

Love Only

When someone truly loves me, what would be my response? It is a penetrating question. I may not be attracted to the lover and I need to withdraw sensitively while seeking to minimise hurt. Or, I could become taken up into the realisation that I'm facing what I have so much been looking for. Then life takes a major turn towards a love story, the kind of event that has been spoken, written and sung about throughout history to this day. That would be just the beginning though, with staying in love the real challenge.

My wife and I met and soon fell in love even though she didn't much like me at first. We got married quickly and came to know each other. Now over 50 years later, having raised five children and holding various jobs, with busy church engagements when young, we still love each other just as much. Love can prevail independently of circumstances and true love will.

However, when the name of my lover is Jesus Christ, how will that fit into my life? Love offers many shades of experience and with Jesus my feelings are quite different from those towards my wife. Falling in love with her had that sense of being taken over by an exciting dynamic beyond my control. With Jesus, entering his love means opening myself up spiritually to a promise of companionship. That too can develop into a special relationship of Person to person.

I have never been in love with the church. I appreciate the Bible but it doesn't elicit relational feelings. At best it prompts into the presence of God. There are only few that bring me the sense of love at its best and they are Jesus, my wife and family. This kind of love doesn't rest upon feelings or situations – it is a state of being. There is no other way in which to truly be in love.

I have learned to be well aware of my psychological disposition which love always seeks to shape for the better. When I am ego-driven, love will fade away, while being too much on the defence emotionally makes love suffer. Other negatives are being a bad listener, opinionated, inflexible, forceful, and many more. Shortcomings like these will restrict how love blossoms. With love I must tread carefully.

Jesus is well able to handle my psychology. He must be approached with humility and openness, with me owing up where I sense my failings. I often just sit and reflect before Jesus, who enables towards change and loves me always the same. I do not seek for the church to solve my problems. Church is the place where I may learn and celebrate what Christianity involves, which cannot ever make me a real Christian. Only Jesus does so, personally. My love relationship is not with church but with the Lord.

The reason for this brief reflection on love is simple: *love is the power able to best sustain someone in an uncertain world and it will do so person to person – or Person.* Circumstances will not prevail against it. As a Christian, I should practise charity towards all, but that real sense of being truly loved is exclusive to my family and Christ. Church cannot make that happen for me and may even become a hindrance. I must take love seriously, also the love of God, and see it overflow towards my family. This brief article began with a question: ‘When someone truly loves me, what will be my response?’ I feel to have made that clear and wish you the very best.

If you have found this interesting please consider my books in which much more is explained about God and the reality of an authentic Christian perspective on life – the benefits that offers.

Thank you,

Michael