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The Case of the Jealous Lover

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Dedication



*This book is dedicated to
my loving parents,
Francis A. and Ida E. Frazier.
They are now resting in the arms of
a Jealous Lover.*



Acknowledgments



The efforts and support of others are the secret ingredients of my success. To be thankful for the same is the secret to having a good character. I thank the Lord Jesus Christ who rescued me and continues to hold me in His arms. I also offer many thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Marcelle and Ann Perry for their inspiration and assistance.

I do so appreciate Bishop T. D. Jakes, a man of excellence and a man with the gift of bringing people together who would otherwise never meet. His special gift to me was his persistent attempt to move me from “I ought to” to “I did it.” Thank you, Bishop.

I must make a special effort to thank my editors, Ms. Wendi Thomas and Mrs. Karen Hadley. Wendi and Karen, you remind me of the wisdom of Ecclesiastes 11:1: *“Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days”* (NKJV).

One of my chief blessings is the love and support of my two daughters, Leah and Janelle. They read my drafts and cheered me on. They are precious young women whom I love with all my heart. Of course, I saved the best for last. I call her Mama, but she is my wife, best friend, and greatest cheerleader. Her name is Pamela J. Frazier; she’s highly anointed and the joy of my life.

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Introduction



The Case of the Jealous Lover was born out of a deep desire of mine to represent God's side of the salvation story—His motivations, desires, and interest in us. We always hear what He has done for us. What does God receive by winning us to Himself? In an effective and workable relationship, there must be mutual benefit, communication, sharing, and oneness.

Most believers know the details of the Lord's blessings in their lives. They can make long lists of the many things He has done for them. Do we, however, as believers, spend the same amount of time listing all the things God receives from being related to us? Do we tell Him how much we love Him when we're not trying to get something from Him? When we pray, are there times when we never ask Him for things but spend our prayer time telling Him how good He is to us? These courtesies are all a part of having a good relationship. A human relationship that didn't have back-and-forth communication, sharing, and love would soon dissolve.

God refers to Himself with names of love throughout the Bible. It is interesting that, with as

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much time and language as God uses to describe Himself as the Lover of our souls, we hardly think of Him in that way.

In Exodus 34:14, the Lord introduces Himself as the Jealous Lover of Israel: *“For you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”* Notice that He uses love language. He declares that He has strong feelings for His bride, the church.

When I first read this verse, the term *jealous* applied to the Lord was unsettling for me. I wondered how He could associate Himself with such a negative term. My answer was soon to follow.

I studied the word *jealous*. It means “having a strong passion for one’s own possessions.” But even after studying the meaning of the word *jealous*, my spirit was still unsettled. I investigated further, and the result is this book, the record of my discoveries.

Several years ago, I preached a message entitled, “What’s in It for God?” The premise of that sermon was similar to that of this book. I felt that I needed to speak up for God, to be a champion of His grace and sovereignty.

We know from the Scriptures that God is sovereign and that He created all things. Knowing this, you may ask, “If God is sovereign and has the power to speak things into existence, why did Christ have to die for us? Couldn’t He just have declared us righteous and been done with it?”

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There are some real mysteries associated with this message. Why did Christ die? Couldn't He have better served the kingdom alive? What good did His death do? And if His death was required to pay for our redemption, wasn't the price too high?

Of course, anything is possible with God. But the fact that He didn't redeem man a different way indicates that a different plan wouldn't have been effective. Our God never operates inefficiently, and He never makes mistakes.

My purpose in this book is to present the message of the Cross from God's point of view. In order to carry out this purpose, I have presented two stories. In the first part of this book, I establish our creation in God and His tender love for us. I also offer my own testimony about how I came to understand this amazing love. The second part of this book is an allegorical story that I hope will help you understand and receive God's love.

The style of *The Case of the Jealous Lover* is different from other commentaries. I blended elements of a mystery novel with practical studies of the spiritual lessons. Many of the chapters contain the drama of the jealous lover followed by a practical application of the Scriptures.

