

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

February 16, 2025



True Love

On April 6, 2000, Ricky and Toni Sexton were taken hostage inside their Wytheville, Virginia, home by a fugitive couple on a crime spree. Toni had taken her poodle outside when Dennis Lewis, 37, and Angela Tanner, 20, roared into her driveway, pointed pistols, and yelled at her to get back inside the house. Inside the house, the Sextons turned their hostage experience into an opportunity to demonstrate Christian love. The Sextons listened to their captors' troubles, fed them, showed them gospel videos, read to them from the Bible, and prayed and cried with them. During negotiations with the police, Ricky Sexton refused his release when Lewis and Tanner suggested that they might end the standoff by committing suicide. The standoff had an unusual ending. Before surrendering to the police, Angela Tanner left \$135 and a note for the Sextons that read: "Thank you for your hospitality. We really appreciate it. I hope he gets better. Wish all luck & love. Please accept this. It really is all we have to offer. Love, Angela and Dennis." (Illustrations for Every Topic and Occasion – Perfect Illustrations: For Every Topic and Occasion.)

This kind of love is displayed in God's love story for man. Even if, by world standards, we were considered good people before we were saved, God said that our righteousness was as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). He said that we did not desire Him (Romans 3:11). We were born in sin (Psalm 51:6) and did not have any hope of experiencing heaven as Gentiles (Ephesians 2:12). We were all destined to hell. It is God who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This is why the Bible says, "for love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7-9; NASU) This kind of love makes a difference in the individual receiving it and in the individual sharing it.

F. W. Farrar tells how, when Dwight L. Moody was an ignorant, ragged, shoeless boy in the streets of Chicago, he found his way to a Sunday school by one of those unseen providences that men call chance. He was shy, sensitive, and very nervous lest the other boys laugh at him because he could not find the places in the Bible. The teacher observed his embarrassment and, with gentle, silent tact, saved him from shame by finding the place for him. But for that little nameless act of love and sympathy, Dwight L. Moody might have lost a career of memorable beneficence to the world. Dwight L. Moody became a well-known preacher and founded the Moody Bible Institute, which serves people worldwide.

Love may seem like a small act that makes a person vulnerable, but when God controls it, it is an act that can change the world, and true love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

UPCOMING Events



SILVER STARS BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2025 11 AM
Calling all 55+, celebrate Black History Month with the LWFC Silver Stars presents their annual Black History Month celebration. Join us this year as we celebrate the significant contributions of Black individuals in the workforce throughout history, from agriculture to the professional world. For more information, contact **Jacqueline Jordan** at jacqjordan@att.net



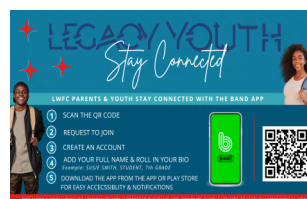
COLLEGE MINISTRY CAMPUS VISIT PRAIRIE VIEW A&M—SAT. FEB. 22ND
Attention all high school students, join us to visit the campus of Prairie View A & M on Saturday, February 22nd. Meet at the church at 7 a.m. sharp. Register at <https://bit.ly/4aEH8Qa> For more information, contact **Keron Brown** at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org



FEBRUARY IS PURITY MONTH
Legacy Youth join us each Tuesday night at 7PM as we dive into open discussions, and learn what it truly means to live with "purpose, purity, and faith"
PURITY MONTH BANQUET — FEBRUARY 24TH
If you have attended 2 or more Purity Month sessions, join us for our Purity Month Banquet. Please register at <https://bit.ly/PurityBanquet> and contact **Angela Holmes** at angholmes32@gmail.com



LEADERSHIP TRAINING SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025 8:30 AM
All elders, pastors, deacons, ministry leaders and coordinators, minister, and staff, join us for our first Leadership Training of 2025. Leaders your attendance is required as we plan, execute vision, and prepare for our year of Light In Truth (LIT). Please register at <https://bit.ly/LWFCLeadershipMarch2025> or on the events page of the website.



