

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR MAY 24, 2013

IN DEEP LOVE

...love one another deeply, from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22, NIV)

I AM ALWAYS A BIT SURPRISED when hear a Christian teacher talk of that greatest of Christian characteristics, love, as though it should be expressed with nine parts Jason Dufner and one part Keegan Bradley. Make it steady and staid and barely emotional.

“Don’t confuse emotions with true love,” they say. And all I can think is ? (really—it’s not so much a *huh?* or a *what?* but just a ?).

It would strike us all as completely odd if Peter had written, “Love one another deeply, from your brain.” While healthy, lasting love involves any number of clear-headed decisions and determined actions, we do not approach love as a cognitive activity. We feel it, and then we act on it.

In Scripture, King David wept furiously over his dying infant son. This was not a son he *knew*. The king had not watched this one grow up, listened to his voice, witnessed the unfolding of his personality. He simple felt love. And because his son was failing, he wept openly for him. He likewise mourned bitterly at the loss of Absalom. His brain knew all that this grown son had done to disparage his father and seize his throne. Yet David’s heart poured out love.

Peter was not departing from what he knew of the psalmist, nor what he knew of the Lord Jesus. Jesus had demonstrated love emotively and actively.

Now Peter was calling his readers to similar expressions of love. In 1 Peter 1:22, he wrote of a love that is “sincere,” “deep,” and “from the heart.” Sincerity captures a sense of truth—love not for personal rewards but to provide riches to another. Depth suggests great risk—will you allow yourself to be immersed in this behavior? And to rely on one’s heart is to carve from our vulnerabilities a gift that cares for others. You simple cannot love this way without feeling it.

Can we really love like this? Not on our own impetus. Peter was clear about that, too. He remarked that the deep love we have to give comes out of the purifying work of obedience to Christ after we have been born again in him. We truly do love only because he first loved us (1 John 4:11,19).

Opening questions: Expressions of love

What is the best expression of love you’ve ever witnessed? How do you know it came from the heart?

A survey of love

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Which traits of love have been demonstrated well to you by someone who loves you dearly? How has he/she shown you this kind of love?

Choose one trait of love that needs improvement in your own life. How do you see this improvement being enacted? What role does prayer play in growing in love?

Jesus’ love

Read John 15:12-13 and John 19:17-36. How did Jesus fulfill his own observation about the greatest of all loves? Where do you see his love most shining through in his dying hour?

Short of the cross, in what ways might we lay down our lives for others in love?
