



October 2020

Dear CWR/PTM Friends and Partners,

...take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.—Ephesians 3:18-19, The Message Bible (my emphasis)

Paul encourages us to dwell on and live full lives in the *fullness of God*. Paul invites us to marvel, wonder at and deeply ponder the love of God which has no limitations or boundaries. We need not worry that God's love will ever be exhausted. God's "storehouse" of love, grace, mercy and forgiveness is never empty.

The riches of God's grace are incomparable (Ephesians 2:7)—God's "bank account" is infinite—God never needs to "go shopping" to fill up his pantry, cupboards or his fridge. God's love is without limits—*experience its breadth, test its length, plumb its depths and rise to its heights!*

Any Christ-centered discussion of God's limitless and boundary-less love will inevitably *experience the breadth, test the length, plumb the depths and rise to the heights* of the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is the greatest singular demonstration of the love of God. Divine love, the greatest love of all, is *cruciform*—always centered and founded on the love expressed on the cross of Christ.

God's love springs from the foundation of self-sacrifice and service. **God's love never has a hidden agenda.** Humans speak of "love" as actions and behaviors that are designed to motivate the object or person receiving that "love" to respond in a particular way. "Love" expressed with ulterior motives is just a disguised and dressed up form of selfishness. A pig with lipstick on is still a pig. Selfishness in the guise of God's love is still selfishness and completely devalues and makes a mockery of love.

When Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, he does not add any qualifiers or disclaimers. Jesus does not instruct us to only love those neighbors we like. We are not exempted from loving neighbors who are real pains in the #!? Jesus' teaching is clear without any qualifications—love your neighbor.

We humans are, for example, reluctant to forgive others. Within our culture's spiritual world of religion, Christ-less religion believes God to be filled with wrath and therefore justifies wrath administered by "the righteous" against "sinners" (namely you, me and everyone). Christ-less religion is not driven by the love, mercy, grace and forgiveness of God but rather on penalties, punishment and retribution.

In the physical dimension, our culture has become increasingly resistant to forgiveness. In the aftermath of horrific violence, rioting and looting, mayhem and murder, our governments and politicians can only offer finger-pointing, name-calling, blame, condemnation and "justice" it defines as eye-for-an-eye retribution. The only answers our governments and politicians can offer is an escalation of anger, hatred and revenge.

God always forgives. He never stops forgiving, even when we, his creation and his beloved children, think he is being soft-headed and soft-hearted. We think God should draw a line and beyond that line refuse to forgive. When people assume God places limitations on his forgiveness, they reveal their failure to *experience the breadth, test the length, plumb the depths and rise to the heights* of Christ's love for them. **Jesus, God incarnate, drew no lines beyond which his love would not go.**

Jesus' disciples resolutely resisted his insistent declarations that he would go to his cross, willingly and self-sacrificially. The love and forgiveness of God and its amazing implications are demonstrated by the cross of Christ, when the love of God was poured out without measure in response to human hatred and brutality.

Apart from God, our resources to extend grace, mercy and forgiveness are inadequate and insufficient. Apart from our embrace of the cross of Christ, and our willingness to accept his love, mercy, grace and forgiveness we are powerless to turn the other cheek and love our enemies and those who spitefully use us.

Love is the way we *live full lives, full in the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3: 19, as above). By the grace of God the Father, we are strengthened by God the Holy Spirit so that God the Son may live in us. By the grace of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—we are enabled to take in the *extravagant dimensions* of divine love (Ephesians 3:18, as above).

C.S. Lewis contrasted human love, which he called **Need Love**, with divine love, which he called **Gift Love**.

Lewis said that **Need Love** is born of emptiness and lust. **Need Love**...

- Sees objects or persons it values as something it desires or covets to possess.
- Tries to appropriate objects or persons it desires for itself.
- In its greed, like a vampire, sucks the very essence out of something or someone in order to feed its own appetite and "needs."

Need Love will say to another person "I love you" when it actually means it desires to make what the other person has and represents its own, no matter what the consequence might be to the other person. Such an expression and emotion is lust, not love.

Gift Love, on the other hand, is divine in origin. **Gift Love** can be expressed by humans, but only by God's grace as God the Holy Spirit strengthens us and as God the Son lives in us. **Gift Love** is just that—a gift of God. **Gift Love**...

- Enhances and enriches another rather than extracting and removing.
- Edifies and builds up another rather than tearing them down.
- Overflows and irrigates, like a life-giving artesian well that never runs dry.

