



May 2022

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

- 1) Love IS patient.
- 2) Love IS kind.
- 3) Love is **NOT** envious.
- 4) Love does **NOT** boast.
- 5) Love is **NOT** proud.
- 6) Love is **NOT** rude.
- 7) Love is **NOT** self-seeking.
- 8) Love is **NOT** easily angered.
- 9) Love does **NOT** keep a record of wrongs.
- 10) Love does **NOT** delight in evil, rather it rejoices in truth.
- 11) Love *protects*.
- 12) Love *trusts*.
- 13) Love *hopes*.
- 14) Love *perseveres*.
- 15) Love *never fails*.—1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The ultimate and sublime demonstration and example of love is the Cross of Christ. *There is NO GREATER LOVE than Jesus' voluntary self-sacrifice for us.* When the Cross of Christ was buried in the soil of this earth, Jesus was lifted up (John 12:32). When Jesus was lifted up, the love of God was singularly and forever planted on earth, for all humans. When armies discover, visit and conquer a territory, they *raise* their flag. **Jesus raised the flag of God's love on his cross.** After his body was *buried*, Jesus himself was *raised* from his *burial* place, becoming our *risen* Lord.

Love is, as the classic song goes, “a many-splendored-thing.” Love truly is many-splendored and multi-faceted.

We first receive, on the purely human level, love from our parents. As an infant, and for some decades that follow, we have little idea or appreciation how much of herself our mother gave to “bring us into this world.”

As we grow, we give and receive friendship love, and then in our teens and twenties, we experience another kind of love. When we find ourselves infatuated, in love with the person we hope to marry, the entire world seems to revolve around just us. At this time and stage of our life, we can

only imagine one kind of love—the love we have and feel for our beloved. At first, before we marry and for a short time afterwards, love seems easy.

When we are infatuated with another, we think of love as our desire to “have” another and “make” another person *our own*. *As we mature, we realize love is not at all about owning and possessing*, and that there are many degrees and levels of love. We naturally begin to realize, especially when Christ lives in us, that **love, at its best and highest expression, is hard.**

In *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis speaks of *need love* as the love humans seek to fill their needs and fulfill their desires. **Need Love** is the love we naturally crave. By contrast, he describes *gift love* as a higher, transcendent love. As we mature and grow in love, and particularly as we mature in the love of God, in Christ, we discover **Gift Love** is a love much harder than we had once realized, so that engaging in **Gift Love** makes us vulnerable and exposes us to loss and pain.

Lewis also used four Greek words to describe the human panorama of love. His description has become a standard template used by many teachers and pastors since 1960, when he published *The Four Loves*. According to Lewis:

1) **Eros** is romantic love. Eros is the love we speak of when we are “in love” or “fall into love.” Eros is a sexual force that can grow into one of the richest expressions of marital love or when solely self-absorbed, a dynamic that can destroy lives and relationship. Eros can grow into goodness or it can become a great evil.

2) **Philia** is friendship love. Friendship is a non-erotic love we choose and a love which necessitates contribution and giving.

3) **Storge** is familial love of parents, children and siblings; it is a relational love in which we find ourselves by chance, not by choice.

4) **Agape** is divine love, the love that never changes. It is, of course, the highest of all *The Four Loves*. When given and lived within those who yield to God’s love, divine love empowers one to see the needs of others as equal to or greater than one’s own. Divine love is forever; it never leaves. It is not reliant on or defined by feelings, which come and go. Divine love is more about giving than receiving. The love of God is given without an expectation of demand on a “return on investment.”

Christmas and Easter, the great towers of Christ-centered faith, are founded and empowered by agape love—God’s great and supreme love for us, his children. Some of the secular days we observe annually focus on gratitude and thanksgiving, a facet of love—including Thanksgiving and Memorial Day. Two of the secular holidays intentionally target love—Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day. Of all the secular celebrations that remind us of human love, Mother’s Day comes the closest to being a holy-day rather than merely a holiday. *Of all our holidays, apart from our sacred days, Mother’s Day may have a greater nexus to God’s love than any others.*

To receive God’s love is to realize that one is not worthy of his love and grace. To receive God’s love is a transformative experience that lasts eternally. God’s love is matchless and paramount, above all...but on the human level, *to be a recipient of a mother’s love, a beneficiary of a mother’s nurture and blessed by a mother’s love and grace is one of the most divine of all purely human experiences.*

Not all mothers (like “all” of anything) are angels. But when a woman becomes a mother, there seems to be something in her physiology that changes in her very essence and soul so that she, apart from all her own failings and sins, becomes filled with love for her child. Some cynically

describe mother-love as “self-centered” for this love is uniquely experienced by a woman for her own children.

