

## CRIBB<S> NOTE - JULY 18, 2010

God loves you! Does that really matter to you? Do you care? Is God's love central to your understanding of life and its purpose?

Like so many things we take for granted, God's love is given so freely and generously to the point where we may not give it much thought. We expect the Sun to rise in the east every morning. We breathe each breath with a sense of confidence that life goes on although we know death is certain. How easy it is to receive God's love without giving attention to God.

What does it mean to know God's love? Everyday we have numerous moments to stop, stand still, and listen to the silent Voice of God. In the midst of our very busy activities, we are called to experience the subtle details of life and learn vital lessons that have significant meaning. This is how we come to know exact aspects of God's love. There is great mystery associated with divine affection; yet, its abundant array of showered mercies sustains us. God offers unconditional love to everyone. The very fact of our existence is a testament of God's great care.

In the ancient Text, we are instructed "to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength." That is, everything that makes us who we are is to be directed toward God as an act of reciprocity. We are held accountable to God for our thoughts and actions. Whenever we do something, we do it conscientiously and intentionally to honor God.

Imagine the power of intentional living. When we are aware of God's love and act with clear knowledge of that love, we begin to notice the beauty that surrounds us. We see people in relationship to us. Trees are sources of oxygen. Water provides substance for life. The interconnectedness of human life to Nature is understood, appreciated, and celebrated.

When God's love consumes us, we are transformed by new ways of thinking. We are changed from being affected by situations and circumstances to becoming agents that make things happen. There is incredible power in knowing God loves us. From the newborn infant to the eldest person on earth, God's love is given without reservation. In fact, we are alive because of Divine Imagination, Divine Intention, and Divine Affection. We reflect God's love when we embrace and love one another. We extend forgiveness when others hurt us.

The greatest love occurs when we love someone who feels unloved and unlovable. That is how much God loves us. We make mistakes and fail to live up to our abilities. Our human potential is not realized, but God does not diminish Divine Love for us. The gift of Jesus to the world sums up God's love by demonstrating how we are capable of being totally loving people.

Jesus Christ is the divinely human being who embodies the completion of God's relationship to humanity. Just as God loves us, we can love each other. Just as God forgives us, we can forgive each other. Jesus shows us how to love our neighbors as well as strangers and others who would be our enemies. God makes it possible for us to love without caution.

Take time to think about all the love you possess and how much more God loves you. It truly is an amazing and wondrous gift that is ours to give away without expectation. Ultimately, that is what love is all about.

-Pastor Art Cribbs