

HENLY TODAY

A WORD FROM PASTOR DON: LOVE DOES

The memory puts a smile on my face. It was 2007 and my oldest granddaughter was four. Treva and I met Craig's family in Reno as we headed to San Francisco for a three-day weekend. By happenstance, we stumbled across a PBS broadcast of Celtic Thunder on television.

One of the performers was a 12-year-old boy named Damon. The sound of his voice immediately snagged Jenna's full attention. She sat spellbound while he sang "They Call It Puppy Love." When the song was over she said, "I want to hear the little boy sing again."

Perhaps the lyrics to the song are now rolling around inside your head. Let me ask you this: "Is love just a feeling?" Is it a chemistry that takes place between two people over which they intuitively yield like iron shavings to a magnet? Or is it something quite different?

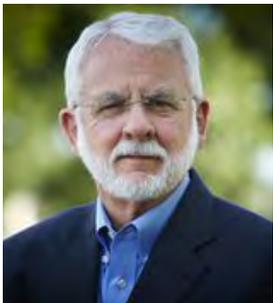
Are we conditioned from childhood to think of love as a feeling? Is it some level of magic between people that makes them seem special and significant? If people can fall in love, can they also fall out of love?

How often and in how many ways do we attach the concept of love to something we own, wear, drive, eat or do? ("I love to go skiing." "I love where I live." "I love my truck." "I love my church." "I love homemade enchiladas." Yes, I have said all of these things.)

We use the word love to describe how we feel about family and friends, stuff we collect, hobbies we pursue and a number of other things, but are we even close in understanding what love is really all about?

Most of our definitions of love significantly pale in contrast to the words of Christ who said, "*Greater love hath no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*" And in his teachings, He clearly made our love for one another a priority, not an option: "*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*" (John 15:12)

Scripture also tells us that "*God is love.*" Never are we more like God than when we see others the way he sees them – with eyes of compassion and a willingness to put our love into action.



Yes, love has a lot more to do with what we give than what we get. It is other-focused rather than self-centered. Love is not just what we want, what we feel or what we say. Love is what we do.

So ... keep using your love to make a situation better, a loved one – or a stranger – happier, a challenge easier, an injustice rectified, a child healthier, a garden greener ... whatever you can do with the gifts God gave you to make your love make a difference.

Don

"Love is not just what we want, what we feel or what we say."

First Chili Cook Off a Tasty Success!

Everybody who gathered at high noon on Jan. 26 had a delicious decision to make: Which of the many mouthwatering chilis before them would they taste first? The accomplished cooks of Henly Baptist Church had brought their very best creations featuring beef, venison, pork, chicken and other “secret” ingredients, and everybody left full and happy.

Proud winners were, from left below: Third Place, Michaela and Madisen Wind; Second Place, Jim Wright; and First Place, Robyn Keskitalo.

The judging committee agreed that everybody was really a winner, and that choosing the top three tastiest chilis was tough. Judging coordinator Kevin Stearns, far left below, led the team of Bobby Dalby, Lisa Pierce, Cindy Murchison and Craig Lindig.



FAMILY FOCUS: CLARENCE GREGORY

The old, weather-beaten, blue Dodge pickup was parked in the parking lot when I arrived at church on a Sunday morning six years ago. At first sight, it was clear that the owner wasn't from around here: The truck had Arizona license plates. As it turned out, he was the new guy in town. He had come to live with his son and daughter-in-law on Old Red Ranch Road, not far from our church.

At the age of 84, it was almost like Clarence was starting over. Vocationally, he had served as the pastor of a number of Baptist churches scattered over several states. Under the leadership of God's calling, Clarence surrendered to the ministry mid-life and pursued his sense of calling with a passion. Eventually, he was forced into retirement when his wife's cognition began to decline, and he voluntarily chose to become a stay-at-home husband in order to care for her.

Those days were now behind him, and Clarence courageously looked forward to the new lease on life that Henly represented for him. In short order, Henly Baptist Church was good for Clarence, and Clarence was good for Henly Baptist Church.

Six years ago, Clarence was the new guy in town; now he has made the town his. Everybody loves Clarence. He has an indomitable spirit and the kind of personality that draws people of all ages to him. He openly participates in every phase of church life. He adds much to every Sunday School class he attends. He is also talented musically and doesn't mind being called on to sing. Clarence is a friend and excellent role model for all of us as he tries to find something to celebrate and thank God for on a daily basis.

On Jan. 26, he celebrated his 90th birthday. Coincidentally, or conveniently, that was the Sunday we had a big crowd at church as well as the chili cook off and lunch afterward, so we all had the opportunity to celebrate with him!

