

Assignment Title: Reading Report

Into Abba's Arms by Sandra D. Wilson

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*Into Abba's Arms* by Sandra D. Wilson is intricately written to help the reader develop a fresh and healthy relationship with God in His presence. Wilson uses testimonials in her book to convey understanding of unhealthy life situations to the reader. She makes the case that we often make God's relationship with us reflect our lived-in circumstances. And that His voice becomes nebulous. Entering into God's presence and allowing him room for intimacy, she argues, is the only way for our hearts to experience the healing and belonging we yearn for. It's the only way we can enjoy being in our "Abba's Arms."

*Into Abba's Arms* revealed to me how "Echoes from Childhood" abandonment has had a major influence in the realities that I seek. In recent times I've measured, by security and safety, the relationships, workplaces and churches that I could trust to help heal my abandonment-wound. I've often put my healing in the hands of man rather than in the hands of God. I've also seen myself "as God's employee than as his beloved child," (Wilson, p.60). I've often walked on eggshells with God when making decisions because I wanted to be rewarded. I didn't want to be punished for being disobedient. Missing a prayer, or not taking an opportunity that was given to me, or not doing something correctly solidified in me that God would change my direction in life. Or that I would miss out on his blessings. Affirmation in that I was doing the right thing meant receiving acceptance and approval from others. I now truly understand that I've already been accepted by my "Abba." Christ accepts me and loves me without my works.

My heart truly resonated with the statement, "the Spirit ministers the reality of Christ's presence" (Wilson, p.66) under *Knowing Our Unknowable God*. It gave verbiage to how often the Holy Spirit will whisper something to me and I'll either see it or hear it later on, and encouraged me to trust my "Teacher," the Holy Spirit. Also, intimacy with Christ shifts us from "acquiring information to building relationship" (Wilson, p.194) and a stronger bond with God.

I agree that simply showing up without any agendas is how we begin healing from abandonment wounds. Submitting the wounds and deep longing to our Father and allowing him to heal those wounds is how we begin to live in the grace and experience redemptive transformation.

Wilson titles a section “Practicing God’s Presence” in the chapter “Why Do I Try So Hard but Change So Little.” She believed that the phrase was too mystical at first but understood that it was “biblical.” She uses verbiage such as, “cultivating an environment” and “practicing habits like listening” (Wilson, p.32) to clarify that I agree with but believe that these phrases are not congruent to what “practicing God’s presence” leads one, or at least me, to understand. When I think about practicing God’s presence, I think about sitting down in my room, with my eyes closed and pretending that God is with me. And doing this over and over. I then think about applying this to when I (or we) have moments where God is silent. It’s scary, because I see myself beginning to question my practice, “why is this not working?” The phrase alludes to an act that earns one more of his presence. When I think about saying that to unbelievers or new believers, I think about how I might be re-enforcing folk religion or New Age practices. I’d be afraid that if one day, the person “practiced” to no avail they’d feel abandoned, rejected, or worse, begin to question God’s presence.

I know that I have been called to minister and to share my testimony. My developing music ministry allows me the platforms to share my heart with many. And as much as I prepare in ministry for others, I understand that God wants to love me first. For some reason, I believe that surrendering to his love will naturally pour out in impartation out of my ministry. Intimacy with Christ will heal abandonment wounds and help me to write songs from a place of love and victory, and to minister to hearts whose deep calls out for deep belonging. Fostering this kind of environment will require that I experience first the embrace that comes from “Abba’s Arms.”