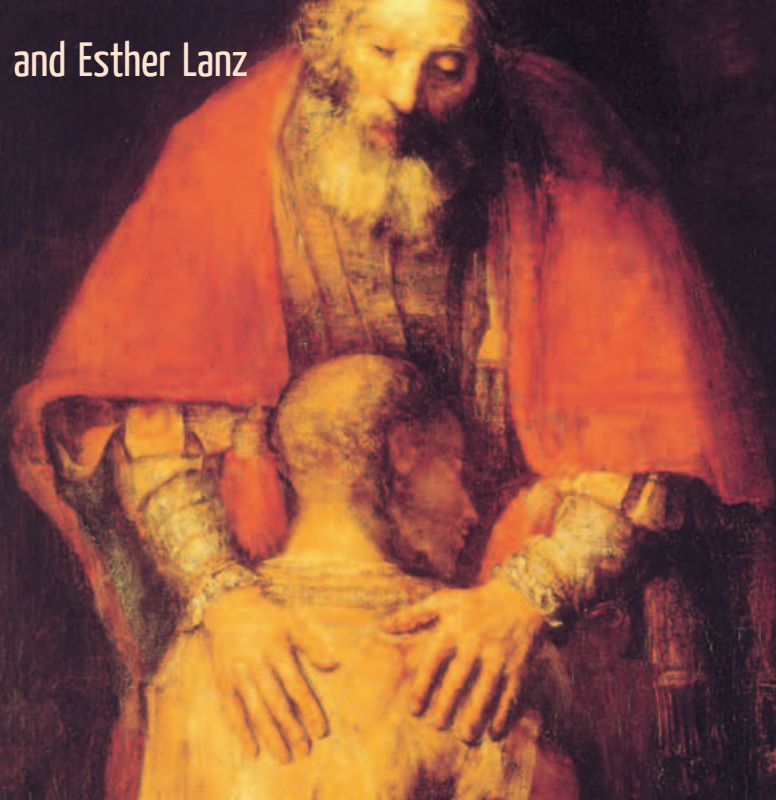


Manfred and Esther Lanz



The Father's Love

Experience the Love of God

DfE



www.heartofberlin.de

Manfred and Esther Lanz: The Father's Love – Experience the Love of God
Quadro No. 17

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Contact

Down to Earth

Laubacher Str. 16 II

14197 Berlin, Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 30 - 822 79 62

Fax: +49 (0) 30 - 897 31 670

Email: info@down-to-earth.de

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Discovery

■ **Many people know in their head that God loves them, but this truth hasn't found its way into their hearts.**

That's how it was for us – Manfred and Esther. We had been Christians for many years and tried to live our lives accordingly. I (Manfred) followed a call into the ministry and became a pastor. We adopted three children from other countries and tried to be good parents. On our journey with God we experienced highs and lows. We had some gratifying as well as painful experiences.

A few years ago we both experienced – at slightly different times – a life crisis. During this time the foundations of our faith were tested. Influenced by a largely performance oriented and fear dominated view of God, we tried to please Him and earn His approval. We were faced with an increasing number of challenges in our family, our church, our health as well as inwardly. The expectations we put upon ourselves were hard to live up to.


See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

—1 John 3:1

We believed that God loved us and would carry us through difficult phases. That belonged to the category of theological beliefs that we never doubted. But reality felt completely different. God's love felt like it was extremely far away. What we believed until now, no longer gave us the strength we needed. During this time I (Esther) prayed nearly every day “let me be rooted and grounded in your love, understanding and comprehending its full dimensions” (inspired from Ephesians 3:17-18).

Our sincere desire was to have God touch us in a new and deeper way. At this low point in our lives He revealed His love to us as never before. We began to understand that God really does love and accept us as we are. A process began. This truth of God's love began to fill us. A lot that was bound up in us began to be released and relaxed. We received new courage and new hope.

Since then our understanding and experience of God's Father love keeps growing.



Because of this increasing revelation, our trust in God has deepened and sustains us through the difficult phases in our lives. Over the course of the last few years we have discovered many practical ways which have helped us to allow God's love to travel from our heads to our hearts. In this Quadro, we have shared some of these practices, which have become very dear to us.