The friendship we've forged is a good one. I've grown accustomed to arriving at church long after Clarence has pulled into our parking lot and is both praying and waiting patiently for someone with a key to let him in.

As a family of faith, we are better when Clarence is with us, and an alarm bell always goes off in my head if for some reason I don't see that old, weather-beaten, blue Dodge pickup when I arrive.

- Don Forrester



Henly Today is a monthly publication of Henly Baptist Church. Pastor and Executive Editor: Don Forrester. Our mission is to report on and encourage participation in all church activities, share stories of our church family, and to support the fulfillment of our church's 100-year-plus mission "to be a spiritual lighthouse in the community through the practice of Christ's teachings, evangelism, outreach, and social and benevolent ministries." Please send your news, comments and address updates to: HenlyToday@gmail.com.

OUR LEGACY IN COLOR AND LIGHT

One of the unique aspects of the stained glass windows that grace our sanctuary is the personalization of each window. Interestingly, folks who choose to honor family members by donating a window also choose the theme for the design of their window – the story the window tells. If I knew nothing about the Allen and Trudie Davis family other than the theme selected for their remembrance window, I'd know much of what they valued. They chose to depict the birth of Christ with Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in a manger. Above their heads is the Star of Bethlehem that guided the wise men from the East who came with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.



Matthew 2:11 describes the scene this way: *“They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him.”* Can you think of a more poignant reminder of God’s love than the birth of Christ, the long-awaited Savior who came to earth to save us, died to redeem us and rose from the grave with the promise never to leave us?

The window also reminds us: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16)

Allen and Trudie Davis were early members of Henly Baptist Church. In fact, Allen was on the building committee for the construction of our original building in 1937. Their daughter, Ruby Lee Davis, was best friends with our longest-tenured member, Sally Jo Gravenor, when they were in high school.

My limited knowledge of the family is based primarily on stories told to me by the daughters of James Allen Davis, Jr., Allen and Trudie’s son, who passed away in October 2018. Henly was the church of his youth, and his family came back here for his funeral. It was clear from the time that I shared with them that their dad was a man deeply loved and respected by his children.

They told me that the Davis family moved from Henly to Austin when James was about 12 years old. He worked part time during his youth delivering telegrams, but his dream job was to be a fireman. He accomplished that goal and also worked as a barber. He even combined both professions by getting permission to cut the hair of his peers while on duty at the fire station. He charged 25 cents. He also was a gifted musician who forgot that he was shy and reserved when he had a guitar or fiddle in his hands.

Perhaps what James Allen Davis, Jr., knew of God he began learning during his childhood here at Henly, including the wonderful story told by the stained glass window that carries his family name.

- Don Forrester

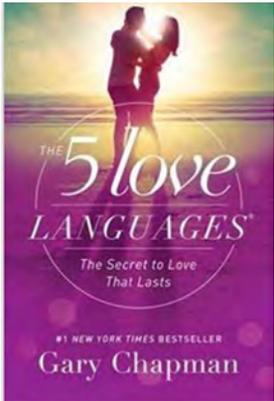
Love was in the air ... and Elvis was in the building!

On Feb. 9, our annual Community Valentine’s Banquet was a delicious, fun evening for more than 80 happy folks: church members, friends, family members and lots of Henly neighbors – just the way we like it!

Bea Eastman and Wanda Reynolds went above and beyond with this year’s decorations, and chef Susan Gripka and her team served up an exceptional Italian-themed meal. We also have Bea to thank for providing the entertainment: a wonderful “Elvis” she saw performing in the Abilene area and persuaded to “take his show on the road” to the Hill Country.



RECOMMENDED: MORE LOVE



“*The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts* has been around for more than two decades. Author Gary Chapman gives an insightful look into the different types of love languages: giving of gifts, acts of service, physical touch, quality time and words of affirmation. Each person has one, if not two, of the love languages that is their preferred form of expressing love. My son’s love language is the receiving of gifts. I can tell him that I love him, but when I give him a gift – such as a plate of cookies, gift card, etc. – he feels love in a more meaningful way. The book comes with a test to learn your and your family members’ love languages! I highly recommend it.” – Susan Gripka

Note: There are five more books in the Love Languages series: for men, children, teenagers, singles and military couples.



“*Love Does* by “recovering lawyer” and international humanitarian Bob Goff is a delightfully engaging memoir of musings, lessons and remarkable real-life stories about making one’s faith in God simple and real by taking love far beyond thoughts and feelings to actions that are at times hilarious, whimsical or brave, but always meaningful – and sometimes life-changing – for others. Read it and be inspired! I’ll lend you my copy.” – Janet Bradford