This is my first book, and I pray that you will be blessed by it. You decide if the approach works. If it does, give Jesus the glory. My prayer is that *The Case of the Jealous Lover* will bless you and encourage you to grow in the Lord and to love Him more.

—Clifford L. Frazier

Part One

Chapter One



The Touch of God

Chapter One

The Touch of God



***Then the LORD God formed man of dust
from the ground, and breathed into his
nostrils the breath of life; and man
became a living being.***

—Genesis 2:7

We begin the story with the beginning of man. The Bible tells us clearly that God created man for His glory (Isaiah 43:7) and that *“all things have been created by Him and for Him”* (Colossians 1:16). There is no doubt that He created man out of love. God—the all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-at-once God who sits high and looks low (Psalm 33:13–15)—created everything by the power of His words alone. We read in Psalm 33:6, *“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.”*

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Unlike man, who has to create with building materials, God created all that exists out of absolutely nothing. For man there must be some kind of raw substance from which things are made. But when God creates, He simply speaks things into existence.

He speaks, and atoms are created, and at the same time those atoms are blended together with other atoms to form molecules. Those molecules are bonded to other molecules to form components that are the building blocks of life. Everything that exists contains these components.

The wonder of God's creation is that He can speak and the resulting creation is without error the first time—every time. He needs no structural engineer to approve His design. He doesn't consult a designer to discover whether blue and green are compatible colors.

He speaks, and the wonder of creation appears. He speaks, and a brown cow begins to eat green grass and give white milk.

He speaks, and there is water to drink. This odorless and tasteless liquid is consumed and reported to be good, for everything that God created is good. (See Genesis 1:31.) All of God's creation except humanity owes its existence to this phenomenon of the creative spoken word of God.

Human beings are not the products of God's spoken word. God radically departed from His previous method of creation when He decided to make people.

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The Creation of Man

When God decided to make man, He did so not only as an artist but also as a passionate lover. I imagine Him taking on a visible form, perhaps like His appearances in the Old Testament—His *theophanies*—when He appeared to people as a man or as “the angel of the Lord.” I see Him stepping on the earth that He had created and bending over some dirt. He could have, in a nano-second, spoken a man-form into existence. He had spoken giraffes, aardvarks, and orangutans into existence in a moment, but this would be a different process of creation.

I imagine God using His hands like a sculptor to form man out of the dust of the ground. Reading the biblical account, one can almost feel the tender care with which He fashioned the human body.

Carefully molding the head, placing eye sockets in the front of the skull, He ensured that this creature would have three-dimensional sight. He might have been saying to Himself, “Man will not only be able to see that something is out there, he will also be able to know the depth and distance of that something just by looking. Most importantly, I want him to see Me face to face.”

Notice the order of God’s creation. He made the majestic mountains, the lush valleys, the sparkling rivers, and the cascading waterfalls before He made man. He created graceful birds of the air and powerful beasts of the field before He made

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man. God did so because He wanted man to see all that He had created, to be impressed, and to say so. Creation was and is a dazzling display of design.

God also fashioned ears designed to capture distinct sounds from the air. For instance, man's ears can distinguish between the vibrations of melody and danger. One can imagine God thinking, "I want him to hear the sound of My voice. Also, the symphony of sound produced by My birds and other animals will be for his enjoyment. He will hear and bless Me for it."

God created a brain for man. This is not simply a network of nerve endings, but a complex computer capable of performing extraordinary tasks. The power to conceive, to develop procedures, to have independent thought, to reason, to solve problems, to analyze, to express ideas, and to invent things was invested in this brain. No other earthly creature has this combined capability.

God programmed all of His other creatures with instinct, not reason. This was part of His design. These creatures can't help praising and glorifying God—one way or another—by their very existence.

But to humanity, God gave the gift of free will. Human beings can think thoughts and express ideas that may or may not glorify their Creator. Why? Because God wants us to love Him freely, not because we have to. What a thought! God, who

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is self-sufficient, all-knowing, and everywhere at once, wants our love.

