by Dan Schaffer

▶ Experiencing God's Affirmation and Approval

In a recent newsletter I shared with you the four elements and responsibilities of fathering:

- I. **Provide**
- II. **Protect**
- III. **Correct**
- IV. **Affirm** (through proper physical touch and the spoken word)

These responsibilities of a father are true for earthly fathers and they allow us to care for and love our biological children. They also are the way our Father God cares for and demonstrates His love for us.

In September of 2009 I was in the Colorado mountains, hunting for deer with a black powder rifle. Each morning I would leave my camp at daybreak and around noon come back to camp and spend two or three hours reading the New Testament, starting in the book of Acts and moving through each book until I finished in the book of Revelation.

Very early in this process I began to be convicted. Here I was in some of the most beautiful country in the world. I had an area of almost 10 square miles virtually to myself. From the door of my tent I could see miles in any direction and yet I was not experiencing thankfulness for this incredible gift of solitude and beauty that God was giving me. By not being thankful, I was not recognizing the provision that God had made for me. By not accepting and seeing God's provision for me, I was blocking my "experiencing" of His provision, protection, correction and affirmation. I began to ask myself, **"How many times have I blocked myself from experiencing God's love and care as a father... because I had not seen His provision and was not accepting it in thankfulness?"**

Over the years I have met many men and women who would tell me that God had promised to be a Father to the fatherless, but in their lives that had not happened. In many of those cases I could see

the hand of God providing for them directly and through the hands of His people. Somehow, just like me, they were assuming that they deserved the good things that came their way, and by not receiving them in thankfulness were unable to see God's hand in their lives.

This issue of thankfulness, I believe, is more important than we realize! In the blessing and cursing part of the Law, the children of Israel were told that they were sent into captivity because they didn't live in gratitude and thankfulness during the times God provided them with abundance. Could it be that we are blocking

ourselves from experiencing the fullness of the relationship with God and His benefits because we are not receiving His provision with gratitude and thankfulness?

We also see this in

Romans 1: 21 where their foolish hearts were darkened because of ingratitude.

In Matthew 6:33 we are told to seek God first and all our needs will be provided by our Father God. In Psalms 3:3 we are told that God will be a shield around us and protect us. In Proverbs 3:11-12 we are told that if God loves us He will correct us. It is this provision, protection, and correction that allow us to experience

His approval and affirmation. Are you living in gratitude and thankfulness and therefore experiencing the fullness of what God desires for

you? If not, will you stop right now and ask Him to reveal His continual and gracious provision in your life? Confess your sin of ingratitude. Ask to see how He has touched you through **providing, protecting** and **correcting**, such that you can experience the full power of His approval, delight and **affirmation!**

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Trip Report

► Breakthrough in Germany in 2009

On the trip to Germany at the end of November, opportunities continued to open up in unexpected ways. Over 60 men participated in phase I training in northern and southern Germany. Four churches are starting the process, two in Berlin, one in Hannover and one in Aalen. At least seven men's groups outside the church are beginning phase I and more want to start. Pastors in Hannover are going to start the four phase process and experience it as pastors and then take it to their churches. In addition, a number of churches that have not been open in the past are beginning to open up.

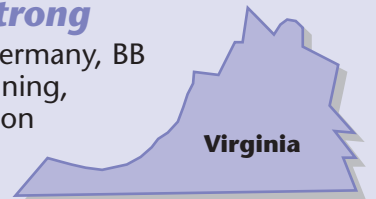


It is clear that the men who were in the U.S. understand the teaching but not the process. When they understand the process they want to move forward. A retreat will be held the last weekend in February outside of Hannover to offer all who came to the U.S. in 2007 and 2009 (as well as others who are interested) the opportunity to understand and enter into the four phase process.

Results could be explosive in the future. Please pray for God's protection, direction and blessing.

► Virginia Going Strong

After returning from Germany, BB provided Phase II Training, Building Unity and Trust, on 12-12-09 for the Virginia conference of the United Methodist Church. To date 23 churches and 160 men have been involved in this process from the Pastors overview, Male Leadership experience, and phase training. The men continue to express growing passion and excitement as they experience change and the power of God in their lives. Please pray that God will bless this process and use it to be a model for the other conferences of the United Methodist Church.



► Akron, Ohio Coming Together

January 9th I had the opportunity to facilitate phase III at Hartville Mennonite Church in the greater Akron area. The men involved told their stories of how God had opened them up, brought them together in safety and was building each man. As the training progressed it was encouraging to see the pastor and leaders discover their plans for building men in their church. On Monday there was a half day seminar with 17 pastors and ministry leaders sharing the heart of Building Brothers. Please pray that God will bless this church and expand the impact to the whole community.



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