

The One-of-a-Kind Love You Want This Valentine's Day

I've been a Christian for a quite a while. For years, I taught the Word to both adults and kids when my first husband, Brent, and I started two churches in the Northwest. I knew God, I loved Him, and I was a "Word girl," meaning I believed and practiced faith in the Bible.

But when Brent died without warning at age 37 and I was left to raise our teenage sons and pastor our church alone, something else happened. I often refer to that time as the *worst* of my life, but also the *best* of my life. Because I desperately pressed into God as never before—and I fell completely in love with Him.

The more time I spent with Him, the more I loved Him. And I began to understand that He has this kind of love for *all* of His children, you included. No matter how much you know that God loves you, there is always more to know. You will never plumb the depths of His love for you.

Now, we're all at different levels of understanding God's love. You might feel completely loved by Him, and that's good. But He loves you even more than that!

On the other hand, you might not be at all sure of God's love. Everywhere I go, I meet Christians who aren't sure. They know that God is love, but they don't know how He feels about them personally.

Maybe you're uncertain about God's love. Maybe you weren't well-loved growing up. Maybe people have told you, "I love you," and then betrayed you. Or maybe you've been treated badly, and instead of understanding love, your life has been based on suspicion and pain. I understand. But that's not how God wants you to live.

This Love Never Gives Up on You

One time when I was preaching a message about how much God loves us, a woman came up to me after the service. She told me that she had a Ph.D. in religion and knew much about God and the Bible, but she had never fully believed the concept that God actually loved her. She said, "I've never really grasped the 'love thing.'"

I wanted to cry out, "But that is *the* thing! It is what the whole gospel is based on!"

No matter what has (or hasn't) happened in your life, I want you to know: you are still perfectly loved by the Most High God. His love for you will never fail; it will never stop. The Bible says, "Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]" (1 Cor. 13:8a, AMPC).

Nothing can separate you from this love God has for you (Rom. 8:38–39). No human has ever loved you like this. God's love never quits or fades out because of something you did or didn't do. It doesn't stop because something happened or hasn't happened. You *cannot* be separated from your heavenly Father's love.

This isn't natural human love, or the Hollywood movie kind of ooey, gooey love. This is not a feeling; it is a spiritual force. This is called "*agape* love," the love of God. It's unconditional. It is at the core of God's nature. It is a love that does what is best for you at every turn, whether that means correcting you (Heb. 12:6) or bestowing every blessing on you (Eph. 1:3).

This love comes from the heart of God. It is not based on your goodness; rather, it is based on His. {eoa}

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