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To Own a Dragon

I'm reading a book called "To Own a Dragon: Reflections on Growing up Without a Father" by Donald Miller and John MacMurray. The book is actually written for men so Donald gives a disclaimer at the beginning for any women who would read it! A friend of mine loved the book so much she asked me to read it. I want to share a couple of excerpts from chapter five where Donald addresses the idea of God fathering us.

"What I am getting at is the concept of a father may have been soiled for you and me, but it was important for me to realize who did the soiling. To be fair, it wasn't God..."

"I knew guys who were truly fathered had certain advantages in life. They were good at sports, for example, and good with girls. They knew how to manage money better, and got their college paid for. At least some of them. So I wanted this, and even though God lived in a bubble, I wanted Him to step out of heaven and show me how to work a power saw."

And then he talks about how he saw John MacMurray interact with his children and relates how the children reacted after being disciplined...

"Sometimes it was as if the kids were saying they were sorry, not yet old enough to know how to express themselves with words. But at other times, and perhaps more tender times, the kids were still frustrated, still confused about why they couldn't get what they wanted or why they seemed to always be getting into trouble; and the embrace, the coming to John and burying themselves in his arms was more about feeling his love in the confusion, in the difficulty, than it was about having moved past it. It was as if they were asking him if he still loved them, if the discipline meant there was anything lost in their much-needed relationship with their father. There wasn't. Discipline is what a Father does because he loves."

The beauty of this example spoke to me. Certainly during this last season, I have felt frustrated and confused with God at times, not because of his discipline, but because I was trying to understand his response or what seemed to be a lack of response. And to think of burying myself in his arms and feeling his love in the confusion, in the difficulty, even though I had not moved past it – how comforting and beautiful!

Donald Miller shares this example he saw in the MacMurray home as he observed John fathering his children. John had raised his voice too loudly with his children.

"John said he tries to apologize when he messes up as a dad, letting his kids know they are more important to him than his pride. He kind of laughed and admitted he screwed up fairly often. But then he said something I thought was pertinent to those of us who grew up without dads. John said another reason he apologized was because he didn't want his kids to have any negative perceptions about God. He said that the way a kid feels about their dad is sometimes projected onto God, so he apologized when he messed up as a father, the kids would know that was his mistake, and didn't have anything to do with who God is. Or at least that is what he hoped."

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