The first part includes some Biblical foundational truths about God's Father love and how that applies to us personally. In this section and throughout the Quadro, we have not only used scripture from the New Testament and the words of Jesus but also consciously included verses from the Old Testament as well as quotes from people who have experienced God as their Father.

The second part is about the liberating and healing effects that we experience the more we realize that we are unconditionally accepted and loved.

In the third part, we give ideas and suggestions about how we can receive and enjoy God's Father love in our everyday lives. Finally, the fourth part is about how we can continue to grow into a lifestyle of living loved.

"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Love is the greatest. Abiding in God's love, and giving it further, is our first and highest calling.

Our wish for you is that this Quadro will be an inspiration to help get you started as well as being an encouragement for you along your journey into discovering and experiencing more and more of the Father love of God.

Esther n. Manfred Lanz

—Esther and Manfred Lanz

■ We developed this Quadro together, however, when "I" is used, it usually refers to Manfred.



How to use this book

■ This Quadro is divided into 28 chapters. It can be used for 4 weeks as a daily inspiration and encouragement.

■ It may be helpful to read this Quadro together with your partner, friend, or in a group. That would give you the opportunity to discuss it with others. You may discover that the different points will then become clearer and have a longer lasting influence.

■ We have quoted Bible passages from different translations. Try reading the passages again for yourself, maybe in a different translation and in the full context.

■ When you write something, you solidify it. For that reason we encourage you to write down the answers to the questions and take notes how you would like to put the practical inspirations into practice.

■ Whoever consumes passively remains passive. After each reading, ask yourself: If I were to tell someone what spoke to me the most from what I just read, what would I tell them?

■ Take time to talk to God or to others about what you have read. Through talking about it, it will become more concrete in your thoughts and you will be able to remember it better.

■ The “question” and “practical inspiration” at the end of each segment are there to help stimulate new thoughts and to encourage you to try new ways of doing things. They may help you to be open for new experiences.

■ Change does not happen overnight. In order that the Love of God can sink deeper into your heart a longer process is usually necessary. For that reason we encourage you not to hurry and not to put yourself under pressure.

■ Hold your heart before the Lord so He can continually fill it with His love.

■ Take time to dream. Picture in your mind what influence it will have in your life when you understand more fully how much the Father loves you. Ask the Lord that this dream not remain just a dream but become a reality.

Week 1
Discover Fatherly love



1.1

God is love

■ *“God is love!”* (1 John 4,16). This is a unique statement of the Gospel that can be found in no other religion in the world. God does not love because He finds something or someone worthy of love. God loves because His distinct eternal nature is love. His love for us is not dependent on what *we* are; it is based upon what *He* is. The triune God gives us an idea of what He is really like. Rationally, we can never truly understand God’s trinity. But as we look at this love it can open our heart to its reality.

God, the One that is love, exists in the form of three “persons” – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They relate to one another in perfect love. How breathtakingly beautiful! In the center of the universe is a love relationship. This loving triune God created man with the desire that mankind reflects and returns this love. He is looking for those that will live in a loving relationship with Him. Their lives in turn will draw others into a love relationship with Him.

God does not love us because we are lovable, but because his nature is love.

—Oswald Chambers

To better understand this intimate relationship the Bible uses different illustrations. It is compared to the closest and most trusted relationships on earth, like the relationships between a husband and wife, parent and child, and among friends. God Himself wants to be our Lover, our Father and Friend. As we receive His love we are enabled to return His love, as well as love ourselves and others.

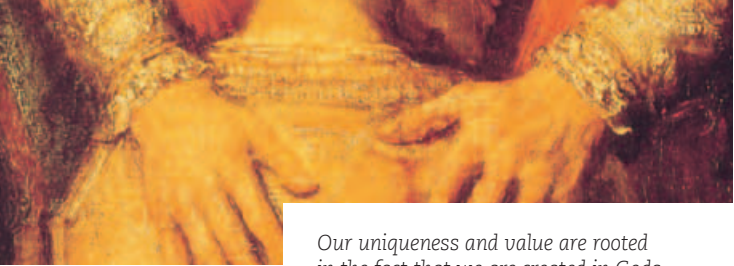
■ **Time to think**

What do you think and how do you feel when you hear the statement, “God is love.”

■ **Time to act**

Talk to God about your thoughts and feelings.

3.2



Our uniqueness and value are rooted in the fact that we are created in God's image.

