



## GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY JILL JOHNSON

### START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

**Share your favorite thing about Valentine's Day and also your least favorite thing.**

### SHARE

This weekend, Red Rocks Church had the privilege to hear from Jill Johnson as she talked about how God is a Good Father. If asked to talk about your dad, most of us will have widely varying responses. For some of us, we could proudly talk about our dads for hours. For others, just saying the word 'dad' reminds us of the dad we never had or one that was difficult or distant. No matter how you think of your earthly dad, they are human and fall short.

For the remainder of this study, ask God to just reveal to you what a truly good heavenly father looks like; that regardless of our past, that we would not allow the enemy to cloud our hearts with unforgiveness or pain. Let's ask God to remind us that he is the father who fights for you and watches over every part of our lives. Ask God to help you be more conscious of your thoughts and to continually remember what the word of God says.

**Read Isaiah 40:9-11**

**What are three descriptive words that come to mind when you think of God?**

**Considering the words you just used to describe God. What do you think that says about you?**

**How do you think your earthly father or lack thereof has impacted your current view of God's love for you?**

### GROW

In this week's message, Jill talked about the strength of God, the tenderness, and protection of God. She talked about how we all have major disappointments, heartbreaks, hurts, fears in life and how many of us

struggle with just simply feeling that we are unlovable. God beckons us to come to him because he wants to lead us, protect us, and shepherd us like sheep that are the apple of his eye.

**Let's look at verses 10 and 11:**

*Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*

In Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Vol. 7, p. 395), we see that God at his essence is strength:

...the prophet goes back from the standpoint of the fulfilment to that of the prophecy. *“Behold the Lord, Jehovah, as a mighty one will He come, His arm ruling for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His retribution before Him.”* We must not render the first clause “with strong,” i.e., with strength, as the LXX and Targum do. The *Beth* is *Beth essentiae* (cf., Isa. 26:4; Ges. § 154, 3, a). He will come in the essence, strength, and energy of a strong one; and this is still further defined by the participial, circumstantial clause, “His arm ruling for Him” (*brachio suo ipsi dominante*). It is His arm that rules for Him, i.e., that either brings into subjection to Him, or else overthrows whatever opposes Him. Nevertheless, v. 10b does not present Him merely in one aspect, namely as coming to judge and punish, but in both aspects, viz., that of the law and that of the gospel, as a righteous rewarder; hence the double name of God, *Adonai Jehovah*...

God promises to flex his might to protect, defend and care for the righteous, yet at the same time he is a perfect judge who will punish the wicked.

**Do you think it is difficult to keep in perspective that God is both a loving and nurturing protector and a righteous judge at the same time?**

**How could it be detrimental to think of God as only a judge?**

**How could it lead us astray to think of God as only a protector?**

**As believers, why do you think it is important that we remember that God is both a protector and a judge?**

## MOVE

Throughout Scripture, God refers to himself as a caring shepherd who leads and provides for his sheep. For many to think of God as caring can be challenging as we talked about earlier in this study.

In a world where we have felt the sting of an earthly father's mistakes, it can be hard to see rightly, the goodness of God. As believers, we need to spend time in the word of God and to remind ourselves that God's love is very different from an earthly father, but that his love is perfect in every way. As believers, we need to make it a point to continually remind ourselves of God's goodness. Let's look at what God says about himself in the following verses.

**Jeremiah 31:3**

*I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.*

**Hosea 11:4**

*I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.*

**Which one of these do you most need to remind yourself of today and why?**

- *God is a loving Shepherd.*
- *God is gentle with me.*
- *God is willing to bend down to care for me.*
- *God is a defender of the righteous.*
- *God is a protector.*
- *God is mighty and strong.*
- *God sees everything and will be a perfect judge.*
- *God's love will never change for me.*

## PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other, especially for the struggles that people might be facing today. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

## TO GO

**Joshua 1:9**

*Haven't I commanded you? Strength! Courage! Don't be timid; don't get discouraged.  
God, your God is with you every step you take.*