

## 260: Knowing you are fully beloved with Timothy Jones

There's a question many people carry—but rarely say out loud: Am I truly loved...or merely tolerated?

It shows up in subtle ways.

In the pressure to perform. In the fear of disappointing. In the quiet exhaustion of always trying to be enough.

Even in faith, love can start to feel conditional. Something we're supposed to believe in—but aren't quite sure we can rest in.

So we strive. We compare. We keep proving.

But what if joy doesn't grow out of effort at all?

What if it grows from security?

From knowing—deep in your bones—that you are already held. Already known. Already loved.

This is the heart of what Timothy Jones calls being [“fully beloved.”](#)

Not loved at your best. Not loved once you figure it all out. But loved—right in the middle of heartache and hope.

Drawing on ancient voices and lived pastoral experience, Pastor Jones invites us to see God not as distant or demanding, but as a living community of love—Father, Son and Spirit—moving toward us, not away.

When love is secure, something shifts.

We stop grasping for approval. We loosen our grip on comparison. And we find ourselves freer—to receive, to belong, and eventually, to love others without fear.

### Show highlights include:

- Why Pastor Jones believes we are living in a time of “epic loneliness.”
- The powerful opening question of his book: “Am I loved?”

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- How insecurity about love fuels comparison, competition and exhaustion.
- Why the Trinity isn't just a doctrine to understand—but a relationship to experience.
- The difference between being loved and believing you are loved.
- How shaky trust in God's love leads to performance and striving.
- What freedom looks like when love feels secure.
- A simple prayer for spiritual stagnation: "Come, Holy Spirit."
- Why grace is a gift—not something we earn.
- The practical impact of knowing you are loved: more courage, more generosity, more room to love others.

*[Listen and subscribe to The Do Gooders Podcast now.](#) Below is a transcript of the episode, edited for readability. For more information on the people and ideas in the episode, see the links at the bottom of this post.*

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**Christin Thieme:** Pastor Jones, what led you to write this book, "Fully Beloved"?

**Timothy Jones:** Great question. We live in times of epic, some say epidemic, loneliness, and I'm aware of the brokenness of our society, the way we seem more isolated than maybe ever before. At the same time, I've been pondering this great belief of Christianity with roots in Scripture and ancient Christian belief that God is full of relational richness. The Trinity God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for many people seems like a difficult, daunting, confusing belief. I find in it a wonderfully rich picture of a God who even before we appeared on the scene was in communion, conversation, relationship.

The first three words of my book, the very simple sentence with which I begin "Fully Beloved" is: Am I loved? And maybe no question matters more. I don't think any question matters as much, and I think some people are surprised to find that the truest, maybe deepest answer to that question, are we loved, is found in this wonderful portrait of God that we get through Scripture. We see in Jesus, we see God showing up with the patience of a father, with the self-sacrifice and redemptive love of the Son, the empowering of the Holy Spirit to make that love real present.

All of those things together have just intrigued me for years and so I wanted to write about it. I knew it would be a difficult topic, so I mean it's possible to get way up in the stratosphere in theological terms, but I also thought if I talk about my own relational struggles, my own longings, my own loneliness, there will be some ways to make this more real and I hope I did that for the reader.

**Christin Thieme:** You write that many people are quietly asking: am I truly loved or just tolerated? Where do you see that showing up most today?

**Timothy Jones:** Well, I think there's sometimes this tendency we have to derate ourselves, to compare ourselves to others. The internet does not help us there. We see curated photos of family vacations on the beach and it's tempting to say, well, do I measure up? Do I measure up to my

friends, my family, others that I see on the screen? I think that can feed into what we experienced, that epic and epidemic loneliness. I just think we, a lot of forces are spinning and pulling us apart, and I think there's no better time to paint a vivid portrait of a God who is rich in love toward us, a God who in God's own being is full of communion and love, Father, Son, Holy Spirit in this wonderful society, this wonderful communion.

**Christin Thieme:** On the other side of that, for us, how does insecurity about love shape the way that we live and serve and relate to others?

