



Love is ... *Unconditional*

It was nearly 31 years ago – but I remember the day like it was yesterday – the moment I met the man of my dreams – because honestly, who doesn't remember that moment and that feeling? Since that day in April 1988, our young love grew, and we were certain nothing could tear us apart. We held on tight to navigate life together, we worked to solve big problems with little experience, and that original feeling of being IN LOVE shifted, it felt different. Throughout our life journey though, we clung to a very meaningful verse, one that most of us can recite in our sleep:



of that person(s). No ill will or negative thoughts towards them, but instead, send your love through thoughts and prayers. There is no doubt this level of forgiveness and consideration for someone who has hurt or harmed us takes work, but they need our love and prayers more than anything else.

When I see this behavior in action, I am awestruck. It's typically when a family member who has experienced a devastating loss through a senseless tragedy is interviewed by the media, and during the interview, they choose to offer prayers and forgiveness to the person(s) who behaved or chose poorly. At a time when we hurt the most and could

1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

easily focus on hate or revenge, but instead we choose love. That is our faith at work. That is our God at work. That is unconditional love being shown.

The last line is quite powerful... **Love never fails.** Never. NEVER. Let that sink in. It has taken me a minute to appreciate and TRUST this verse.

Love never fails means, we are called to love through it all. Not just when it's easy or convenient or when the kids are behaving and following directions or the marriage is strong, and everyone is getting along. No, Love never fails means just that – LOVE NEVER FAILS. Period.

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1 Corinthians 13:4, 7-8

In **John 13:34-35**, Jesus tells us, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

You'll notice there isn't room for negotiation in this commandment. We have been called to love one another – period. We weren't told to only love those who love you back; or only love those who practice your same faith; or those who look like you; who live like you ... or, or, or! No, we are called to love one another as He has loved us. As we celebrate Valentine's Day and this season of Love, let us remember what Love is ... it's unconditional.

Please note this doesn't mean we should stay in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship – your security and state of being is most important. However, in these times of testing, I believe we are called to pray for the well-being

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