—Richard J. Foster

Finding your own way

■ We have three children and have a different relationship with each one. Not because we prefer one over the other but because they have such different personalities. Whereas one of our children enjoys physical closeness and touch another may enjoy it more when we express our love through practical help or a gift. Over the years we have been able to discover many of our children's individual characteristics. This has helped us to understand their needs and how to best meet those needs.

Our Father in heaven has millions of children. Each one was created uniquely and has developed his own personality. Also in a relationship to God there's not a right way that fits to each person. Each one can find the way that fits him the best to relate to his Father in daily life.

The deciding thing is what draws me closer to Him? What helps me to intentionally receive and experience God's presence and love?

One may love to intensely study the Bible while another would rather hear a sermon. Some experiences the presence of God in connection with other people. Others prefer times of solitude and quiet. Maybe your "place of meeting" is in the kitchen, the fitness or hobby room, yard or garden ... If we have our hearts tuned into God, He will come near to us and meet with us. The more we discover and accept our God-given individuality, the more we will be able to enjoy our relationship with Him.

■ **Time to think** _____
When do you feel happy and close to God?

■ **Time to act** _____
How and where would you like to meet with God today? Try out a new way.



3.3

Enjoy God

■ Georg Müller, a well-known “man of faith” gave a home to thousands of orphan children. In the midst of his many duties and challenges he never lost sight of life’s real meaning, his relationship to God. After giving 40 years of intensive service for people that were suffering he explained how he kept his faith alive and his enjoyment of life:

“I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished.”

Georg Müller took time every morning to read his Bible and meditate on what he had read. As a result his soul was deeply satisfied. This was the source of his joy and strength.

The prophet Jeremiah describes a similar experience: “When your words came, I ate

them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight” (Jeremiah 15:16).

The more we understand the character of God, the more important and precious what He says will become to us. The more we get to know the Father’s loving heart, the more we will enjoy His words.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

—Psalms 34:8

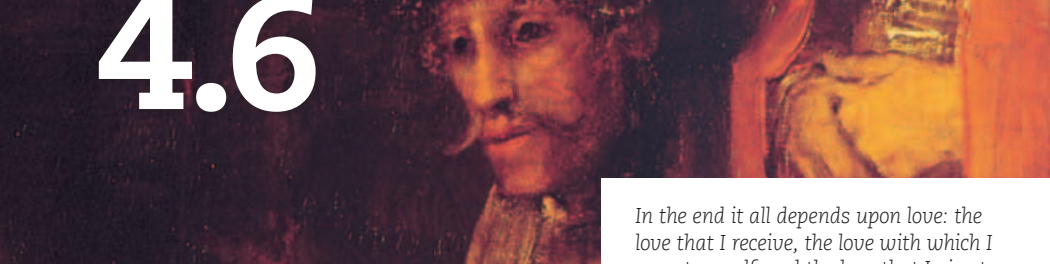
■ Time to think

What are your expectations when you encounter God and His Word?

■ Time to act

Look for a word of blessing from the Bible that speaks to you. Think about it often today and let it sink into your heart.

4.6



In the end it all depends upon love: the love that I receive, the love with which I accept myself, and the love that I give to others.

—Kerstin Hack

Giving from abundance

■ Love has its origin in God and all love comes from Him. When we love, we are reflecting God's nature. *"Be imitators of God, as His dearly loved children. And walk in love"* (Ephesians 5:1-2).

The more we apprehend and comprehend that we, as God's children, are loved without measure, the more we will be able to return His love, love ourselves and love others.

In my daily life I repeatedly come to the end of my ability to love. Instead of being merciful, patient, and willing to forgive, I often react irritably, resentfully, and judgmentally. When I look closely I then become aware that I have lost sight of the fact that I am loved. Or, that I've not treated myself kindly. In order that love can flow through me, I need to be connected to the source. *"We love because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). Our love is in answer to God's love.

The more we receive and enjoy the Fathers love, the more generous we are in giving this love to others.

The more we give His love to others from a heart that is running over, the more the Father can re-fill our hearts with His love. *"Man, you have been created in the image of God who is love. With hands to give, with a heart to love, and with two arms that are just long enough to embrace another"* (Phil Bosmans).

■ Time to think

How do you know that your love tank is full? What kind of impact does that have on those that are around you?