**Timothy Jones:** Sure. Well, it makes us more competitive. It makes us more suspicious. I think we're still living in the aftermath of COVID, the social isolation. You look at somebody maybe you saw in the street or a church or in a community group and a part of you said, could I get infected? Or these masks that some of us wore served to kind put a little barrier between us. I think that's part of it.

I think we spend too much time on our screens and I don't think that ultimately satisfies, we have this burning curiosity, what's happening in the world, but then that becomes doom scrolling where we're just endlessly reading the headlines or seeing the latest scandal, and I also just think we've become more polarized and that feeds into a kind of insecurity that makes us, I think, ready for a deeper connection for what really is the ultimate life speaks to us.

**Christin Thieme:** I think it's interesting that you chose the phrase "fully beloved." You didn't say you're loved, you chose fully beloved. So why did you choose that wording and why is that distinction so important?

**Timothy Jones:** That's a good question. Well, the ancient church father is known to have said the glory of God is a human person fully alive, and I like that. In fact, there's a book that I like very much by Elizabeth Oldfield titled "Fully Alive" and I got to thinking, life ultimately is grounded in love and in many ways the glory of God as a person fully loved, who knows they're fully loved. So at one point as we were brainstorming titles, I said, well, how about "Fully Loved"? And my editors said, well, yeah, but that could mean romantic love, brotherly love. Then at some point, one of us said, well, what about "Fully Beloved," which it feels more theological, maybe.

**Christin Thieme:** More sacred almost.

**Timothy Jones:** So that was key, and so when my editor said, oh, one possibility was "deeply beloved" that had some appeal but fully just seemed to have great richness to it. I will say also the subtitle for me is very important: meeting God in our heartaches and our hopes. That's where the realism comes in, where the rubber meets the relational road, where we bring to God our brokenness, our hurt, our rejection, and so that echoed that subtitle, meeting God in our heartaches and our hopes echoed what I tried to do in the book, which was to tell a lot of relatable stories. We get pretty honest about some of the ways relationships have broken, have hurt me, ways I have not been perfect in that, and still there's a God of great grace who meets us.

**Christin Thieme:** It might seem obvious, but I think a lot of times it's not for us—how is being loved different from believing we are?

**Timothy Jones:** I think we often need to feel loved from other people. I do think cultivating nurturing relationships is really important. There are many forces now, as I've said, driving us apart many ways in which we can drift away, become more isolated. That human connection is really important, and I don't want to downplay that and I don't, I hope, downplay that in the book, but I also believe that is in and of itself not enough. The one thing, human love is always, always going to be imperfect. So God's love is the gold standard, the ultimate way in which we will know that we're loved. I do think that God will meet us with his grace, and as we turn to him humbly in our need, in our brokenness, he'll help us know we're beloved. Hanging around other Christians is a good thing. They can remind us; sometimes we forget.

**Christin Thieme:** It seems like some of that coming into that believing that we're loved ends with a freedom from striving, if you will. So you describe how shaky trust in God's love leads to exhaustion and performance. What does freedom begin to look like then? When that love feels secure?

**Timothy Jones:** It means that we are free from having to prove ourselves. I don't know about you. I spend too much time thinking about what others think of me, but when I saturate my thoughts and my fears and when I bring my loneliness to God, I experience a depth of grace and mercy. It's what one writer called the Big Relief. It feeds me to have more to share with other people. I think it's possible to get caught up in a spirituality but the real article, the genuine love that God offers us in Christ, that allows something deep inside of us to just kind of settle. There's a calm possible that begins—and it may take some practice and discipline and prayer—but there's a calm that begins to settle and that allows us more room, more space, more reserves to love other people.

**Christin Thieme:** I thought it was interesting how you reframed the Trinity, not as a doctrine to understand, but really as a relationship to experience. Why do you think that matters for people today?