JOIN THE LEGACY YOUTH BAND APP
Legacy Youth parents and youth, join the **BAND APP** to stay connected. WE have an exciting year planned for our youth and we don't want you to miss a single event or activity. Use the link below to join:
<https://band.us/n/a8ad2A6Gv4fd0>
For more information, contact **Angela Holmes** at angholmes32@gmail.com



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

"True Love"
John 15:8-10

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship
Please remain seated at this time

Visitor's Welcome

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.
Infants—6th grade



True Love
John 15:8-10

A. Love is From Above (vs. 8-9):

1. The relationship between the Father (God) and the Son is best described in John 10:30; "I and the Father are one," and "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?" (John 14:10) Everything that Christ did was led by the Father (John 14:10-11). So, because "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son..." so that we have eternal life (John 3:16), the Father (God) is Christ Father and is now ours (John 20:17).
2. Throughout this passage, the word "My" will be repeated five times. This process is very personal from God the Father to Christ the Son to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Love comes from a personal relationship with God before it is from a personal relationship with others.
3. The character of God continually finds its full expression when believers remain steadfast in their obedience to God's Word in the midst of trials. This divinely maturing process shapes a believer's life to "be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-4) It also purifies believers from the pollution that can infiltrate their lives (1 Peter 1:3-9).
4. When believers, once and for all, faithfully and persistently remain committed, no matter the circumstances, to obeying God's Word, they validate that they are true learners and followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose of God's work in us (John 13:34-35; Philippians 2:12-13) is to be His disciples.
5. Similarly, the Father who began this spiritual process in Christ, decisively and persistently, not phileo (friendly love), but agape, loved Christ, now loves us through Christ. The Father visibly exposed the disciples to Christ's love, which must have been encouraging when Christ extended it to them
6. At the end of His physical ministry with the disciples, Christ assures them with much affection from the depths of His heart, that He has vividly and sacrificially extended God's love towards them in the very manner they saw God love Him.
7. Christ commands the disciples to stand firm and remain committed to obeying His Word no matter the cost (John 16:33). This way, just like in His case with His Father, He will love them affectionately and compassionately.
8. For those who commit to abiding in God's Word no matter the circumstances, Christ can now command and expect us to abide in His love towards one another: "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you." (John 15:12; NASU)

B. Empowered (v. 10):

1. We must decisively commit to learning and obeying God's Word and view it as authoritative, directly provided by Christ. This is critical to experiencing God's love through Christ.
2. We can be completely confident we will experience the Lord's love when we surrender ourselves to remain steadfastly committed to walking in His Word.
3. For those who commit to abiding in God's Word no matter the circumstances, Christ can now command and expect us to abide in His love towards one another: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35; Matthew 22:36-40; NASU)
4. When a person cannot love someone, it exposes that they love their feelings or the way they think more than they love God. To vividly portray their true relationship with God, a person must love their enemy (Romans 12:14-21). Loving an enemy is one of their many rewards (Matthew 5:43-48) and is the perfecting of their faith. Christ portrayed this when He was on the cross. When all His enemies were below the cross, and those walking by were mocking Him, despite the pain, humiliation, and betrayal, Christ said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing....." (Luke 23:33-37)
5. The most incredible display of a person's love for God (a true disciple) is when they faithfully obey God's Word towards a person they ought to hate (the Book of Hosea).

Scan For Full Notes



SILVER STARS MINISTRY 55+

Black History Month Event

CELEBRATING LABOR: THE IMPACT OF WORK ON THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

FEBRUARY 22ND
11AM-2PM

CELEBRATE THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK INDIVIDUALS IN THE WORKFORCE THROUGHOUT HISTORY AS WE HIGHLIGHT THEIR INFLUENCE ACROSS VARIOUS INDUSTRIES TODAY. FROM AGRICULTURE TO THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD, LABOR HAS SHAPED ECONOMIC PROGRESS, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
JACQUELYN JORDAN AT JACQJORDAN@ATT.NET

FREE

LIVING WORD
FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

POP UP MUSEUM

BLACK HISTORY DISPLAYS

VISIT OUR BLACK HISTORY MONTH POP-UP MUSEUM DISPLAYS IN THE FOYER EVERY TUESDAY AND SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Jon Heard & family, Marcia Anderson & family, the family of Vivian Phillips, and Judah David & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Cheryl Walker, Walter Banks, Sheryle Crowe, Arnie Glover, Clarence Coleman, Diana Doyle, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Janie Buchanan, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Beatrice Williams, Jessie Austin, Evelyn Harvey, and Maverick Everson Malveaux.



JOHN 15:8-10