■ Time to act

Show your love practically today. Take the opportunity to help someone, to embrace someone, or to speak encouragingly to someone.

Try something new

■ I learned this the hard way. Many years ago I was very upset to receive a bad grade and negative criticism about an essay I wrote for a German class. For decades this experience dissuaded me from putting my thoughts down on paper.

After my encounter with the Father heart of God a soft voice spoke to me, “Manfred, write a book about My love.” I reacted immediately, following the pattern I had internalized. “I can’t do that, I can’t write.” At the same time I felt a strong desire to not let these limitations restrict me any longer, but to step out into something new. I allowed myself to step out and try a new adventure. The result of this dialogue with my heavenly Father was my first book “Leben in der Liebe des Vaters” (Living in the Love of the Father).

Esther and I want to live increasingly like our heavenly Father’s loved children: happy, playful, and free. We like to try new things: Although she is over 40 Esther began to play the violin and paint.

I can’t be free, without loosing myself. I can’t begin again, unless I recognize the necessity of ending the old.

—Hans-Joachim Eckstein

Recently I ventured into the rank of self-employment. Together we developed this Quadro. At the moment we are thoroughly enjoying a dance course. We look forward to everything that expands our borders and are eagerly anticipating the new things ahead.

Thank you that we could, to a certain extent, accompany you on your journey. We wish you all the best with many unique encounters with God.

■ Time to think

What inward limitations do you want to be free from? Through what thoughts do they express themselves?

■ Time to act

Try something new! Do something that you’ve always wanted to do, but have never allowed yourself try.



Don't forget

- These thoughts and ideas have become important to me. I never want to forget them!

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- Along the way with my Father I want to practice the following:

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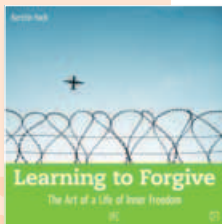
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Book and Media Recommendations

- Jack Winter: Homecoming. Unconditional Love: Finding Your Place in the Father's Heart. YWAM Publishing, 1999
- Wayne Jacobsen: He Loves Me!: Learning to Live in the Father's Affection. Windblown Media, 2008
- www.fathersloveletter.com

We would enjoy hearing how you have experienced this Quadro.
Please send any correspondence to manfredundesther@t-online.de

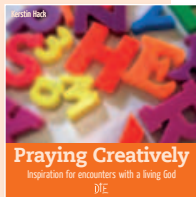


Kerstin Hack
Learning to Forgive

The art of a life of inner freedom, 40 pages

Forgiveness is an effective tool to deal with a suffered injustice. But it is not always easy. This Quadro shows why forgiveness is worth the effort, which attitudes may help to forgive and what practical steps can be taken to make forgiveness happen.

Quadro No. 16



Kerstin Hack
Praying Creatively

Inspiration for encounters with a living God, 32 pages

Prayer is boring? Not if you make use of all five senses in prayer and get your body and spirit in motion. This Micro-book provides practical tips, inspiration from the bible and creative ideas to shape your encounters with God in a new and lively way.

Micro-book No. 5



Kerstin Hack
Happiness

Inspiration for a rich life, 32 pages

You don't have to leave your happiness to chance. It grows when you shape your life in a good way. This Micro-book offers inspiration for attitudes and actions that will make you happier. For everyone who wants to be happy.

Micro-book No. 6



Kerstin Hack
Our Father

Inspiration to simply pray, 32 pages

Our Father in heaven ... The words of this well-known prayer are familiar to many people, but what exactly do they mean? This Micro-book provides inspiration for a new and deeper understanding of the Lord's Prayer.

Micro-book No. 40

The Father's Love

Do you long to feel the love of God? Not only to theoretically know God loves you but to really believe it? This Quadro will help you to experience God's love in a deeper way, and to live with God as your friend.

In this Quadro Manfred and Esther Lanz describe how they were touched and changed through the Father love of God. In addition they describe different pathways to the Father's love and give practical tips how you can receive this love.

Questions and practical inspirations help you not to get stuck in the theory, but to put what you have read into practice. The Quadro inspires and accompanies you with four impulses per day:

- A concise quote
- Some food for thought
- A provocative question
- A practical activity

Ideal for everyone who would like to experience the Father's love.

 **Quadro**

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