



flež: to grow the plumage necessary for flight



## Lost Words: Love Love Needs Knowledge

We've been talking about the meaning of LOVE. Is it based on warm feelings or a gift from God? In the last *fledge* we re-visited some of the key verses that pop into our minds when we think of LOVE and what these verses mean.

This *fledge* I want to give you some practical ways to LOVE, especially as Christmas comes nearer. Think of those you might need to be more proactive to LOVE, those family members who strike you as constantly annoying or just plain difficult to get close to. Christmas isn't simply about a sweet baby lying in a manger; it's about LOVE made flesh, taking hands and feet and invading our everyday lives. When God's LOVE touched down on earth we received the supernatural fuel to consistently, sacrificially, unconditionally LOVE.

Perhaps those couples who have braved decades of marriage together know more about this kind of supernatural fuel than anyone else. I've heard elderly

couples reminisce about their early married years. "Oh, we barely knew each other back then." And they laugh at their silly expectations and demands on each other. Then sometimes you catch a glimmer of knowing in an exchanged glance or a slight squeeze as they hold hands. If there is closeness between them it is because they know one another so much better.

With just six years of marriage under my belt, I know Dale much more than I did on my wedding day. That knowledge works itself out in practical terms. Last year, I learned that he likes a certain kind of toothpaste more than the sparkly sweet flavors I used to buy. That means I am more responsible, have more power to both LOVE or annoy my husband. What do we do with the knowledge we have of those in our family? How do we will their good with what we know of them? Do we insist that our desire is their good, or do we keep pressing to know them, studying them as we would a great story that's always changing? One thing I've noticed is how easy it is to fail to "update" our knowledge of family members, assuming that how they were 10 years ago is how they are now and how they will always be. It comes out in phrases like "Oh that's just Uncle Cain. He's always been a murderer, always will." But perhaps Uncle Cain has repented this year and



wants the chance to be re-known by his family. If we refuse to update our knowledge, then we have refused to know and thereby refused to **LOVE**.

**LOVING** isn't always being present; **LOVING** might mean leaving. There are times when my presence is not good, not necessarily because I'm a mess, but because there is more to Dale's life than me. When I'm gone, he has the space to be in uninterrupted solitude, to write, to fish, to fix up his Jeep, to read and to relax. He has time to be **LOVED** by Another. Mothers know this well when they must let their children grow up. Fathers know this when they allow their son to confront the bully on his own.

We are not capable of being all the good in anyone's life. Because we are finite beings our companionship has its limits. When we allow God in, He will fill up the corners where our **LOVE** is deficient. We can trust him to **LOVE** supernaturally. And trusting Christ to **LOVE** another that I desperately want to **LOVE** is part of my **LOVE** for them, too. But often, I have to get out of the way, to be proactive about pulling away, to **LOVE** by removing myself. I withdraw, even though sometimes I really don't want to, so the Infinite God can take over, **LOVING** where I am deficient, encouraging where I cannot, filling the souls of the hungry.



It would be such a relief if we could just know what **LOVE** is supposed to look like, but there is no formula to determine that. The way to **LOVE** this person or that annoying family member is unique to them. **LOVING** is not a task that can be itemized out in an easy check-off list. **LOVE** must be free to customize itself to the beloved and his unique needs, taking different pathways depending on whom we **LOVE** and who God has asked us to be in their lives. There is only the guideline that **LOVE** requires knowledge.

The way I **LOVE** my husband now is different from how I **LOVED** when we were just getting to know each other. We're both glad for the improvement. **LOVE** requires that we keep a listening ear to how God wants this person's good. And as we **LOVE** we can walk with confidence over to God's well, where because of Jesus we can dip our jars again and again, knowing there are everlasting cisterns of **LOVE** from which we can draw buckets.

Our next fledge will be sent out as a Christmas refreshment, a devotional for you to mediate on how

God customizes his **LOVE** for us.

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

