



The Truth About Love

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” This past week, I have become aware of something that has been troubling me for a few months now. It has been a sub-routine playing over and over in my mind and heart - sort of like a stuck record player. I am not sure quite how or when it started. However, my awareness is the simple fact I have been feeling that I am letting God down in many areas of life.

I realize that this sentiment is none other than a lie from the enemy, but it is unusual for me to live for a few months under the shadow of a lie of this proportion. And so, I wanted to address it this week, because it has been so subtle and destructive. There also might be other readers in the same place and my hope is that we will together find freedom from this deception.

There are things that we know in theory, and then there are things that we have revelation on. However, even with revelation, I am always amazed at how quickly we can slip into patterns of thought that can undermine the revelation on which we have stood so firm. For me, I have always prided myself on having a firm foundation of the love of God in my life. Perhaps this is part of the reason for my recent departure - over confidence. So how then could I slip into patterns of feeling that God is disappointed in me, or that He loves me of course, but isn't necessarily pleased with me, or that He has a better plan for me but I am unable to grasp it for lack of faith. I think that if I am totally honest with my inner musings, the root lies somewhere in my extreme tendency to want to please God. When I try to please Him, and I don't feel it is going like I planned, I then tend to manufacture the sense that He probably isn't very well ... pleased.

The enemy is extremely resourceful. He is an observer and an exploiter, studying us carefully. Have you ever heard the biblical term, "familiar spirit." There is good reason for this description. Imagine for an instant if you had nothing to do except study and deceive someone. Sometimes I think a demon's life must be extremely boring in that

they have nothing to do except devise schemes to throw humans into deception and turmoil. Anyhow, there are familiar spirits assigned to family lines. They ride the generations from one person to the next. They know family dispositions, tendencies, and history. They literally have nothing to do except watch for patterns of behaviour in an individual that might indicate a departure from a solid foundation and then exploit that pattern. They are personally assigned to be "familiar" with us. So in me, for instance, this spirit might have detected a few months ago that I was turning a subtle corner from a grace lifestyle of rest, to a law-based "trying to please" on my own strength lifestyle and decided it was time to pump up the volume. So now I have given the enemy a whole new strategy. Because he has nothing else constructive to do, he sits on my shoulder and begins to scream, "God hates you, He is not pleased with you, you are disappointing Him, you don't have any faith and without faith it is impossible to please God." These demonically inspired thoughts, mixed in with my own, create a cesspool of inner turmoil. My law based tendencies turn into striving, and I literally spend months in a place that is counterproductive to the destiny of God being released over my life.

I believe this is what has happened to me. There have been several instances in my life over the past months where I felt that I didn't handle a circumstance well. I then felt that these instances were probably things sent from God to test my character and that I failed the tests. They were not big things, more just attitudes and reactions to situations but being that I have a perfectionist personality, I am very aware of my own shortcomings. In trying to please God, I became discouraged, feeling that I was probably on His outside list, and each time it happened, I fell a bit lower. What I then did was start to isolate myself from the love of God, which was there all along. It's just that I didn't allow myself to feel worthy of it. Once this isolation starts to take place, the road gets very slippery. The enemy also exploits these tendencies. If he can get us to believe that God's love for us is compromised, he has little to do except watch us slide. There is no foundation in this kind of lifestyle.

So, now I will try to turn this whole thing around because up until now, this article has been pretty much of a downer ... pull it up Dean.

Every week I meet with a couple of dear friends to pray. We usually just put on worship music, hang out in God's presence, and pray for each other and our city and region. We also have a dream that we are carrying to see 24 hour prayer and worship released in our city and so we wait on the Lord and pray into these things as well. This week, one of my prayer partners had a recording that she had picked up during her last trip to Bethel church in Redding, CA. It was an audio version of the book of Song of Solomon out of the Passion bible. It was done with background music and characters narrating the different conversations contained in this exceptional book of the bible. As we sat in

God's presence and listened to the entire book of the Song of Solomon, I was struck with the fact that I had been listening to and living the lie that I have just described to you. The unconditional love of God was so evident in the narration that it literally rocked my heart and soul. The revelation of the love of God that I have known came storming back to me, the realization that there is nothing I could do that would ever disappoint Him into withholding His love for me. I realized that it was I who had isolated, and removed myself from the love of God. The love of the bridegroom for His bride is unconditional. There are statements in this book of the bible like, "you are altogether lovely, there is no flaw in you, just one look from you dazzles me."

So when God looks at me, does He really see someone in whom there is no flaw? Has the God who created our universe really made Himself so vulnerable to us that when we look at Him, tell Him we love Him, worship Him, or praise Him, He is dazzled by us and even confused by His own tendencies of tenderness towards us? In listening to this narrative, it was evident that the only thing separating me from this kind of love, was myself. If I feel unworthy of it, I remove myself from it. However, if I somehow can open up my heart to this love, it is there for me without reserve. And the only thing that can open my heart up is grace. Somehow we humans can't get around the idea that we have to earn it, and I realize I have been trying to earn it by none other than pleasing Him.

To end today, I would like to leave you and also myself with a scripture. Please don't try to put theological boundaries on this verse. Don't say, "Oh that was just God talking to Jesus." Take these words into your heart and let the truth of them set you free. I am going to do the same.

Matthew 3:17 And behold, a voice came out of the heavens and said, "This is My beloved son/daughter, in whom I am well pleased."

Period, end of story!

Thank you again for reading. Jesus is real - rest in His love!