

“Living Loved”
March 22, 2015

1 John 4:11-17

CORE: **CONDITIONAL LOVE** is the climate of a Fallen World. You have to **EARN IT** to get it—and **PERFORM** to **KEEP IT**. It’s filled with duty & drivenness. Competition, comparison, depression along with an overriding sense of being unappreciated. In the end—it leaves you lonely—longing for something real.

[God’s love is not anything like that] **UNCONDITIONAL LOVE** is the essence of His Kingdom. His love fills you—as you give it away. Experiencing His powerful “shed abroad” love (Romans 5:5)—then expressing it to others (even those who don’t reciprocate) doesn’t drain you. Because His love “believes and endures; lives unoffended. And it never fails” (1 Cor. 13). He fills you with His “want to”—there’s no “ought, must, should” about it.

1. Starts with “BEING LOVED” (Eph. 5:1-2)

- “Be imitators of God—AS dearly loved children.”
- “Know this LOVE (*i.e., to experience as an ever-present reality*) that surpasses knowledge (*i.e., mere intellect*)” (Ephesians 3:19)
- **VALUE** is determined by what is **PAID**.
 - Our Father **BANKRUPTED HEAVEN** to buy us back!
 - “He did not spare His Son...given us all things” (Rom. 8:32)
 - He is the **ONLY ONE QUALIFIED** to value us!
 - “Purchased with His own blood (*i.e., the blood of God*)!” (Acts 20:28)
- As we “**GET THIS**”—we stop looking to other people to **VALIDATE** us: frees us to love them!

2. Increases as we GIVE IT AWAY

- **1 Thess. 4:9-** “**TAUGHT BY GOD** to love one another” (*only time “God-taught” is used in NT; an “apprentice of God”*)
- **PAUL-** repeatedly said, “**THE mark that you are believers—you have FAITH IN GOD and LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.**” (“Love is the mark of true maturity.” Colossians 3:13 TPT)
- **JESUS-** “By **THIS** will all men know you are My disciples—if you have love for one another” (John 13:35)
- **JOHN-** “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.” (1 John 3:14)

3. His LOVE endures...it's "unquenchable" (Song of Solomon 8:7)

- "Not good for man to be alone"—made to experience His love in community; social creatures—made "in His image" (i.e., "Let US")
- Yet, we CANNOT EXPECT FROM HUMANS WHAT ONLY GOD CAN GIVE.
 - Why David said, "My soul waits silently for GOD ALONE. My EXPECTATIONS are from Him." (Psalm 62:5); "THE LORD is my shepherd—I shall not be in WANT" (No person can be that for me)
 - God made us to be fully satisfied in Him!
- When we find our IDENTITY in Him—we don't look to our job, a person, or even our own performance—to find it!
 - When people are unloving/disappoint us—we are not "broken to pieces"
 - Then you are ultimately FREE—with nothing to earn & nothing to prove.
 - Free to worship—and love—and forgive—and serve.
 - Criticism & flattery don't cause you to rise & fall
 - *Your circumstance doesn't have to change your stance!!!*
 - This frees you to be more creative, more productive, more anointed—you can rejoice always & worship anywhere!!!
 - Luke 14- You are confident & content whether you sit in the back of the room or in seats of honor at the wedding banquet

NOTE: Jesus came to Jerusalem—and they rejected both Him and His message. He wept over them, grieved by the separation: "I long to gather you, but you wouldn't have it!" Yet, He didn't struggle with feelings of FAILURE. He didn't resign as Messiah!

Good that He didn't—just 50 days after He rose, He gathered 3,000. And many more followed in the days, weeks, and months after that!

CLOSING

When we are free—we actually free others to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN LIFE/CHOICES.

- i.e., Jesus got a word on Peter's denial—Jesus didn't suggest that Peter stay home tonight. He allowed him to face it. That's what love does!
- When we take responsibility for other people's choices—we actually DEVALUE THEM.
- Love "hurts for" others—but love doesn't "DO FOR" others what they must do for themselves.