

From the Pastor's Pen

It is February, and because of Valentine's Day we typically think of this as the Romance Month. As the cartoon skunk Pepe Le Pew might say, "Eet's a month for love, and I thinks she's playing hard to get, no?"

Our church has determined that this month would be a great time to honor marriage, so we are in a series titled, "Love Never Fails!" And I must say our people are excited about it.

Do you notice how much the subject of love piques our interest? Why else would there be so many books available on the subject?

We husbands simply wish that it weren't so difficult to let our wives know just how much we love them. We feel like Pepe Le Pew. We don't know exactly what we're pursuing, because "love" is some mystery only understood by women.

So we turn to the experts out there: the jewelers who try to convince us that if we really want to express how we feel about our honey, we will purchase a diamond from them. For them, LOVE = sales. Then there are florists who want you to believe LOVE is found in a dozen roses, and the greeting card companies that tell us that LOVE is finding the perfect card that says it "just right."

For the record, my wife likes all of these expressions of love, and I have bought them for her, except for the diamond—all I could afford was a diamond chip, but she loved it! I often quote one husband in my Sunday School class who calls these purchases "Stupid Insurance"—and he highly recommends them. However, I don't think they will work for very long when I truly behave stupidly. As Pepe Le Pew once said, "Did you know zat when you are in love it is impossible to get insurance? But zen, security isn't everything!"

But are such expressions what love is? Can money buy love? I think we all know the answer to that question. Do you remember the Beatles' song, "Money Can't Buy Me Love"? It was a hit because it was the truth.

It is interesting that expressing my love to my wife rarely involves much money, but always involves cost of another type. For example, I can wake up in the morning and just spend time with her, talking to and listening to her, and she loves it. She says it is her favorite time with me. I can take her to Sumner, IA and spend 99 cents each for a movie we watch together, and she loves it. I can make a salad for lunch and have it waiting for her when she comes in from work, and she loves it. I can walk with her in the summer down the street and around town, and she loves it! I can acknowledge her for the way she helps me in the ministry and she not only loves it, but she loves me for it.

What is so hard about that? What does it really cost me?

Why is Love so difficult to define and yet such a simple thing to express? How can something be both simple and difficult? Just what is LOVE?

Well, guess what? The Bible actually gives us the true definition of Love; considering this definition it stands to reason why the topic of Love is complex and yet so simple.

Are you ready? Hold on to your hat; secure your suspenders.

"God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them."

(1st John 4:16)

Do you know what that means? If we are going to love with a true love we are not going to do it without God, so we are going to have to get to know God. Then, with God's help—because all things are possible with God—it is simple to express our love. Let me give 6 more verses from this portion of text to help us out:

"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. 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 atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us."

(1st John 4:7-12)

That is why this is so complex and yet so simple. As I see it, I am never going to be any good at this thing called "Love" without the help of my Creator who knows just how we tick, and what it takes to do it right.

All I can say is, — and I mean this — "God help us!"

See you in church!

Pastor Carl

