



fledgeSM
flēj: to grow the plummage necessary for flight



Lost Words: Love Warm Feelings or Gift of God?

It was LOVE that brought the Son to visit planet earth, and it is LOVE that entwines us to Him in worship and service. As Advent approaches and we prepare ourselves to celebrate Jesus' birth, it would be good to refresh the word LOVE.

English is sort of limited because we only have one word to express all sorts of different ways to LOVE. We LOVE our music because it makes us feel good. We LOVE our sister because she's part of the family. We LOVE our dogs because they are so cute. We LOVE romance because it's exciting. But LOVE means more than feeling good.

In the early part of November, Dale and I visited our home church in Laguna Beach. We fit back into this community so seamlessly that I could focus entirely on God. That is a rare thing for me, we travel to so many churches to speak that I'm often distracted by the newness or the order of service so as to not miss my cue. But this Sunday, God gave me a gift of being

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undistracted so I could understand his LOVE. I didn't hear him audibly say anything, but through my own thoughts, I sensed the Spirit of God asking me one question,

"Jonalyn, do you know that you are entirely loved? Do you know you are thoroughly approved? If you believed this, if you knew your life was kept safe by me, what would you do differently? Where would you go, what would you do if you knew you were loved?"

And that spurred me into a new place, new ideas because I felt the LOVE of God. God's LOVE was changing me, yet again. That hasn't happened but a handful of times in my life. But it is out of one experience that I can walk into faith, trusting God to do more for me and in me. God's LOVE is the template for my LOVE.

John writes, "LOVE is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). What makes this LOVE from God different from the LOVE we feel for our puppies and sisters and music? This godly LOVE is a badge of Christianity. This is the LOVE that shows we are born of God, no small credential. That would be something for our resumes—proof that we are loved and we know how to LOVE like God. But what does this LOVE look like?

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John writes “God so loved the world that He gave” ([John 3:16](#)). When the Father gave His Son, this gift cost him dearly. The Father’s LOVE required watching the Son relinquish the comfort and honor of heaven for the dishonor and humbling of earth. Paul says the Son emptied himself ([Phil 2:7](#)). Think of that feeling, being emptied. It makes me think of Ariel in Disney’s The Little Mermaid when Ursula takes her voice. Ariel was emptied of her power to speak or sing. This is not a fun feeling.

Being emptied is a sort of naked feeling. And that’s what Jesus signed up for, the helpless beginning on earth as a naked human baby dependent for his food, shelter, clothing on a young female and her fiancée. He didn’t come to a heated, well-monitored hospital in the 21st century, but in the first century in Palestine to sleep in a manger. Imagine what this did to the Father, watching the all-powerful Son who spun the planets into orbit and co-labored to create humans out of dust now at the mercy of the descendants of dust, Adam and Eve.

John writes that “We know LOVE by this, that He laid down His life for us” ([1 John 3:16](#)). I used to think this passage meant we should be willing to die for each other. And it does mean that, but not just

willy-nilly dying in the off-chance that a gun will be pointed at our loved ones. It means **figuring out what is best** for those we claim to LOVE. Jesus intentionally figured out what we needed and he knew he was the one to meet that need through laying down his life.

LOVE means we must have knowledge and a will to carry out what we know is best for those we LOVE. Emotions may or may not come. LOVE means we turn our entire selves towards another, that we want and will and work for another’s good. In the next *fledge* we’ll talk about ways we can be intentional to LOVE others as God loves.

Got questions/comments?

Feel free to **email us**.

or

Join us for **Ask! LIVE Wednesdays 6-9PM pacific**

Bring any question or puzzling life situation