

## 6. OUR NEED FOR LOVE

*“Love is the medicine for the sickness of the soul.” Karl Menninger*

Because each one of us is a relational being, we cannot exist properly without love, understanding and compassion. To find fulfillment in life we must know we are loved and we must learn to love in return. A truly human existence cannot be lived in isolation. Personhood demands community – fellowship with God and others – because “Divine Love” has so created us.

Erich Fromm believed that psychic and emotional disorders stem from loneliness and the inability to love. Most of our emotional problems begin in childhood. We seek to meet the needs of our children in terms of such items as food, shelter and education while their basic needs are very different. And the greatest of them is the need for love. As one of my mentors, Charles Taylor, put it, “Only love heals!”

“God is love”(1 John 4:16). Scour all religious teachings throughout the world but only the Bible makes such an incredible claim. Jesus talked about God, not as an impersonal force, but as a Father of infinite love. How do we know that God is love? Not through nature or history but only through the cross of Christ. The incredible death of Christ on our behalf reveals the unspeakable love of God.

Along with the rest of the world, we need love to fill a void inside. But, perhaps when you opened your heart to receive love before, you were disappointed, hurt or even rejected. Therefore, you have decided that love is not worth the risk and pain. But, you still yearn to experience love from someone who will not be ashamed of you, reject you or worse, ignore you. You need a love big enough to accept you as you are and strong enough to last forever. Where can you find such love? Why not ask God? His love proves stronger, and deeper than anything this world offers.

God receives us unconditionally and in Him we discover the love we crave. He accepts us just the way we are, but he loves us too much to allow us to remain that way. He wants to change us and make us part of His family. When on earth, Christ never turned anyone away. He associated with all kinds of people, in every walk of life and he loved them all. He did not condone or excuse their sins but after they entered into a personal relationship with Him their lives were never the same again. The greatest adventure in life comes when we experience the love of God in Jesus Christ and then pass it on to others.

*Jesus said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”(John 13:34).*



