

# BELOVED

FRANCIS CHAN  
WITH MERCY GORDON

# B E L O V E D

FRANCIS CHAN

WITH MERCY GORDON

**150** YEARS STRONG  
DAVID COOK

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*To everyone who has prayed for me to experience  
breakthrough in receiving God's love, thank  
you. I really believe God heard and answered,  
and this book is a testament to that.*

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# INTRODUCTION

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**I**n heaven, God sits on a throne, beaming with glory far beyond anything you've ever seen. The thunderous sound of millions of angels worshipping Him is like nothing you've ever heard. If I could approach our holy God right now and ask Him how He feels about you, what do you think He would say?

Actually answer that.

Your answer reveals a lot about what you believe about God and yourself.

It affects everything that matters.

“Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved...”  
(John 21:20).

Five times in his gospel, John refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” Throughout history, John has been remembered as the beloved disciple.

If this was your last day on earth, how would you be remembered?

How would you like to be remembered?

Again, how you answer those questions will tell you a lot about yourself, so actually answer them. For most of my life, I wanted to be known for my integrity, sacrificial love, or powerful teaching. I admired the stories of Elijah calling down fire, Peter walking on water, and Paul suffering greatly to spread the gospel.

I could not relate in the same way with John. The idea of simply being identified as God's beloved never crossed my mind. I considered it my purpose in life to be useful, not to be loved. But over time, I've learned that you can live a seemingly useful life that is void of the very thing you were created for: the enjoyment of God. You serve Him but don't enjoy Him. What's worse is that you're not sure if He enjoys you.

Only recently did I realize the word "beloved" is two words combined: be loved. It hit me because it conveys the idea that being someone's beloved is completely passive. I'm not good at passive. Many of us are terrible at receiving, but that needs to change. We are God's beloved children, and He wants us to be able to simply *be* loved. Not striving, just believing and enjoying and resting in His perfect love. Like John resting his head on Jesus' chest (John 13:23-25).

## The Problem We Face

When's the last time you sat in silence, doing absolutely nothing productive, and just enjoyed God's presence? When's the last time you truly believed, deep in your bones, that God was smiling at you—not because you did something impressive, but simply because you're His?

My friend was with his wife in the Amazon, staring at an untouched area of the rainforest. It was wild, lush, and overflowing with beauty: orchids, bananas, cacao. As they looked at the cacao tree, he commented, "Imagine the amount of cocoa beans that tree has produced over decades, only for them to fall to the ground." His wife had a different reaction that had nothing to do with production and harvesting: "I think God must just enjoy the beauty of His creation; to see the flowers flourish and fade, to see the fruits ripen and then fall. He made it, and it's enough that He takes pleasure in it."

For many of us, our minds are obsessed with production. It carries over into our relationship with God. We try to accomplish as much as possible in order to please Him. What began as a joy starts to feel like a burden or obligation. We serve until we're exhausted, hoping God notices our efforts. We battle doubts about our salvation and constantly wonder if we're doing enough. It's hard to imagine

a God who enjoys watching us, like a parent who sneaks into his toddler's room just to watch her sleep.

I know because I've been there.

On my fiftieth birthday, I gathered my family and friends to pray for me. I had recently read 1 John 4:18b, "Whoever fears has not been perfected in love." I knew it described me, but I didn't want to believe it. It felt shameful to admit that I was only ninety percent sure of my salvation.

Is it okay for a pastor to tell his church that he still fears God's rejection?

Wouldn't that have a detrimental effect on their faith?

I started a church and saw it grow to thousands of people. I wrote books that were read by millions of people. I founded a Bible college, planted churches, preached to masses but still battled insecurity. Insecurity probably motivated most of my actions. Maybe it stemmed from never being loved by my dad, or maybe it's from my Bible college days when I was taught to constantly evaluate myself and others. Whatever the origin, it needed to stop. I didn't want to live another day without the perfect love that casts out all fear.

By the grace of God, He brought me to the point where I wanted freedom more than a reputation. I wanted to be perfected in love more than I wanted to be admired. I chose to be honest with myself and those I loved.

The good news is that God heard my prayers and those of my friends. He opened my eyes to lies that I had believed and continues to teach me how to enjoy Him daily. In short, He rescued me and wants to do the same for you. I think that's why you're holding this book.

I have a conviction and a belief that God gave me for this book that is simple but life-changing: abiding in the love of God frees us from all insecurity and leads us into a lifetime of joyful, worshipful obedience.

Read that again.

I used to think that God created me to impact the world. I now think God created me to have another person to lavish His grace upon. He didn't create Adam and Eve because He needed gardeners. He abounds in love, so He created beings to receive it.

This isn't about trying harder. It's about believing deeper. It's not about doing more for God; it's about receiving

more from God. It's about moving from performance-based religion to love-based relationship.

When you read the passage below, I hope you can see the heart of a loving Father.

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:16–19)

Did you catch that? “We love because he first loved us.” Not “we love in order to earn His love” or “we love hoping one day He’ll love us back.” His love comes first. It’s the foundation, not the reward.

## The Invitation

This book is for those whose Christian experience feels contractual rather than romantic. For those who deep down believe that God is disappointed in them. For those who serve out of obligation rather than overflow.

It's for those who have a hard time believing that a holy God pines for them. It is far easier for you to declare your love for Jesus than to boast in His love for you. You fight against sin and serve sacrificially, but it's driven by insecurity instead of the overflow of love.

My prayer is that God's love is not wasted on us. That He doesn't stand with open arms as we serve frantically in disbelief. May we break the enemy's lies and just receive. Just be loved.

In the coming chapters, I want to walk alongside you as we rediscover what it means to be loved by God—not as a theological concept, but as a daily reality that transforms everything about how we live. I want to help you see that God's greatest desire isn't your service or sacrifice—it's your heart. He wants you to know, beyond any shadow of doubt, that you are deeply, completely, eternally loved.

And from that place of security—of being loved—will flow the kind of obedience that doesn't exhaust you but exhilarates you. The kind of service that doesn't drain you but delights you. The kind of sacrifice that feels less like duty and more like privilege.

That's the Christianity we were meant to live. That's the freedom Christ died to give us.

Be loved, beloved.

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