

Do You Love Me?

From Ronald L. Dart's Notes

At the crack of dawn, the very first light of the new day was showing over the Golan Heights to the east. It was still too dark to see anything. The men in the boat fumbled with their tackle, frustrated with an entire night of wasted fishing. They hadn't caught a thing. On the shore just to their left they could see a small fire burning and someone moving about the fire.

"Boys," a voice called from shore, "Have you caught anything?" "No," they called back. "You are fishing the wrong side of the boat," the voice continued, "Try the other side."

The men in the boat looked at each other in the dim light. "How can he tell what side of the boat we are fishing on?" they wondered. "It's way too dark. And what difference does it make anyhow?" "Yeah, well," one of them replied, "anyone have a better idea?"

No one did, so they threw the net on the other side of the boat. The net had hardly begun to settle before they began to feel vibration and the net started to get heavy. They looked at one another as they pulled in the net.

"It's the Lord," John said to Peter. Peter grabbed his garment and put it on because he had been fishing naked. He hesitated only a moment and jumped into the water. They were less than a hundred yards from shore, so the rest of the men dragged the net full of fish to the beach.

When they arrived, they found Jesus had a fire going and bread and fish toasting by the fire. It was, of course, the resurrected Christ who was waiting for them and they hardly knew what to think.

After breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me more than these?" They may have been walking down the shore by this time, and Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." "Feed my lambs," was all Jesus said.

They walked further down the shore, and Jesus

broke the silence and asked Peter again, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" Asking this question the second time must have bothered Peter more than a little. It wasn't that Jesus had no reason to ask. On

the night when Jesus was betrayed by Judas, Peter had denied Jesus three times. "Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know that I love you." "Feed my sheep," was once again all Jesus replied.

continued on page 3 . . .

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Do You Love Me?

From Ronald L. Dart's Notes 1

Win, Win, Win 1 **A Foundation of Unconditional Love**

From Ronald L. Dart's Notes 2

Fruit Salad

By Ken Swiger 2

March Chronological Reading Plan 4

In Memory 4

Win, Win, Win. . .

Does the company you work for offer corporate gift matching for donations given to nonprofit organizations? Over 65% of Fortune 500 companies offer these programs, including many of the nation's leading employers. Corporations are able to offer this benefit because they can receive tax benefits. Some companies even offer this benefit to their retirees as well. Look for your company on the list found at www.borntowin.net, check your employee manual, or call your Human Resources department to find out if your company does gift matching. If they don't, ask if they could begin doing this. They win. You win. Christian Educational Ministries wins. This type of program can double your donations without costing you a dime. It can allow CEM to support additional radio stations or other ways of getting the Gospel to more people.

A Foundation of Unconditional Love

From Ronald L. Dart's Notes

One of the most vital lessons we can teach our children is based on the model we were given when Jesus became human and came to earth. While on earth, Jesus modeled unconditional love for all he met. His desire, and that of his Father, was that all on earth could understand, accept, believe, and also share with others the love that he has for his people. Paul tells us that he hoped fervently for us as well: "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ," (Ephesians 3: 17-18 NIV).

Our job, as parents, teachers, and role models of God's children, is to demonstrate for them the love that Jesus came to earth to model for us. Children overwhelmingly need to feel loved, nurtured, accepted, and valued. This feeling, or sensing, is something we all have at the very beginning of life. A newborn instinctively knows who is comfortable holding an infant, and who is very uncomfortable, or fearful. Children of any age instinctively know who loves and who accepts them unconditionally.

We are to nurture and demonstrate God's love to each and every child, regardless of their status in life, their habits, their history, or their personality traits. They are all children made by God. His love and mercy are available to them and he wants us to love them as Jesus did. The most valuable lesson you may ever teach a child is to instill in them the assurance of how much God loves them:

"Even the very hairs on your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30 NIV). He loves us enough to know, to the

exact number, how many hairs we have on our head at any given time.

"List my tears on your scroll. Are they not in your record?" (Psalm 56:8 NIV). He loves us enough to keep track of all the tears we have cried and will cry in our lifetime.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father" (Matthew 10:29 NIV). He knows when a sparrow falls, but he says we are worth more than a sparrow, so we are always in his care, every minute of every hour.

"How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer" (Isaiah 30:19 NIV). He will hear us when we call, no matter when or from where, and he will answer.

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 NIV). We can give him all our cares and concerns, because nothing is so trivial that it he does not want us to share it with him.

Matthew 18:6 gives us a very clear picture of how important to God our little ones are. "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (NIV).

If God loves them that much, and Jesus healed the sickest and taught even the most condemned sinners of God's love for them, can't we, as parents and teachers, be the vessel to teach them that his love, healing, and forgiveness is still available to them today? To receive a *FREE* copy of Ron's message, *Save Your Children*, return the card, email us at adm@borntowin.net or call 1-888-242-5344.

Fruit Salad

By Ken Swiger

My good friend Wayne Hinton posted a recipe for fruit salad on Facebook this week. The post included a colorful photograph of a bowl chock-full of ripe and juicy fruit. I glanced at the recipe, and then again at the picture and realized that I was smiling. I could imagine the sweet goodness of the fruit with all their individual flavors melding together into a delicious blend. I savored the flavor in my mind. Hey, I am smiling again.

