

Freedom's Gate

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the Love of God

By Joe Pranger

“Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1a. God loves us so much that He made a way for us to be His family. He bridged the gap between Him and sinful man by allowing Jesus to be our sacrifice. He paid the price once for all. According to Hebrews 10:10, we are sanctified forever by His body.

This matter of sanctification is probably the number one thing that caused me to really know the love of God. I had no problem accepting Jesus as my Savior, knowing He paid the price for my sins, and I was on my way to heaven. What caused me great turmoil was this matter of ME! I didn't know what to do with me – how to get away from me. I seemed to be my biggest problem. I've always said, that if it was just the devil and me on the earth, he could relax and kick his feet up because I had the ability to destroy myself without his influence.

When I got this revelation that He put me in Him, sanctified me and there was nothing I had to do to fix me, I began to understand the love of God. Once I understood and accepted this, I could then begin to **receive** that love manifested in my life.

I had a wife and six children and I knew what I felt for them. I loved them and wanted to bless them. I desired to enjoy them and see them happy and fulfilled. Well, I knew those feelings had to come from God because the family all started with God. Even though I knew this, I couldn't seem to believe God felt the same way about me. Perhaps it was what I was taught about God as I was growing up. Nobody meant to put wrong thinking in me, they just didn't know. But I grew up thinking that somehow I had to please God. It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that I couldn't do that; which, opened the door for condemnation and kept me from receiving the love of God.

But God, in His great love for me, opened my eyes and drew me to Himself and then began to teach me His ways. In Genesis 17:1 God says to Abram, “I am the Almighty God,” translated El Shaddai. El Shaddai meant to Abram: **a multi-breasted God**. Yes, God is male and female in one being, because Genesis 1:27 tells us that God created man in His own image, male and female. At this time in my life, Anne and I were knee deep in cattle, kids, and corn. Multi-breasted God! Wow! I saw it. The love of God was being demonstrated all around me in the natural.

One night we left our children with a babysitter. Nick was a baby, 2 or 3 months old. After picking them up from the sitter and heading home, Nick started to cry because it was time to nurse. We were driving in the car, so Anne wanted to wait to feed him when we got home. She looked at me and said, “Every time Nick cries, milk is gushing out of me.” By the time we ar-

rived home, the front of her dress was soaked and dripping with all the necessities of life intended for Nick. Nick was not receiving that blessing because circumstances were causing him not to be intimately connected to the love that was being poured out of Anne for Nick. I suddenly had a picture of God and me. I saw my multi-breasted God with milk running out for me. All the things that pertain to life and godliness were uncontrollably running out of Him every time I cried. Unlike my wife, God is not waiting to bless me, He is wanting me to receive. He loves me!

God has recently brought to us great joy with the birth of three new granddaughters, all born within 12 days. What a wonderful blessing! Many of you remember my testimony of how the Lord delivered me from a spirit of death on September 5 of 2006. He gave me back my life and I praise Him for it.

Christmas this year (2006) had special meaning for me. As I sat in our living room with our family all gathered around, I found myself thinking of how grateful I was to be alive. It was good to know they were not all having to talk about “remember when dad...” I enjoyed each and every one of them. I was especially mindful of the blessing of holding each of these granddaughters just recently born. As I held them and gazed into each of their little faces, I was so thankful. I believe that God feels the same way about me. As He looks into my face, He thinks about how much He loves me and is thankful that I am His. I was reminded of ‘El Shaddai.’

How great is this love God has for us. I am fully persuaded of that love. It is that love God has for me that literally constrains me. It keeps me in Him. It is an anchor – it holds me in place. Because of that love, I don't want to go do things that dishonor the Lord. That love compels me to stay in the abiding place. That love – my Daddy – speaks to me daily that He is indeed my keeper. He is my rock, my refuge, my shelter, my healer, my provider, my strength, my joy, my peace, my guide; He is my very life, my all in all. He said He would never leave me – I believe Him. I am His and He is mine. I need Him and He needs me. We are an everlasting team – one new man, never to be separated again. I am in Him and He is in me. He loves me!!

It is hard for me to put in words the depth of what I feel and know about this love of God for me and all of you. Perhaps the word says it better than I could: “My heart is overflowing with a good theme. I recite my composition concerning the king.”

