

The Diamond that Blinds the Sinful Heart

By Pastor Loescher

How amazing is the love of God that we should be allowed to be his children and that is what we are! How blessed we are that we have a God and Father who not only forgives, but teaches and empowers us to love as he has loved us. We are trained by the best with the best training materials—the Holy Word of God. The Lord has taught us how to love, but it can be complicated. We can be happy with a generic sort of love and forget how God has uniquely called each of us to love. God’s love is like a brilliant many faceted diamond—intricately applied from several different angles of life. For instance, parents love God when they are gentle and kind with their children. They also love God and their children when they are firm and unmoving whenever their children disobey God’s commands. They love by bringing sorrow to the child’s heart because of their sin; they love further as they bring joy telling their children that Jesus forgives them.

Wives love their husbands when they submit. It is so easy for a wife to think she is loving God when she consistently points out to her husband what he is doing wrong, when she corrects rebukes and encourages with great patience and careful instruction—just as the Bible says. Yet that is a completely different facet of God’s love than what God calls upon a wife to give. God actually tells wives to love by submitting to their husbands not by putting themselves above their husbands as spiritual teachers. This facet of love does not exclude a wife from offering her wisdom and opinion on any and all matters. God’s truth is simply this: the Lord blesses and praises a quiet and submissive

spirit. Remember, dear sisters, the truth the Apostle Paul learned about service in the Lord’s kingdom, “When I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). Pray for a spirit of love that you may be an example and by your spirit win your husband. Where his wisdom may be weak, pray for the Lord to increase his faith and expect the Lord to answer your prayers without your constant correction.

Husbands love their wives when they listen to them and highly honor their uniquely wise, female perspective. More than that, they love their wives when they do not let any sin on their wives part give them cause to be harsh and unloving. Husbands *never* have cause to be harsh and unloving to their wives. The facet of God’s love that is unique to husbands is perhaps the most brilliant of all. It shines from the very heart of the Savior as he bled on the cross and gave himself up for his bride the Church. For any man to be a loving husband it is imperative that he not take his eyes off the cross of Christ. Such a man remains humble and loving as he lives with his wife and leads his family with gentleness and respect.

Brothers, never think that your marriage is as healthy as it needs to be. Listen to your wife even when she isn’t particularly submissive (especially when she isn’t submissive). She is crying out to you to love her. Show your love to her as you actively listen to her and lovingly consider her pleas—yes, even if her pleas burn your heart with angry, accusatory words. A gentle leader taught by God can show that he doesn’t appreciate the way his wife is saying something but at the same time let her know that he appreciates what she is saying. Men are supposed to be the emotionally strong ones. Take the furnace

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blast like a man and love your wife. Always cherish her as God's gift to you.

Adults who are single, widows and widowers, love in their own unique way. Another facet of God's love shining through our hearts calls those currently unmarried to live in patient endurance and prayer with the kingdom of God foremost on their minds. St. Paul says, "The widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives" (1 Timothy 5:6). Live your lives for the Lord and not for yourselves. Look for ways to love your neighbor and give of your time in kingdom work. If marriage is desired, pray for this, too, along with godliness and contentment, and the Lord will give you the desires of your heart.

One person recently lamented, "Satan is tearing the church apart from within as marriages fail and families are torn apart." I write this with a heavy heart as I consider my own failings to shine God's love in the unique ways he has called me to do so. As your pastors, we have discussed the heaviness of heart we each feel when we see the failings to love tear apart marriages and families in our own congregation. Brothers and sisters, this must not be. Any broken marriage can be saved. And any broken marriage, not broken by marital unfaithfulness, should be saved. Consider your own failings and sins, repent of how dimly God's love shines from you. Forgive whatever sins others have committed against you. Let the darkness of bitterness in your heart flee away at the brightness of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. When you are so sure you are right and another is the wrong one, pray for wisdom and clarity to see yourself again. We have a sinful penchant for selfish use of God's Word when we want someone else to change. In other

words, do not use God's name to point out the sins of others while acting as if you have none. Such an abuse of God's Holy Word cripples us from being able to love in the way God has uniquely called each of us. Instead, use his name to uncover your sins and to receive strength through his forgiving love. In his brilliant love alone do we have forgiveness and the strength to love even in the darkest day.