The **Gift Love** of God is a mystery and a marvel to our human mind—it is a power that defies our definitions and perceptions. Love is a dynamic divine reality which does not employ force as we know and experience it.

God's love does not use us or force us...God's love is offered without any conditions...and we are free to accept or reject it. Nothing in the realm of human experience prepares us for this transcendent dimension of divine love...it is beyond our ability to fully comprehend.

The cross of Christ was God saying “I love you” when humanity at large said, “We hate you and we are going to kill you.” Jesus didn’t demand that we sign a contract pledging our devotion to him before he gave his life on the cross. He did what he did without any guarantees that we would respond favorably and love him back.

That’s part of *the freedom of God’s love*. *God does not force us, for if it is force, then by very definition, it is not God’s love*. Our relationship with God is not an arranged marriage, where we have no say in the matter, where we are predestined to marry him and where we have no choice but to marry him, no matter what.

This is the message and bold proclamation Plain Truth Ministries is sharing worldwide. The limit-less and boundary-less love of God, so evidenced in the *breadth, length, depths and heights* of the cross of Christ is the gospel—good news—incredible news! The limitless and boundary-less love of God does not seek vengeance—it does not answer violence with violence.

Thanks for your willingness to partner with us as we point people all over this world to the wonderful and amazing love of God.

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

PS. Here are a few letters of thanks from readers and Partners who have been blessed by the ministry of PTM, which you help to provide.

I have read the Plain Truth for many decades now. Through thick and thin your articles have been informative, helpful and inspirational. We thank you for yielding to the direction and inspiration of the Father, Son and Spirit.
—South Dakota

I still find everyday that I am so blessed to attend the University of Jesus Christ! What great professors there are: Profs Albrecht, Jersak, Fowler and many others. Love all of you!—California

In this troubling and terrible year of 2020, CWR/PTM and its staff has faced the challenges and trials with an unflinching message of the gospel. Hats off to an encouraging and comforting ministry. I’m proud to be part of it.
—Canada

Thank you for your much-appreciated work. During this very challenging pandemic time, your message of truth and hope in Christ is so encouraging.—Washington

CWR/PTM Prayer List—October 2020

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

Please pray for my family situation. For years there has been a serious rivalry between me and my brother. Please pray that we can live in peace.—Germany

Please pray for my niece who suffers from seizures.—Massachusetts

I have spine problems causing severe headaches and also have lower back issues causing left leg problems. Everything I do causes pain, and I don't sleep well. I'm a widow living alone and don't have any children.—Alabama

Please pray for my brother—he is diabetic and not able to eat well. Thank you, and may God bless you and keep us all healthy and safe.—Florida

Please pray for my sister who has a fever and has become very weak.—Indiana

Please ask God to help our national and international leaders to wisely and successfully fight and conquer the corona virus outbreak. May God bless our medical staff.—Maryland

Please pray for my brother-in-law who recently suffered a mild stroke. He's also suffering with a form of dementia, and my sister is struggling to deal with his health trials along with her own health troubles.—North Dakota

I pray for the CWR/PTM ministries team to be in good health as well as all the people living in California and nationwide during this corona virus pandemic.—Louisiana

Please pray for my wife. She now has colon cancer and short-term memory loss.—Georgia

Please pray for my daughter, age 38, who has kidney failure and needs a kidney donor.—Minnesota

Please pray for all the victims of the corona virus and pray for all the health responders who are working so hard and under difficult conditions for these people.—Texas

My husband's Parkinson's disease is causing him trouble with dementia. He has hallucinations and delusions, and he's at great risk of falling. This issue causes me much mental and physical stress. We will soon be married 54 years. Please keep us in your prayers.—Virginia

Please pray for me as I have pain in both shoulders, my back and my left arm.—Massachusetts

I went out for a walk in the sun today and talked with many of my neighbors, from a distance, of course. We need to comfort and pray for each other during this pandemic.—Minnesota

I have a recurring infection in my leg that is not healing the way it did years ago. Please pray for my healing and for my financial needs because I'm in serious financial trouble.—Florida

Please pray for our daughter-in-law. She is undergoing treatment and surgery for breast cancer. And please pray for an end to this corona virus pandemic.—Colorado

Please pray for my sister who is still in pain since she was struck by a car months ago.—Florida

Please pray for relief from the arthritis I'm suffering in my hand and elbow.—Virginia

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.