Far from being self-centered, mother-love is more likely an example of how humans, at their very best, cannot love beyond their boundaries. It is true that not every woman who has conceived, delivered, watched over, held, comforted and cried over the child to whom they gave birth have done so in an angelic fashion. It is true many messages on Mother’s Day cards are idealistic, because many children have not had exceptional experiences of care, comfort and concern from their mothers. *But of all relationships we have with other humans, we are all more likely to receive life-long grace, mercy and love from our mothers than any other source.*

Motherhood is unique in all human relationships, and her role is critically important in the life of her children. *The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.* How are mothers a picture of the divine?

- Mothers ignore, wink at and downplay the shortcomings of their children.
- Mothers quickly forgive and make some of the most farfetched excuses for their children’s failure to make the grade.
- Mothers never give up loving—they love their children forever.
- Mothers love self-sacrificially—when there isn’t enough food to go around, mothers suddenly lose their appetite in order that their children may eat.
- Mothers love unconditionally. Of all the varieties and kinds of love we humans experience and know, mother-love is perhaps the closest to divine love.

Let us consider the nexus of God’s love and Mother-love, and appreciate and give thanks for both! I conclude with this final thought from Lewis’ *The Four Loves*:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.”

Happy Mother’s Day to one and all—may this time move us to deep appreciation for mothers at large, and for God, who created us all, including mothers!

Until next month,
Yours in Christ, our risen Lord,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

CWR/PTM Prayer List—May 2022

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 a resident here, where I live, who had a dizzy spell and fell in the parking lot.—Arizona

Please join me as I pray for the victims of violence in our society and those suffering from disasters of all kinds.—Texas

I have a problem of getting a good amount of air in my lungs. I need to breathe better, fuller and deeper.—Oregon

I have pain from ill-fitting dentures and trouble eating. Please pray for me.—Minnesota

I am requesting your prayers on behalf of all my family members, friends and neighbors in the loss of our sister and dear friend to many who recently passed away in a nursing home at the age of 70.—Virginia

I pray for everyone at CWR/PTM to continue God's work to all fellow mankind.—Louisiana

Please pray that my granddaughter would meet a godly man, someone very special she would really love. —Indiana

Please join me in prayer for my friend who has Muscular Dystrophy. Her symptoms started at age eleven, and now at 24 years old she is in a wheelchair.—Pennsylvania

Please pray for three members of my boyfriend's family who are in the hospital with COVID-19. —Maine

Our son-in-law just recently died from COVID-19. Please pray for our daughter. —Indiana

Please pray that tensions in Russia and Ukraine don't escalate into war. —West Virginia

Please pray that all my loved ones will come to a closer relationship with God, and pray for their health. —Texas

Please continue to pray for my son, who has cancer. Thank you for your prayers.—Georgia

Please pray for a very helpful neighbor and friend, who is in his early seventies, suffers from neck and back deterioration. He is in constant pain and barely can walk or stand and desperately wants relief. He has no help from family.—Florida

Please pray for improved self-employment income in my field of accounting and tax preparations. Also please pray for relief worldwide of the COVID pandemic.—Louisiana

My wife is in a nursing home rehab center. She had a urinary tract infection and cystic blood disorder. She recently passed out and fell, but she is doing better now.—Louisiana

My good friend's son committed suicide (he was in his mid-twenties). Please pray for God's comfort.—California

Please pray for me. I need much improvement in my retention of what I hear and read.—Indiana

Please pray that all the killing, looting and stealing will stop and that the victims will get lasting relief from God.—Texas

Please continue to remember me in your prayers, as I'm struggling with depression. Thank you all at CWR/PTM for all of the encouraging literature that you send in the mail.—Tennessee

My family and I have had much difficulty trying to avoid catching the Corona virus, Delta variant, Omicron etc. Some of our family members have passed away and others survived. We ask for your prayers to get through these difficult times. —New Mexico

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.