



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

July 2023



I enjoy a cup of coffee in the mornings, often sitting in the recliner with view of the pine trees just outside. (We live in town but, with the row of pines, I can imagine I'm at a mountain cabin!) I often get distracted from the coffee... when I later reach for my cup, the coffee has "grown cold," leaving me little pleasure to enjoy.

I commented on my cold coffee to our son Joel. The next time he stopped by, he gave me a gift... a one-mug coffee warmer. THANKS, Joel! I can now come back to my drink 15 minutes later and still enjoy just-right hot coffee.

When you read Sharon's article on the back page, you'll see that the question she addresses is "love grown cold." It's as though many of us could use a mug-warmer... well, actually, a LOVE-WARMER.

A devotional I read this morning used a very-challenging passage of scripture, instructing us on how to LOVE:

**Do not love this world nor the things it offers you,
for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you.
For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and
pride in our achievements and possessions.**

**These are not from the Father, but are from this world.
And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave.
But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.**

(1 John 2:15-17 New Living Translation)

The devotional included this dialog, as though spoken TO US, by CHRIST:

"My friend, it is beneficial to be ignorant and to consider yourself dead toward many things, as one crucified to the whole world. You must turn a deaf ear to many things. Instead, think on things that lead to peace. It is very profitable to turn away your eyes from things that are displeasing to me. Leave people to their own opinions, and avoid their arguments that lead to strife. If you are in a good relationship with God, and judge things by His mind, you will not be defeated."¹

Let's be HOT in our love toward Christ and others!
John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

¹The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas À Kempis, compiled and edited by James N. Watkins. © 2015 by James N. Watkins, Published by Worthy Inspired, pages 238-239

Open Arms Childbirth Class

**Four Consecutive Thursday evenings
October 5 - 26, 2023
Class Time 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

Covering the important information offered in a hospital course, *Open Arms* adds a distinctively-Christian perspective. You will enjoy meeting other expectant couples as you prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course.
Register by contacting the ALM office.



When Love Needs

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BOB



Question: I don't know what's happening. I just feel really "blah" towards my spouse and children. I know that I shouldn't live on emotion, but it sure would be nice to get some warm feelings back. Any help?

Response: Love, just like a car battery, benefits from a check-up from time to time. What is the state of your love... between husband and wife, parents and children, friend with friend? Does it need a boost? Following are some ways God shows love to His children... choosing to copy His example is the best way to recharge our own expressions of love.

L Let go of resentment, hurts, disappointment and anger.

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like you who pardons sin and forgives the transgressions of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

If God is willing to forgive us over and over and over again, for our many sins, how can we not choose to quickly forgive those who have wronged us? **Love lets go of grudges!**

O Offer expressions of love every day.

John 3:16 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.

Psalms 103:2-6 Praise the Lord, O my soul and forget not all His benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed

like the eagle's. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

God's love for us is not just a feeling. It is an action! He *demonstrates* His love with practical and sacrificial giving. His love causes Him to communicate with us through His Word and prayer and His amazing creation. His love causes Him to watch over us, protect us, listen to us, encourage us and help us. If He does all these things for us every day, how can we not choose to give our love to those in our lives via practical action. **Love reaches out in kindness!**

V View others from God's perspective.

Psalms 103:13-14 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 & 17 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

God's love causes Him to focus more on our potential than our failures. He understands that we are imperfect, prone to messing up, and often weak. In spite of that, He is patient with us, helping us to learn and grow, not rejecting us because of our mistakes. **Love gives lots of grace and encouragement!**

E Enter each other's world.

Romans 12:15, 16 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

God expressed love to His children by identifying with them in their joys, sorrows, good times and difficult times. He was not too proud to connect with people on their level. It is easy to become so engrossed in our own interests, that we neglect the people we love the most. If God loved us enough to enter our world, how can we not make the time to learn about those we rub shoulders with every day? **Love shows genuine interest in the interests of others!**

May our love grow stronger every day as we follow the example of Him who loves perfectly... our wonderful Father!



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