

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

In our daily lives we find ourselves longing for love; not only we, but so many people around us also are hungry for love in terms of having real loving relationship. It does not only apply to marriage relationship between a man and a woman; but it also applies to family relationship such as between parents and children and among siblings. Furthermore, we are longing for fellowship with God and with one another as children of God. If you have a good friend relationship at the workplace or at your neighborhood, you would feel good or happy.

The word ‘love’ makes us feel good, intimate, and happy, although we really don’t know the chemical ingredient of love. So I can say that everyone is longing for loving others as well as being loved by others. One of CCMs (Contemporary Christian Music) entitles “You Were Born To Be Loved” and begins its lyrics: Do you know You're the one who were born to be loved by God You have been receiving love of God within your life Do you know You're the one who were born to be blessed by God You have been receiving love of God within your life.

Jim Daly, the president and CEO of Focus on the Family and host of its National Radio Hall of Fame-honored daily broadcast (heard by more than 2.9 million listeners a week on more than 1,000 radio stations across the U.S), shares his childhood memory in the book *Simple Little Words*. Abandoned by his alcoholic father at age 5, his mother remarried with another man. Unfortunately, she was diagnosed with cancer four years later and passed away. On the day of her funeral, his step-father walked out, leaving Jim and his four other siblings home alone. They were brought to foster care families. In the midst of his terrible circumstances, Jim often rejoiced because of his next-door neighbors – a couple Jim knew as Grandma and Grandpa Hope.

When his mom died, the Hopes told him, “God is with you.” Simple little words made Jim feel part of a loving family and gave him comfort that he might not be completely forgotten. For a lonely young boy, those words meant the world to him. Even though nothing seemed to be working out right, he caught a blurry glimpse of God’s larger picture. He exists. He cares. He loves. And God was concerned about Jim’s ultimate destination in life. Jim hungered to have someone care and love. Until he heard those words, “God is with you,” he thought for sure he was completely and totally alone.

Besides Grandma and Grandpa Hope’s care and love, teachers and coaches in high school also put an arm around him, saying “God cares for you” “God loves you.” That message made him smile inside. Daly committed his life to become a Christian in high school and found meaning, purpose and a sense of belonging through his faith in Jesus.

"I am living proof," he wrote in his 2007 autobiography, *Finding Home*, "that no matter how torn up the road has already been, or how hard it may look ahead, nothing – nothing – is impossible for God."

The Scripture says that God is God of love and that **God is relational in his essential**. God created humankind to have a loving relationship with them: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). We humans are created to love others and to be loved by others because we are relational as our God is. The Scripture continues to say, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).

From where does love come? How can we live better in love? Love does not come automatically; real love comes from God when we know of God and experience God’s love personally and intimately. When the Scripture says God is love and it comes from God, his love has deeper level of love than we often say or understand it; that love is unconditional love written in Greek word *agape*. God showed us this unconditional love (*agape*) revealed in His Son Jesus Christ: “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the anointing sacrifice for our sins” (I John 4:9-10).

Love needs to be learned, practiced, and our love needs to reach out to others beyond our boundaries. To me I am still learning how to love my wife, my kids, and my congregation. The more I learn how to love others, the more I feel being mature as well as growing up in faith; and I come to understand God’s love revealed in Christ. What I mean loving others means embracing others as he or she is, and try to offer my favor to him or her touched by God’s love. We are all different so embracing different people is an expression of our love. Someone says, “The love that unites Christians is stronger than the differences that divide them.”

Love is ...

Slow to suspect – quick to trust,
Slow to condemn – quick to justify,
Slow to offend – quick to defend,
Slow to expose – quick to shield,
Slow to reprimand – quick to forbear,
Slow to belittle – quick to appreciate,
Slow to demand – quick to give,
Slow to provoke – quick to help,
Slow to resent – quick to forgive. –Author Unknown

Walking down the street one day a lady noticed a little girl leaving the church by herself. When the child passed her, the lady inquired where she had been. “In there,” replied the little girl, pointing to the church. “And what were you doing in there?” the woman asked. “Praying,” was the prompt reply. Thinking the child was probably bothered with some problem, the lady inquired, “What were you praying for, dear?” “Nothing,” the child replied. “I was just loving Jesus.” Loving the Lord is the beginning of what love is because love comes from God. And at the same time, loving the Lord from your heart and mind is the way that you can live better in love. Remember that love is the greatest among faith and hope: “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

God desires us to love others by saying simple words or showing your kind deeds: “God cares for you.” “God loves you so much so do I.” Amen.