

From Your Bishop: WHATEVER IT TAKES TO LOVE SOMEONE

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. ~John 3:16-17 (CEB)

Following the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, we focus on how much God loves us and how much we love God. We are invited into a love relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Are you ready to follow Jesus and deepen your love of God?



When you love someone, you do whatever it takes to sustain that relationship. After growing up in blue-collar families, Elaine and I were married when we were eighteen. We gave up scholarships to different colleges because we knew our love was more important than money. Of course, the decision to get married made us responsible for paying the rent, putting food on the table, and paying tuition. We found jobs and enrolled in college part-time on the way to the altar.

Over the next five years, I had many hard, manual labor jobs. Most of them were on the night shift. I worked the assembly line in an axle factory, washed buses in freezing rain at midnight, stacked rough-cut lumber in a sawmill, scrubbed toilets, washed floors, and cleaned windows hanging outside a ten-story building. One of my easier jobs was working with rats and colleges sophomores in the learning lab of the psychology department.

In the early years of our marriage, I was willing to do whatever it takes to sustain our relationship. Of course, there were blisters and cuts on my hands and aching muscles in my arms and shoulders. You might think that I was miserable, but you would be wrong. Being in love was such a blessing I was willing to take responsibility for what God had given me. Whenever I was worn out and tired, I would count my blessings and dream of being with Elaine. Sound romantic? You bet! I'm still in love with her.

I began following Jesus Christ because I was deeply moved by how much he loved me. My sins were forgiven, my life was changed, and my faith was in God. I was in love with God and willing to do whatever it takes to sustain our relationship. The Great Commandment directed me to love God with all my heart, soul, and mind; and love my neighbor as myself. In short, there was work to do to stay in love with God and share the blessing with others.

Following Jesus is never easy. It requires sustaining a relationship and loving others. You may become discouraged or disappointed when the person you love does not respond. Remember, God did not stop loving you when you did not respond. When we go the second mile to care for others, we find a joy that moves us to more risk-taking service in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sound romantic? You bet! God's love is like that.