Psalm 45:1a (NKJV)

“BEHOLD, WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED THE SONS OF GOD!”

Behold what manner of love
Was sent to us from above
In the Body of God's Son
That in Him, we might be one
He put us in that hiding place
That He might speak face to face
To all His sons and daughters
Pouring through them many waters
His great love for you and me
So the lame will walk and the blind will see
Oh receive this love He has for you
There is so much He wants to do
The price was paid, He made the way
To free men from their darkest day
Oh receive this love He has for you
He is ever faithful, ever true
He gave His life, made everything new
Oh, receive this Life He has for you

~ Anne Pranger

Please remember to pray for Joe and Anne Pranger and the Global Advance team as they minister in India the second week of February. **Praise God**, the conference expense is met - THANK YOU PARTNERS! We are receiving by faith the remaining balance to pay for the travel expenses.

Homes for Children

What an exciting thing God is doing in the lives of children in India. James and Usha Chacko, our partners and founders of New and Living Way in India, currently have opened two children's homes for boys and believe to open a third home for girls by the end of 2007. There are a total of 20 young boys in the two homes, with eight of them still awaiting sponsors. Chacko's are presently seeking a ministry couple with vision and passion who will start the first children's home for girls.

They have already begun the recruitment of destitute or orphan girls.

Chacko's minister with the hosting couple the New and Living Way message for 6 – 12 months before actually starting the home. These children are fully cared for and trained in the ways of God. The majority of these children, especially the older ones, have expressed a desire to go to Bible training for fulltime ministry.

**“For God so loved the world
that He gave...
By Anne Pranger**

...His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16. Did God send His Son that we would have a ticket out of hell and a free ride to heaven? Well partly yes, but there is more to it than that. He sent His Son that we might **know** Him. John 17:3 says, “And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

To know God means to have communication with Him, through Jesus Christ. It means you fellowship with Him; you have relationship with Him daily. Moses knew God; God talked with him ‘face to face’ (Exodus 33:11). Psalm 103:7 tells us that Israel knew God’s acts, but Moses knew His ways.

I don’t just want to know God’s provision (although I greatly appreciate that), I want to know His ways. Translated into the new creation, I want to know how to walk in His Spirit. For instance, we know that God is love. Well, what does that mean? If you asked 10 people what love is, they would all have a different definition. We need to go to the word for the right one.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a in the Amplified version reads, “Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God’s love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it (it pays no attention to a suffered wrong). It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything (without weakening). Love never fails (never fades out or

becomes obsolete or comes to an end).”

That is a word picture of Christ. It is walking in the Spirit of Christ (a new and living way); it is **knowing** God’s ways. Notice this version brings out the fact that it is God’s love in us. Romans 5:5 says God’s love is shed abroad in our heart. The Lord has equipped us to walk in Him, to walk in love. I want to focus on one aspect of this definition of love: **love is ever ready to believe the best of every person.** I have said previously, as parents, Joe and I have missed the mark many times, but I was always ‘ready to believe the best of every person (child).’ Somehow God had dropped in me that truth. No matter what our children did or how much we missed it as parents, there was no way I was going to quit believing the best of and for **them and us.** I really did believe that God could put us over!

We have a large family and sometimes it doesn’t always look like I think it should, but that is not my focus. I believe the best of them. I have made a decision to see them **In Christ.** I choose to believe God’s highest plan for their lives will be fulfilled. I choose life!

This is not just an article for parents. It’s about all of us in the Body of Christ. Maybe you have a spouse you need to choose to believe the best of or someone at your job that feels like a piece of sand paper to you. Perhaps you ‘feel’ like that child doesn’t love you. On and on we could go with scenarios. **Choose** life – choose to believe that spouse loves you, that child loves you; choose to believe the best of that co-worker. Choose to believe that God loves you and is working out every detail of your difficult situation.

You see, with choosing to believe the best of every situation and every person, you silence the enemy of your soul. It stops the guesswork. It ends the struggle. Indecision is the devil’s trap. It reminds me of the little game we played as kids. We would pick the petals off a daisy, saying, “He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me not.” Make a decision! Choose the good report; choose God’s report. He loves you! (Philippians 4:8)

