

The Truth About Love

❌ Do you realize that there is a connection between love and power? We know this is true because God's Word says that "love comes from God" and that "the hand of the Lord is powerful " (1 John 4:7; Josh. 4:24, NIV).

The Bible also tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:16) and describes the ways God expresses His love to us. God says of Himself in Jeremiah 9:24, "I am the Lord who exercises kindness." Paul writes to the Corinthians of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1). And Isaiah 63:15 refers to the Father's "tenderness and compassion."

Unfortunately, many of us have difficulty expressing love as God does. Some people, especially men, confuse these ways of loving with being "weak." Caregivers who treated them with less than kindness, gentleness and compassion have brought them up. A powerful love to these caretakers meant heavy hands and harsh words – expressions of physical and verbal abuse.

If a person was raised in such an environment, he may confuse love with abuse. Or he may develop negative feelings toward himself and think, "I must have been a very bad person for someone to treat me like this." Plagued by feelings of shame and guilt, he considers the abusive treatment justified. Sadly, this type of individual often grows up to model the same behaviors in his expressions of love.

1 John 3:18 tells us that we are to "actions and in truth." But it takes power to love as God loves. It takes great strength to love "in the most excellent way," as 1 Corinthians 13 describes.

In fact, unless you have God's Spirit within you, it is impossible to love in this way. Our flesh nature – the one that instinctually protects self – will not willingly give up its own needs and desires to love others. However, Psalm 73:26 reminds us, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart."

God's people need to learn the truth about love and how to express it as our heavenly Father expresses it to us. The Bible tells us that God is both loving and all-powerful. Thus, the more we love in gentle, kind and tender ways, the more truly powerful we become.

2 Timothy 1:7 tells us, " For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." The Greek word used here for power is "dunamis," which means "ability." God gives us the ability and self-discipline to love as He loves.

Ask God to give you the desire to love as He loves. Cherish your loved ones as you remember His loving-kindness toward you. Think of the ways He has gently restored you and how His Spirit has tenderly embraced you. Start today to love others as God loves.