



LOVE LIKE A MOTHER
HOW THE SACRED WORK OF MOTHERHOOD
REVEALS THE MATERNAL HEART OF GOD

Discussion Guide







INTRODUCTION

1. What is your familiarity with the idea that God is like a mother? Is this something you've heard about in church or in your home growing up?
2. What does being made in God's image mean to you? Has there been a moment in motherhood or parenting in which you thought, "This must be a glimpse of how God feels about me"?

CHAPTER 1: WOMBS AND THE WEAVER

1. How have you sensed God's *rakhum* compassion in your own life? What is one way you have practiced this kind of maternal compassion?
 2. What spiritual pressure have you experienced within motherhood or parenting? In what ways have you felt like you were not "keeping up" in your faith? Where did these pressures come from?
 3. What surprised or moved you most about the idea of God choosing to enter the world through a womb?
 4. What from your own experience of being pregnant (or knowing and loving someone who has been pregnant) helps you understand God's creation and care more?
 5. What does it feel like to know God is nesting, or preparing, for you? How does that change your perspective on what you might be waiting for in your own life?
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CHAPTER 2: BIRTH PLANS & BIRTH PANGS

1. What is a time in your life when you've sensed the quickening, life-giving breath of God – *Ruach Elohim*?
2. How does the Hebrew word *chuwol* help you understand the visceral truths of the crucifixion?
3. The language of being 'born again' is so familiar it can lose its weight. What does it actually mean to you – what were you born from, and into what?
4. What does it mean that God was a baby? That God was mothered?
5. Birth stories carry so much – fear, wonder, humor, grief. If you have one you'd like to share, we'd love to hear it. What did that experience reveal to you about God?

CHAPTER 3: BURSTING FORTH AND BORN AGAIN

1. How has the experience of giving birth, or witnessing a birth, changed your understanding of Jesus' words: "This is my body, broken for you"? What does this help you understand about God's sacrificial love?
2. If this life is a womb – a place of formation before something greater – what do you sense God is forming in you right now?
3. What do you think about the idea that God is trying to form a "secure attachment" with us? How does that ring true in your experience?
4. How do the paired, side-by-side male and female images for God in Isaiah resonate with any resistance you might feel toward knowing God as mother?
5. In your own life, have you experienced circumstances in which you've sensed both God as father and as mother?
6. Adoption is such a unique and tender dynamic, yet this is what God promises us: Adoption into the family of God. How do the realities of fostering and adoption help you understand these promises?
7. The medieval church clearly had fewer issues equating "the powers of women and Christ." Why do you think we've lost our ease in these feminine images and comparisons for God?



CHAPTER 4: SEARED HEARTS AND SCARRED HANDS

1. Think about the father's experience in the story of the prodigal son. What would you think, feel, or attempt to do in the same scenario? How does this add color to your understanding of God incarnate, come to find us?
2. Longing and loss are threads woven through motherhood in ways we rarely talk about openly. Where have you experienced that ache — and where did you find God in it?
3. All of us have experienced the grief of loss in some measure, within motherhood and beyond. What has it meant to you, in a season of grief, to imagine God weeping alongside you? What has Mary and Martha's "Come and see" meant to you in these dark seasons?
4. Why do you think Isaiah includes the death of a child on his list of what will not be within the new heavens and new earth?

CHAPTER 5: MESSY BIBS AND THE BREAD OF LIFE

1. What do you think about the biblical term *El Shaddai*? Have you heard of its alternate meaning regarding breasts and fulfilled sufficiency? How can this help us understand how we can know God as mother even while God is primarily referred to as father within Scripture?
2. What is your favorite account of God feeding humanity within the Bible? Elijah in I Kings 19, manna, Adam and Eve in the garden, Jesus and the 5,000, or any of the others? Why does this story resonate with you?
3. What images of God did you inherit — and how has motherhood and parenting challenged or confirmed those images?
4. Have you ever heard of the depictions of God as mother pelican? Or the maternal musings of Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila? How do these images help you understand God's nourishing work in your life?
5. Talk about an experience where you have had to practice "intellectual flexibility" within a sermon, church service, Bible study, or other similar setting?
6. How do you understand God's love when you picture God preparing a feast for you? Simmering, stirring, waiting to see you come to the door?



CHAPTER 6: SHELTER AND SHEKHINAH

1. If women's brains are significantly altered within motherhood - wired to care about the needs of their babies and to protect with vigilance - what does that tell us about a God who calls us his children?
2. What does the concept of *Shekhinah* mean to you? How have you experienced the protection of preservation – this different kind of power?
3. As both mother bear and mother hen, God is conveying a desire to protect us from ourselves. Why do you think the Bible uses maternal imagery in these two passages to convey God's care for us when we perhaps don't know any better or are choosing what is harmful for ourselves?
4. What does it mean that you are invited to abide in Christ, especially when we frame this invitation in terms of fostering and adoption?
5. What did you already know about the term *ezer*? Why is it significant that God coined this term for Eve but then used it to refer to Divine power in most of its other uses within Scripture?

CHAPTER 7: THE MENTAL LOAD AND THE MONASTIC BELL

1. Talk about what your current mental load feels like. Where do you feel overwhelmed? Where are you on top of things? How do you sense God, like a mother, holding all things, including you, together?
2. What does it feel like to acknowledge, to admit, that you are a limited human being? Does it feel frustrating? Like a relief? How do we embrace this reality in real, everyday life with its endless demands and responsibilities?
3. What would "trying softer" look like for you in this season? What is one thing you could release this week, trusting God to hold it?
4. What has knowing God as both father and mother looked like in your life?
5. How does the concept of the "monastic bell" help you reframe the constant interruptions of parenting?



CHAPTER 8: SLEEP REGRESSIONS AND THE SABBATH

1. What does it feel like to imagine God never slumbering?
2. What do you know about the practice of the Sabbath? What do you want to know?
3. How have you experienced Sunday morning church with littles in tow? Do the author's words resonate, or have you had a different experience? How do you see the Sabbath and Sunday morning interacting in this season?
4. How has motherhood and parenting changed — or quietly eroded — your faith practices? What have you let go of, and how do you feel about that?

CONCLUSION

1. How have your views about God changed through the reading of this book? Have you grown more comfortable knowing God as mother? What questions do you still have?
2. What reminders of God's love are you beginning to see in your day to day of caring for kids?
3. What could churches and communities gain from centering the voices of mothers?
4. How are you experiencing the gentleness God has for you in this season?
5. What is one thing you want to carry from this book into your faith? Or in how you talk about God with your children?

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