

Assignment Title: Reading Report

Into Abba's Arms / Report by Sandra D. Wilson

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Drawing heavily from her own personal experiences, as well as those she has counseled with over the years, the authors emphasizes that intimate relationships are necessary with God, with others and with ourselves in order to be who we were designed to be. She describes this as a longing in our souls. The implications impact many aspects of our lives, and properly confronting issues – sometimes from childhood – can bring a freedom from a bondage that would otherwise prevent us from fulfilling our lives and God-given purpose.

“We all need intimate relationships. That explains the mountains of evidence demonstrating that throughout our lives we need consistent, caring interactions with others to develop our sense of identity, to learn how to relate to others responsibly, and even to be physically healthy.”¹

Several times throughout the book the author mentions the idea of practicing the presence of God, and moving beyond the mere learning of facts *about* God, to a deep relationship *with* God. She also makes a distinction between two personality types, the Relater and the Achiever, and how each processes struggles, security, self-identity and success.

Touching on the intimate nature of the Trinity as an example of how we can remain “anchored” to Abba, she presents a comparison of our earthly parents to Abba God, exhorting us to forgive, and ultimately to receive the acceptance of our heavenly Father that is already ours.

This book highlighted areas in Christian practice that I have been uncomfortable with in the past. Things like guided prayer times, listening prayer, deep breathing, and recording in such detail what God is speaking to you have been things that I have not understood and consequently have shied away from. Nonetheless, the author carefully uses Scripture to undergird her point that transforming relationship can only happen when we go beyond learning truths to experiencing true intimacy. “Perhaps... you have been taught to focus on *learning* truths to correct misbeliefs rather than on *experiencing* truth in intimate friendship with Jesus, the Truth.

¹ Sandra D. Wilson, *Into Abba’s Arms* (Tyndale Momentum: Carol Stream, 1998), 14.

(see John 14:6). If so, transforming truth remain a theological certainly rather than a personal reality. The two are light-years apart—as far as head and heart.”² Elsewhere she states, “I believe that we learn to love as Christ does by *experiencing* his love, not merely by *studying* his love.”³

One of the areas where I feel the author reflects more of a western cultural view, as compared to that from which the Bible was written, is to individualize verses that were originally intended for the larger Church audience. For example, in Ephesians 1:4-6 she changes the original “we” to “me”, in order to highlight the wonder of being adopted by God.⁴ While I understand her intent, I feel that doing so loses much of the importance that can be found in the corporate understanding of being adopted, so that collectively we may be identified as holy and unblemished bride both in His sight, and before an unbelieving world. While I understand the purpose of her book, and that it is being read by individuals who have experienced rejection and abandonment, I believe that her solution is a personal one as well. In other cultures, many problems that people go through are dealt with as a group, not individually. Perhaps we have much to learn from other cultures.

I live and minister in a culture in where people carry a lot of pain stemming from their childhood. My own Peruvian wife, though raised mostly in the U.S., is an example of how hurts that come from the cultural understanding of how to raise children can carry into adulthood. Latinos are also much more emotional, relational and intimate with each other. For these reasons alone, I am eager to learn what I can better relate to them, to myself, and ultimately to my Creator.

Bibliography

² Wilson, *Into Abba's Arms*, 40.

³ Wilson, *Into Abba's Arms*, 149.

⁴ Wilson, *Into Abba's Arms*, 95.

MacGavran, Donald A. *The Bridges of God in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009.

Richards, E. Randolph, and Brandon J. O'Brien. *Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

Wilson, Sandra D., *Into Abba's Arms: Finding the acceptance you've always wanted*. Carol Stream: Tyndale Momentum, 1998.

With integrity, I have read this book (circle one):

Thoroughly and Entirely 100%

Quickly but Completely _____%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely _____%

Quickly and NOT Completely _____%

Not at all

Signed:  _____