Being loved is the essence of life. It is the purest gift anyone can give another individual. God wanted to create beings in His image whom He could love and who would return His love.

It is easy for the animals, the wind, the waves, and the atmosphere to obey God. No other alternatives exist for them. But a man can bless God or curse Him, honor Him or blaspheme Him, adore Him or despise Him—and when he dishonors God, he often lives to tell the story.

Is this a flaw in God's design?

No! It is a display of His passionate love for us.

God is willing to risk the pain of rejection for the pleasure of real love. Love cannot come to those who are unwilling to be hurt. The expression of real love cannot be forced; it must be freely given. You cannot make a person love you and speak soothing words of devotion. You can force people to recite a script or to repeat phrases, but that is not love.

It cannot move God emotionally to hear a dog bark when He knows that the dog is doing what its nature requires. But when a person, equipped to discover, analyze, evaluate, and decide, reaches out for God as though reaching out for a father, and says to God, "I love you"—that moves God.

I believe that it was the thought of having someone to appreciate Him for who He is and what

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He does that caused God to create man in the first place.

The most impressive expression of God's love during His creation of man was what He did last. It was the way He gave life to the man He had formed.

The hands of God molded and fashioned the body of that first man. I imagine that, as His hands went over the skeletal form, they caused skin to fall into place. When God finished, He undoubtedly paused to look at His creation. It was flawless in design and unique in its features, but it was lifeless.

Then He did something so awesome that the angels must have taken note of it. The Bible reports that God made man in His image and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26) and breathed into man the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). How did He do it? Some theologians believe that the Scriptures imply that God "spread Himself out" on that sculptured clay model, as if placing Himself eye to eye, mouth to mouth, chest to chest, legs to legs. It was almost as if He was making a copy of Himself. He covered the body of man and blew into him the breath of life.

When that man opened his eyes to life, the first thing he beheld was God. Imagine waking up and seeing God before your eyes! With that one act, the great God of heaven demonstrated His special love for man.

The love of God abides with believers even now through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans

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5:5). It has never been the attitude of God to be distant, cold, or uncaring—especially not to those He has created and redeemed.

God's way of creating man was personal and immediate. He touched man and breathed life into him. God continues to touch our lives today and meet our spiritual, physical, and emotional needs.

The Gift of God's Touch

One of the best gifts human love brings is the act of touching. It is sometimes called caressing or stroking. A touch speaks without words. Similarly, a spiritual touch from God tells us that He is very near to us.

Sometimes a baby cries, not because of hunger or distress, but because of the need to be held. Young children will run up to their parents with uplifted hands, reaching for them. They are saying, essentially, "Pick me up and hold me. I feel safe in your arms."

God loves us so much that His creative, soothing hands still touch us in all our situations. He wants us to reach for Him; He wants to pick us up when we are crying.

He doesn't merely speak life to us; He breathes it into every fiber of our beings. He comforts and reassures us by His touch. In a word, He is there for us.

One of the most striking illustrations of God's tender care and desire to touch us is found in the eighth chapter of Matthew:

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And when [Jesus] had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

(Matthew 8:1-3)

Much of the time, when Jesus healed, He did so by speaking to the condition. But when the man with leprosy came to Him, Jesus did not simply speak healing to him. Instead, Jesus touched him.

This is an intense example of love because people with leprosy were considered unclean, and leprosy was considered incurable. No one could go near lepers, let alone touch them. In the days of Christ, lepers were required to announce their arrival when they did come around other people. This gave other people an opportunity to keep their distance. Even today, lepers in many countries have to keep away from the general population.

In Bible times, therefore, contracting leprosy was like having a physical and emotional death sentence handed to you. But Jesus showed His love to the leper not only by healing him, but also by saying with His touch, "Your condition is not too bad for Me."

