**What is True Love?**

“Love” is one of the most loosely-used words in the English language. This creates a lot of confusion about what true love really is. In 1 Corinthians 13:8, the apostle Paul said, “Love never fails.” Yet many times couples will say they have fallen out of love with one another. Such an attitude shows that they never really understood how God defines love.

Most people think of love as a strong, warm feeling of affection for someone or something. Certainly, there is an emotional aspect to love. Between spouses, there are even romantic feelings. But in the Bible, love is not just something one feels, it is a decision of the will to help others even if one must sacrifice of oneself to do so. That’s how God and Christ love us and that’s how we should love others. In 1 John 3:16-18, we read, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” In Scripture, love is a verb. It is shown in how we live and in how we treat others (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

So it is not enough just to say, “I love you” (although we certainly should say that to our loved ones). We must back those words up with genuine, loving actions. When we consistently treat others with kindness, respect, and love, the right feelings will naturally follow. Let us resolve to be truly loving people.

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**Jesus the Good Shepherd**

“Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever” (Psalm 28:9).

As Jesus is “in the beginning” and the agent for creation, history is His story. Therefore, we should be able to see Jesus in the Bible’s poetry. We see Him as the living redeemer in Job, the lover or bridegroom in Song of Songs, and wisdom itself in Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. But, most powerfully we see him as our shepherd in Psalms. David, a humble shepherd himself, uses the imagery of shepherds in this favorite book for many to help us understand the attributes of God in many places as He protects and cares for His sheep, binding up the injured and leading them to green pastures with quiet waters. This all helps us to understand the Savior, who is God, so much better when He declares Himself as the Good Shepherd, who lays His life down for His sheep in John 10 that God said He would be in Ezekiel 34. But this also highlights our role as the sheep. It’s not enough just to know that the Good Shepherd is about His duties. We must listen to His voice, distinguishing His voice from others and trusting in Him alone. But do we? Do you trust in the Shepherd of our souls?

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**Who’s First in Line?**

A little boy was given two nickels—one for the Lord on Sunday and one for some candy. He put the two nickels in his pocket and when out to play. When he came back inside, he reached deep into his pockets and found that one of the nickels was gone. “Oh, my,” he said, “I’ve lost the Lord’s nickel.”

Isn’t that the way it is with many of us? When we have all our needs and all our wants taken care of the Lord gets what’s left over. But think about it. Would God want leftovers? Will He be happy with scraps?

As children of God, we must learn to give the best and the first of all that we are and all we possess. When we determine how our hard-earned money will be spent, let’s figure the Lord’s portion first. When we set about to use our talents, let’s use them first for Him and to His glory. These things are gifts from Him to begin with! God desires and deserves the cream of our lives, not just a few drops of skimmed milk left over after the carton has been drained. Remember the words of Solomon, “Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase” (Proverbs 3:9).

*Selected*

**Marriage Means Being In Love for Life**

Marriage is love walking hand in hand together.

It’s laughing with each other about silly little things, and learning to discuss big things with care and tenderness.

In marriage, love is trusting each other when you’re apart.

It’s getting over disappointments and hurts, knowing that these are present in all relationships.

It’s the realization that there’s no one else in this world that you’d rather be with than the one you’re married to.

It’s thinking of new things to do together.

It’s growing old together.

Marriage is being in love for the rest of your life.

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