Daily Devotion #151

**God Loves You**

**1 John 4:10** — “*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

There are many people who never understand how much God loves them. Recently I was in a meeting with a couple who have been struggling in their relationship with one another. As we talked, to determine what the problem was, it became apparent that the husband has never felt or accepted the love God has for him. Not that he didn’t believe what the Bible says about God and His love, but he had never fully felt the loving embrace of God for him personally.

As we talked and he shared more of his struggles in life, I said to him, “God loves you”. Upon hearing that, he began to weep. And when he started to cry, I knew his tears told a story. His story was that he has never believed he could be loved by someone who deeply cared for him. Most of his life has been thinking little about himself and believing the lies from Satan that he has no real value to anyone, including his family. But when he heard the truth that God loves him, as my mother used to say, “warts and all”, he couldn’t control his emotions. There was a relaxed relief as he processed that truth - that God could and would love him, truly love him.

What most people fail to understand is that God created us and truly loves us. This is because most people don’t understand what real love is. Most people live under a façade that tells them they are loved, but never fully experience it. Most people never see the effects of genuine love.

Many people grow up in homes were love is not the priority. They are provided for and cared for, but genuine love is not offered or if it is offered, it is based on certain conditions. Therefore, their view of themselves and the world around them is that love is only for other people.

What makes God so amazing is that He truly loves us, even when we are not lovable. As the Apostle John writes, the real definition of love is God loved us and proved His love by sending His Son, Jesus, to sacrifice His life for us. And that was before we loved God. God proved His love for us by action - giving us a great gift, His Son, to pay the penalty for the sins we commit against God.

Many people go through life believing that this life is not worth living. Many even take their own lives because they can’t handle the pressures of a world where real love seems nonexistent. But what they are really missing is God. They never fully embrace that truth that God loves them in the midst of their difficulties and has the ability to help them through whatever they are facing. If there was ever a message the world needs to hear, it is that God loves them. God loves you and me.

The tears of the man in my office tell the story of a heart that longs to be loved. To know that someone accepts him as he is. To believe in him. To want to help him be the best he can be. The fault most people have is they try to find those things from others. But no human being has the ability to love the way a person needs to be loved. We try. We use words. We express love the best we can in our actions. But real love, lasting love, eternal love, comes only from God. That’s who we need to receive our affirmation from. And when we do, people then become the bonus to life, not the source of life.

Beloved, you are greatly loved. Never forget that. You have value and purpose because God loves you. To prove His love, He sent His Son to die for your sins. To take the punishment that we deserve for violating God’s holiness through our sin. Causing us to be guilty and worthy of eternal death. But God loved us and didn’t want us to go to hell. So in His love for us, He paid the price we owe Him. Setting us free. That is real love.