**Timothy Jones:** Yeah, so many people are convinced they cannot understand the Trinity. They think it's dry, as you've said, dusty, ancient, not relevant to today, and some of your questions have been I think, really helpful in showing how it can be relevant to what we struggle with. But yeah, this idea of the Trinity just is intimidating to people, and I wanted to say when you think about God is love and the picture we get of the Son, Jesus communing with the Father, God saying that is my beloved son, to see the Holy Spirit at work in and around the Father and the Son and putting into place into human reality that Jesus did. When we see all that, I think it's a great invitation. It's an invitation to a deeper connection to God. This is a picture of a God who's not distant, aloof. This is a picture of a God who's already engaged in relating, loving and the great thing about that is the Trinity's not a clique. This trinity of Father, Son, Holy Spirit constantly, repeatedly is saying, come on in, come on over. There's love here that we're ready to share with you.

**Christin Thieme:** You described the Holy Spirit as a lively, life-giving, electrifying presence. I love that. For someone who feels their spiritual life maybe is more stagnant than electric, what's a first step

toward becoming more alert to the Spirit's movement?

**Timothy Jones:** Yeah, we all have those times of dryness, stagnation, a sense of being stuck whether in our circumstances or in our praying and relating to God, our participation in church worship. We do experience that, but I think a good practice is to say, is to pray what really is a very scriptural prayer: Come Holy Spirit, come. It's okay. In fact, the Bible in Christian tradition encourages us to pray to the Spirit. I think we can. Some people call the Spirit the shy member of the Trinity, and I've heard people say, well, there's the Father. He created the world. There's Jesus, the Son. There's lots of stories. Those I can easily relate to. The Spirit seems more vague and I get that, but I also think there's more we can do to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Prayer is part of it. Being around other people who have this infectious sense of the joy of the Lord who have experienced the Holy Spirit moving in them and through them, being around people like that, that helps us, that can kindle something in us that maybe we wouldn't have just by ourselves.

**Christin Thieme:** For someone listening who feels maybe worn out from trying to be enough from that striving, what would you want them to hear today?

**Timothy Jones:** Yeah, I talked about the way I started my book with that simple three-word sentence: am I loved? I think I would say to that person, to those people, a similar three-word sentence in Christ, but here's the three words: you are loved. It's not up to your performance. It's not something you earn. Grace is a gift. It's something we receive and it doesn't have to do with our measuring up. It has to do with the God of great grace who extends to us forgiveness, and not just forgiveness for the past but hope for the future because that God wants to continue to work in our lives, wants to continue to make us know, help us know we're fully beloved, fully beloved.

**Christin Thieme:** If we finish your book, hopefully feeling a renewed sense of being treasured by God, what is one practical change you would hope we make in how we interact with others immediately?

**Timothy Jones:** Yeah. I would hope that the anxiety stirring deep within us that makes us unsure, tentative, or as we've said, prone to competition, I would hope that something deep in us would give us more reserves, more energy, more resilience and more ability, maybe I should say more boldness to reach out to other people, to say to yourself, I'm deeply loved. I can stop maybe ruminating so much. I can pay a little more attention to my neighbor or to the needy person I come across, or I can be saying to somebody who's hurting and afraid, I'm praying for you, or how can I help you? You're deeply loved. It doesn't draw you in on yourself like God's love, which extends itself out of grace. We ourselves find ways to share that love with others, not keep it to ourselves.

**Christin Thieme:** Absolutely. Pastor Jones, thank you so much. As a last question for you, what is bringing you joy right now?

**Timothy Jones:** Thank you. Well, I have thought about this topic, the Trinity, for years and years. I've written about prayer. I've written other books. One of my callings in life is to take things that seem hard or difficult or intimidating and just find within those things the invitation, the thing that's not so

daunting, and it's giving me joy to take something like the Trinity that a lot of people have struggled with, that maybe you've given up trying to understand and say, look, there's something here that can change your life. Now doing this sort of thing like we're doing is giving me joy.

**Additional resources:**

- Read [“Fully Beloved: Meeting God in Our Heartaches and Our Hopes”](#) (Thomas Nelson, 2026) by Timothy Jones.
- What if one small story could spark hope? [Join our free 5-day email course, Find Your Story: Share the Joy](#). Discover how everyday moments from your own life can encourage courage and kindness in others.
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