

PICTURES OF LOVE

What pictures do you see in your mind's eye as Valentine's Day approaches? Perhaps someone decorating with red hearts, wiring a friend a bouquet of roses, or sending a box of fancy chocolates? Such pictures all suggest LOVE.

Love was God's first gift! God breathed life into man and provided him with a life in the garden. He also gave man a mate. Instead of worshipping God, however, the first couple turned their backs on His great love. Nevertheless, He cherished them, looked after them, and found a way for their relationship to become whole again.

In 1 John 3:1 it is written, "How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called the children of God," followed in chapter 4 by the words, "Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7), and finally "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

Yes, when we come to understand God's great love for us through His Son, we are transformed from an individual having a shallow, self-centred, and worldly understanding of love into one whose life is changing, edifying, and lasting. Our love then becomes more like that of the One who created us in His image. Through Christ, God brings us back into a loving relationship with Himself—the one He originally wanted us to have.

Of course, there will be hardships in our lives: sadness, sorrows, and disappointments can cause us to feel that we have lost our footing. However, if we retain strong loving ties with our Saviour and Friend, we come to realize that He is also our fortress and strength. Scripture tells us in 1 John 4:18, "Perfect love casts away fear." No longer do we feel the need to seek extra support



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through work and wealth that may be lost along the way, or even from family or friends who may, for one reason or another, fail to support us. We can always count on Jesus! His love and protection, and deliverance never fail!

One of my favourite hymns is "Thee Will I Love My Strength and Tower" #694 LSB. The first verse puts into words the feelings of gratitude we should have toward God and His love for us:

Thee will I love my strength, my tower,
Thee will I love, my hope, my joy.
Thee will I love with all my power,
With ardour time will not destroy,
Thee will I love, O Light divine,
So long as life is mine.



Prepared by the Christian Growth Committee, LWML-Canada