Jesus was saying, "I love you enough to risk contracting what you have in order to give you

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what I have. I love you enough to care about your feelings and to cover your shame.” This is real love.

When that healed leper left his encounter with Jesus and was asked what happened, he must have replied, “He touched me.”

God’s Personal Involvement

Sprinkled throughout the Scriptures are examples of this kind of personal involvement on the part of God. Another example of His touch of love is found in the story of the Shunammite woman. (See 2 Kings 4:8–37.)

The Shunammite was a woman of some prominence in her community. Known and respected where business was conducted in the city, she still had something missing in her life that made it incomplete: she was childless.

This was a terrible disgrace for women during her time. She made the best of it, though, by busy-ing herself with the family business and serving God.

Her faithfulness in providing for the prophet Elisha’s needs was rewarded with a promise from God, given through the prophet: “You shall have a son.” (See verse 16.) Could she truly have joy after all these years of disappointment? Could she now hold her head high and give a gift to her husband?

She had accepted her condition; she had not asked for a son. But God’s love is so precious. He considers all of our needs. He gave her what she

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wanted but would not ask for. And just as God had promised, she gave birth to a son.

The Bible offers no information about the child until he was almost grown. One day he was working in the field with his father. It was an ordinary day. Suddenly, without warning, the boy began to complain of a pain in his head. The father ordered a servant to carry the son home. The son was brought to his mother, but it was only a few hours before he died on his mother's lap.

To have what you have always hoped for taken away is much harder to deal with than never having it at all. One can easily imagine the mother crying out, "How could this happen? Lord, You promised me this child. Now my son has preceded me to the grave. What do we do now? This is horrible!"

The boy represented the hope and future of her family. He was the source of their joy. Now, as if a cruel joke were being played on them, his life was snuffed out.

How many times have we faced bewildering situations that shook our foundations? We have wondered, "Could life get any more difficult?"

Anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one knows how difficult life can be for those who are left behind. Nothing is more final than death—unless Love stands in the way.

The Shunammite woman knew that God would find a way. When the boy died on her lap, she put the lifeless child in the room that had

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been prepared for Elisha. She then went searching for the prophet.

When she found him, she fell at his feet and reminded him that he had promised her a son. He had promised her when she hadn't even asked, and now she needed his help.

Elisha, who in this story represents the care of God, first sent his servant, Gehazi, to deal with the situation. Gehazi came back and reported that he was unsuccessful in raising the boy to life.

Then Elisha went to her house. He found the boy in the room reserved for him. While praying to God, Elisha lay on that child and covered him from head to toe. Life came back into that boy's body. He was restored to his family. God's love found a way.

The first lesson to be learned from this story is that God will go to great lengths to show His love. There are some situations in our lives in which a word from God will suffice. Then there are times when we need Him to lay Himself over our situations. We need His personal involvement, His touch; we need the hand of the Lord upon us.

Second, this story teaches us that if death cannot stop the love of God, our other problems are not too great for Him either. If the love of God can bring life out of death, His love can also bring joy out of sorrow, peace out of confusion, and laughter out of sadness. If death cannot stop God, then a wayward child, a financial mountain, a confused mind, or a hopeless cause cannot stop

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Him. Reach for Him, and you, too, will be able to say, "He touched me."

* * *

As a foundation for this book, we have seen how God created man and loves him in a passionate way. We have seen how God touches man at his point of need. But the greatest manifestation of God's love and personal commitment to us is Christ coming to the earth to live and to suffer and die for us. It is His incredible love in dying for us that is the main focus of this book. In the following pages, we will explore the depths of this love.

A Prayer

Dear Lord, I pray for the precious soul who has just read this chapter. Maybe he, too, is looking for love and needs a touch from You. Maybe his situation seems hopeless or his condition untouchable.

But I know, Lord, that You care for him and love him. Touch him now. Let Your hands of compassion soothe him right where he is.

Lay Yourself upon his problems if You have to. Most of all, let him rest in Your love.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Let it be so.