**Sunday:**

1. What stands out to you from the above? What do you want to remember? Do you disagree with anything?
2. Share a way you have experienced the gentleness of God through Scripture, music, or an experience this last week.

**Monday: What God Has Your Loved One Rejected?**

**McClung writes: "Aussies themselves will tell you that most Aussies couldn't care less about God. But I don't believe that. Aussies have not rejected God -- they have rejected *false images* of Him. The god they reject, I reject also."**

**This has caused me to ponder and wish I could have another chance to communicate with those who seem to have rejected God. Once at pickleball when inviting a woman to our Bible study, she told me "I was abused sexually by my priest as a child. It ruined my marriage, my life. I'm really not interested." I did commiserate and told her God is not like that, but I could have handled it better. I wish I had said, "The god you reject, I reject also!" I also am going to start asking people what they think God is like so we are at least on the same page!**

**McClung looks at Michal, the daughter of King Saul. He says: "Michal's life clearly illustrates the pain of a "wounded" or "broken" spirit. Michal was raised in an environment charged with friction and conflict...She was moved between the men in her life like a pawn in a chess game."**

**3.  Why did Saul want to give Michal in marriage to David according to 1 Samuel 18: 20-21?**

**4. Read 1 Samuel 19:11-17 and explain how this revealed not just hatred for David, but a lack of love for his daughter, Michal.**

**5. David has to flee for his life and leaves Michal behind. Michal eventually remarries Paltiel. Read what happens in 2 Samuel 3:13-16.**

**A. In the midst of bartering for land, David makes another demand (v. 13-14). What is it?**

**B. The verb "taken" in verse 15 is used repeatedly in Scripture (as with the virgins in the book of Esther taken from their homes for King Xerxes contest) to mean forcibly taken against their will or the will of their parents, or in this case, husband. How can you see grief here?**

**6. Though I had never thought of this before, McClung believes that the way Michal was treated caused bitterness to grow in heart toward her father, toward David, and toward God. He points to 2 Samuel 6:16. Do you think that is possible? What are your thoughts?**

**I tend to think he is right, though as we always tell the women in prison, still, they have a choice, despite the sins of their fathers, to do right. Yet it gives me compassion and I think I will probe to see if the reason a person is rejecting God is because they have a false view of Him, thinking He is like their father or their husband.**

**7. In what ways was your earthly father like your heavenly Father? In what ways was he not? How might this be impacting you?**

**Tuesday: What is God Like?**

**Floyd McClung's five-year old daughter asked him: "What does God look like, Daddy?"**

**He said, "He looks like Jesus."**

**This reminded me of  a question my stylist's 6-year-old had: "Does God have feet?" She does not know Scripture so asked me. I told her "Yes, because Jesus is God made flesh. His feet were pierced for us."**

**8. Read John 14:1-9**

**A. How can you see love and gentleness in verses 1-3?**

**B. What does Philip ask in verse 8 and how does Jesus respond in verse 9?**

**9.  Challenge Question: For those who read Dane Ortland's *Gentle and Lowly,*what did you learn about the character of Jesus, and therefore the Father, from that?**

**10. Think about an episode in Scripture with Jesus that particularly moves your heart. Share it and why it moves you and what it tells you about what the Father is like.**

**Wednesday: The God Who Sees**

**11. Read Genesis 16:5-13**

**A. How was Hagar mistreated?**

**B. How did the Lord encourage her?**

**C. Many of you have been mistreated by your family and have wounded hearts. Do you believe God cared for you and saw you? Do you believe he is calling for you to come to Him? Do you know of others like this -- how might you pray for them and talk to them?**

**12. McClung takes the incident of Jesus and the Samaritan woman and sheds a new light on it.**

**A. Read through Johhn 4:1-26. How might she, like Michal, have been a pawn of men? (We don't know, but we do know women were, in the culture, treated like slaves.) So imagine!**

**B. How did Jesus treat her differently than the culture? Find everything you can.**

**C. McClung writes: "He saw past the outward hardness, the loud jokes, and the sarcasm about religion: He saw her heart; He saw her longing for something to fill her emptiness; He saw her need to feel loved, cared for, and special." Think about this and how you might apply it to your own heart or to the broken heart of another. Share your answer here.**

**Thursday: Imperfect Shadows**

**13. Even the best fathers are imperfect shadows of our Heavenly Father. Let's consider some verses that show us that. McClung says our past experiences color how we relate to God. So let's consider first how well or poorly our "shadow" did, and then God is better.**

**A. How giving as your earthly father? What does Jesus tell his disciples in Matthew 7:11?**

**B. Did your earthly father discipline you harshly so that you back away from God like a beaten pup? How had God been gentle and forgiving with you?**

**C. Has your mother or father forsaken you? What does Isaiah 49:15 say? And over and over, what does Scripture say about "orphans?"**

**D. Was your father's love conditional? How is God's love different? (Think about the Father in the Prodigal Sons.)**

**E. Was your father affectionate? Read how God expresses His affection in Hosea 11:1-4.**

**Friday: Near to the Brokenhearted - Always**

**Even the best earthly father cannot always be with us and cannot live forever. But we are promised He will never leave us or forsake us. I'd like you to share a prayer of praise for this and tell us about a song that ministers to you that we might sing or listen to as well.**

**Saturday:**

**13. What is your take-a-way and why?**

**14. If you were to really believe these things, how might you live differently today?**