



First Love



“We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

The strongest desire of the human heart is for love – a longing for a deep, intimate relationship with someone who understands us and loves us in spite of our faults – who is there to help us carry our burdens in life – and helps us to love and trust in return. We all yearn to be accepted, not only for what we are, but for what we might become if we were loved.



The degree to which we are able to receive love will be the degree to which we are able to give love. It’s a spiritual law, because love is spiritual – it does not originate in the human heart. If a person feels unloved, they have trouble giving love to others, and are unable to feel the emotions of love. Their ability to love is based on the rejections of their love that they have experienced. Rejections make us afraid to try again, but the Bible says, *“There is no fear in love.”* (1 John 4:18)

Love comes when we let go of fear and stop looking at where we have been and start looking at where we are going. When we let go of fear, the way we see ourselves and others changes. Our attitude changes. When (and if) we choose to **stop** thinking the fearful, negative, and guilty thoughts in our mind – love thoughts will replace them. It’s really not people and conditions that upset us; it’s our attitude toward them which is our thoughts about them – that upset us.

Those who created yesterday’s pain do not control tomorrow’s potential in you. Mother Theresa said, “The biggest problem in the world today isn’t people dying on the streets in India, it isn’t inflation, or government – but it is a spiritual deprivation (loss) – a feeling of emptiness inside ourselves – a feeling of separation between ourselves and our fellow men and women – a feeling of being unlovable and not having a capacity to love – a feeling of being fearful of love.”

All of us remember our first love. That first time we fell in love with someone who loved us back. That wonderful time of happiness that made us feel wonderful about ourselves and our life. Such joy that had no negatives – the other person was perfect and made us feel perfect. Every moment was filled with the thrill of having someone who belonged to us and wanted to be with us all the time. All feelings of inadequacy, fear, loneliness, ugliness and discouragement disappeared as if they had never existed, and surely life would be this way from now on, because we had found perfect love!

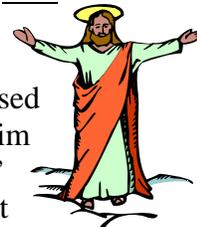
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But, in most cases, after awhile we began to see little things that we didn't like about that person, and they began to not be as loving toward us. We no longer felt accepted and as we began to react to those feelings, the relationship began to deteriorate because we felt insecure in it. We saw more and more things to criticize. A critical spirit is the result of a person's insecurities about themselves, and they become their own worst enemy. As long as we look for perfect love in any other person, we won't ever find it.

Where is true love then? We search for it everywhere all our lives and never find it until we trace it to its source. And like so many other things in life, we find that we already have it within us. God is the source of all love, the fountainhead, the only place of true love. And His love is perfect, complete and fulfilled. *“Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells (lives) in him (us), and he (us) in God. God is love, and he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, complete, and fulfilled because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; because fear has torment. He that has fear is not made perfect in love.”* (1 John 4:15-18) **(Leader read from amplified version if possible).**

It is a tragic thing that we who are God's people – born of Him – created by Him – made in His image – implanted with His nature – with His Holy Spirit living in us – filled with His perfect love – would keep on searching for someone outside of ourselves to give us an emotional response that makes us feel loved and accepted – when the completely accepting, non-critical, non-judgmental, unchanging, tender, comforting, nurturing, understanding, and eternal love of God lives (dwells) right inside of us!!!!

Even more tragic are those who know and believe that God's love indwells them, but they refuse to love Him back. One-sided love is not a relationship – it is one person giving and the other taking. God has promised His Kingdom to them that love Him. Being an heir of God is not a legal contract, He does not owe us anything, it is a love contract, a sort of spiritual pre-nuptial agreement, agreed to by both parties, based upon mutual promises. God has promised His Kingdom to those who love Him – based upon our promise ‘to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.’ That's it, that's the contract. Jesus is the mediator of the contract – without Him, neither side meets the other.



We are still practicing our childlike ABC's and 1,2,3's and “do you love me's?” when it comes to learning love. The love commandment gives us the basic fundamental truth of all love, but we seem to be unable to fully grasp it and make it work in the everyday incidents of our daily lives. All of God's love and grace are summed up in those 28 words of our contract. If we truly learn that truth and do it – love would expand from the source within us into every area of our life, and put the sound of love into every word we speak, and the appearance of love into every action that we take, and every plan that we make.

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Why don't we start learning now how to be able to love like we really want to – as members of His blended family – where every unlovely and unlovable thing you ever did is washed away and you are new every morning (unless you neglected to take out yesterday's trash) which is those wrong thoughts and memories. You don't have to dig in every crevice of your brain trying to discover what your mother or father or other people did or did not say to you years ago. Start believing that you can give and receive love. Believe you are loved. Couple that belief with action, and you're on your way. Refuse to let any person, or remembered love failure, keep you from being a "lover." Stop being God over yourself, and start giving yourself over to God. Be thirsty for a relationship with Him more than any other person.

In our relationships with others we want them to be consistent, with no fluctuations of moods, always the same, always there for us, but no human being can do that. Only God can meet those desires. And if God's love is the base of love in your heart, then you can let people be the way they are without reacting, because your own basic all-consuming need for love has been met in Him.

Every meaningful lasting relationship has to start with God. A relationship with God in it becomes a spiritual experience. It will be everything you are looking for, you don't have to have a romantic relationship to survive and if it is God's will for you to marry – let God's love be the bond between you – that ties you together.

"A threefold cord is not easily broken." (Ecc. 4:12)



When you truly experience God's love, it is enough . . . anything more is frosting on the cake. Get to know Him by talking to Him, and by reading about Him. To know Him is to love Him – because He first loved you, make Him your first love, not your second. His is the only love in this world and the next that can ever be the complete fulfillment of the love that your heart has been seeking since the day you were born.



At the close of this study, let each person take a turn praying out loud to personally thank God for loving them now and forever with His precious love that never changes.

First Love

1. What is the strongest desire of the human heart?

2. What determines the degree to which we are able to give love?

3. If our love is based of the rejections we've had, what happens?

4. When does love come?

5. What is a critical spirit the result of?

6. Where is the source of true love that we search for?

7. Where do we find that place?

8. Who did God promise His Kingdom to?

9. What does every meaningful lasting relationship have to start with?

10. Why do we love Him? (1 John 4:19)

(The answer to this question will be your memory verse)

MEMORY VERSE _____

First Love

1. What is the strongest desire of the human heart?

To be loved.

2. What determines the degree to which we are able to give love?

The degree to which we are able to receive love.

3. If our love is based of the rejections we've had, what happens?

We are afraid to try again.

4. When does love come?

When we let go of fear.

5. What is a critical spirit the result of?

A persons insecurities about themselves.

6. Where is the source of true love that we search for?

God is the source of all love, the only place to find perfect love.

7. Where do we find that place?

Right inside of us.

8. Who did God promise His Kingdom to?

To those who love Him.

9. What does every meaningful lasting relationship have to start with?

It has to start with God as the base.

10. Why do we love Him? (1 John 4:19)

MEMORY VERSE "We love Him because He first loved us."