My mom taught me to make fruit salad. The recipe

was simple—cut up fruit and put it in the bowl. I never add sugar to fruit salad, nor any kind of salad dressing; only fruit. I find that the flavors need no enhancement. I love the flavor of a red, ripe strawberry. Likewise, I really enjoy the flavor a nice ripe banana; and who doesn't love the taste of a juicy, ripe peach? Crispy apples, crunchy almonds or walnuts, awesome ripe orange, flaky coconut, and luscious blueberries all really make me want to smile.

continued on page 4 . . .

*Do You Love Me?**continued from page 1 . . .*

We don't know how much further they walked, but Peter must have been groaning inside. Then Jesus asked him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" Peter was truly grieved because Jesus asked him this the third time, and he said, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you." And Jesus answered once again, "Feed my sheep."

It's understandable why Peter was grieved. But Jesus had a reason for calling his love into question. Peter had denied him three times and Jesus required him to affirm his love three times. But what if Jesus asked you the same question—three times? Would it cross your mind why Jesus had to ask?

I don't doubt for a moment that Peter loved Jesus. How could he not love him after more than three years of serving with him? But we only know Jesus second hand. How could we possibly know Jesus to love him as Peter must have? But Jesus felt urgent to ask him anyway. Do you suppose he's asking you as well? "Do you love me?" It is a painful question, but one you have to answer.

Peter, writing much later, spoke of the trials the saints had to endure, and spoke of their faith: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love. . ." (1 Peter 1:6-8). But how can you know if you love him?

Read the parable in Matthew 25:31-40. So don't you think it is fair to say that Jesus will evaluate our love for him, in terms of the way we treat one another? And when we put the question that way, is there reason for Jesus to ask you, "Do you love me? Do you truly love me more than these?"

On the day when Jesus sent out the 12 for the very first time, he gave them some instructions that were specific to the occasion, but there were also some things he said that seemed to reach down through the ages and speak to us in our time and our place. This situation is detailed for you to read in Matthew 10:5-42.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go

rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:5-8).

This does not seem to have been much of a factor on this first effort, but it would be later. "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:38).

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42).

In our generation it is too tempting to consider the faith of Christ as a matter of the mind and the intellect. We may see it in terms of ideas or doctrines instead of actions and a way of living and interacting with the world. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). In what are you investing your life?

"And he began to teach them. . . he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:31-34).

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:35-38).

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first" (Mark 10:28-31).

continued on page 4 . . .

Do You Love Me?
continued from page 3 . . .

Now let's return to the breakfast along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus had finished questioning Peter, he went on to say in John 21:19-22, ". . . And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:18-22).

And here are my last questions for you. Where is Jesus leading you that you don't want to go? What is it that he wants you to give that you are holding back? What does he want you to do, about which you are dragging your feet? And to his question, "Friend, do you love me more than these?" What is your answer? Return this card, call, or email us at *Born to Win* for a FREE copy of *All You Need to Know About Spiritual Gifts*.

Fruit Salad
continued from page 2 . . .

Yes, each of those flavors is a winner all on its own in my book. But there is something very special about marrying them together, placing them in a bowl where they can touch each other and get a little taste of the flavor of their neighbors in the bowl. In the end, the whole is more than just the sum of its parts

I think that our spiritual family is similar. Each of us is a unique individual. We each bring our own distinctiveness to the whole. We may each be very special and pleasing to the Heavenly Father all by ourselves. We may enjoy special alone time with God in which we thrive and are blessed. But like the fruit in the salad, when we are thrown together, rubbing up against one another, we can take on the flavor of those around us and we can change, and actually become better; with a new distinctive flavor.

When I think of our family of believers as compared to a fruit salad, I imagine a smile spreading across God's face as he savors the flavor.

March Chronological Reading Plan

Mar 01: Num 14-15; Ps 90	Mar 17: Deut 17-20
Mar 02: Num 16-17	Mar 18: Deut 21-23
Mar 03: Num 18-20	Mar 19: Deut 24-27
Mar 04: Num 21-22	Mar 20: Deut 28-29
Mar 05: Num 23-25	Mar 21: Deut 30-31
Mar 06: Num 26-27	Mar 22: Deut 32-34; Ps 91
Mar 07: Num 28-30	Mar 23: Josh 1-4
Mar 08: Num 31-32	Mar 24: Josh 5-8
Mar 09: Num 33-34	Mar 25: Josh 9-11
Mar 10: Num 35-36	Mar 26: Josh 12-15
Mar 11: Deut 1-2	Mar 27: Josh 16-18
Mar 12: Deut 3-4	Mar 28: Josh 19-21
Mar 13: Deut 5-7	Mar 29: Josh 22-24
Mar 14: Deut 8-10	Mar 30: Jud 1-2
Mar 15: Deut 11-13	Mar 31: Jud 3-5
Mar 16: Deut 14-16	



Christian Educational Ministries gratefully received a generous donation in memory of Nell Matheney, 99, of Notasulga, Alabama. She was a loving mother and grandmother and very active in her church. She passed away December 26, 2014 and will be greatly missed.

Christian Educational Ministries also received another donation in memory of Shirley Armstrong, who died on October 17, 2014 at her home in Bullard, Texas.

These generous donations were most gratefully received and our prayers are with the families.

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.