

IT IS ALL ABOUT LOVE

Since it is almost Valentine's Day I feel compelled to write about "LOVE." Actually everyday should be "Love Day." Love has been God's idea all along. Scripture is full of directives to love, but so often we seem to relegate it to only one special day.

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV) 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'[a] 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'[b] There is no commandment greater than these."

Wow! Did you see that! There is no commandment greater than these!

I cannot begin to tell you how many hours I spend each week counseling on topics related to "love." There are many who do not feel loved in their marriages and there are others who somehow never felt loved as a child. Many others haven't even learned to love themselves. These love voids leave such emotional wounds it is no wonder the devil loves to attack in these vulnerable areas.

The devil is thrilled when there is a divorce. He thrives when adults and children alike feel unworthy and unloved. He loves it when attitudes of bitterness and unforgiveness take root. Unfortunately, he realizes that if he can keep us down we will be less likely to reach our potentials and to project God's love to those we encounter. What a powerful strategy!!!

Satan has many other strategies too. One such strategy is to destroy the gift of marital sex and love. Some of my clients could not begin to count the number of sexual partners they have had. I've even counseled in the last few years with those who have "celebrated the loss of virginity" at age eleven since it is no longer cool to still be a virgin in Middle School. Sadly this behavior often leaves many scars. Often by the time they finally marry- "sex is just sex" and nothing to really care about.

Clients are often shocked when I share that scripture is packed with teachings about love and sexuality intimacy. They somehow have a difficult time realizing that sex was actually God's idea. 1 Corinthians 7:5 (NLT) Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer, Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. Yes, making love is indeed God's idea.

I cannot begin to share all of His teachings about love, but I will close with one of my favorites:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV) 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails....

Churches across the valley are stepping up to the challenge of encouraging healthy marriages. Some are even holding special events to teach children of God's love and their value to HIM. I encourage you consider these resources:

www.marriagetoday.com

www.footstepschristiancounseling.org