

Just Believe It & Receive It!

REDEFINING LOVE!

1 John 4:7-10 The Message (MSG)

God Is Love

7-10 My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God *is* love—so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

This devotion is written to **challenge** your thinking concerning **your definition of love**. In **Romans 12:2**, (The Message) tells us don't become so well-adjusted to our culture that we fit into it without thinking. So before you make a decision question yourself as to why and what

information am I basing this decision on? The tool for all decision making should be in line with the Word of God and is this what His Spirit is leading me to do? God knows that we can't change into what He wants us to be if He can't get us beyond our current belief system. So today begins the day God has decided to challenge your belief system regarding the definition of love.

Love Is Sacrifice.

In **Genesis 22:2**, we see the first mention of this type of love. God commands Abraham to take his son whom He loves up the mountain to sacrifice him as a burnt offering. And again in the New Testament God says in **John 3:16**, that He gave His only son. Both fathers in the scriptures took someone of great value and with a willingness of heart gave them away. Abraham fully trusting God in spite of doubt and fear did what was required of him. Abraham believed God would provide a way for his son to live even if it meant raising him from the dead. He did what was required of him regardless of how he felt. He kept his focus on God's request and God's ability. Jesus did the same and He too was also obedient living a life of sacrifice even to death. He too kept His focus on God in spite of the pain and anguish He felt. The focus of our love

determines the decisions we make. Who or what are you focusing on?

Love's Mistaken Identity.

Love has had its identity stolen. Many believe love is always affirming and never disciplining. The identity thief of love says that love is always giving positive and that when you are disciplining you are not loving. Many people believe that Christians should be doormats and that they should never confront or discipline wrong behavior. This is an incorrect view of love. In Hebrews 12, it states God corrects the ones He loves. Just as a loving parent corrects the behavior of their children. Would it be loving if a parent allowed their small child to run and play in the streets? We would all agree that is neglectful. A child learns what is safe and unsafe from loving discipline. In the same manner, God advises us and allows correction in our lives for our safety and well being.

Love Is Designed To Be Received.

Since love is designed to be given (sacrifice) that also means there must be a recipient. When we are the focus of someone's love we have to be open to receive it. Many of us can not receive God's love or anyone else's because

we are holding on to the baggage of our past. Past hurts received by loved ones and past hurts from wrong decisions we have made ourselves. But since God is Love (**See 1 John 4:8**), and we come from Him we are naturally seekers of love. We were created from love and we are created for love. We are created to love. God created you because He first loved you. We all desire to be loved. We all desire to give love to others around us. This is the natural flow of love that God created. We are called to love God because He first loved us. Then we are called to love others as we love ourselves. (See **Matthew 22:36-40**) Even in **Matthew 5:43-48**, Jesus challenges us to love our enemies. He urges us not to return evil for evil but to overcome evil with love. Praying for those who treat us wrong and not reacting to their bad behavior. For God knows when you pray for them He can begin intervening and transform them into a new person. We were created to love people not created to love their behavior or what they do.

Redefining love is not going to happen magically overnight. Your knowledge and experience with Love grows. (**See 1 John 4:17**) Each day we have an opportunity to receive God's love for us and share that love with others. We are even blessed to be the recipients of love from others around us. If we believe we are loved

by God and receive that love daily that love will impact our thoughts. And our thoughts impact our actions. The more of God's love we receive the more love we can give away and the more others will begin to pour love into our lives.

In order for the love of God to get rooted deep in our hearts, we must confess His love for us out loud every day. Then the love of God will begin to break down the areas of our lives that we have shut Him out of. The natural flow of His love will begin to manifest in our daily lives and increasing our faith in this area. Take the challenge and begin to believe it and receive His love!

God bless!