

God's Love

[God's Love Post #1]

"[God] is the perfect embodiment of love, and we rely heavily on the constancy and universal reach of that love. As President Thomas S. Monson has expressed: 'God's love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.'" This statement from Elder D. Todd Christofferson caught my attention when I read his talk again recently. This says to me that God will never change his love for us no matter what we do.

Later Elder Christofferson said, "God's love is infinite and it will endure forever, but what it means for each of us depends on how we respond to His love." So the choice is ours. What will His love look like in our life? We will spend the next two weeks exploring what President Thomas S. Monson and Elder Christofferson have to say about God's love in their talks from last conference.

[The Perfect Path to Happiness](#) by President Thomas S. Monson

[Abide in My Love](#) By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

[God's Love Post #2]



When speaking about how to describe and speak of God's love Elder D. Todd Christofferson said, " the descriptor unconditional appears nowhere in scripture. Rather, His love is described in scripture as 'great and wonderful love' (D&C 138:3), 'perfect love'(1 John 4:18: Moroni 8:16), 'redeeming love' (Alma 5:26), and 'everlasting love' (Jeremiah 31:3). These are better terms because the word unconditional can convey mistaken impressions about divine love, such as, God tolerates and excuses anything we do because His love is unconditional, or God makes no demands upon us because His love is unconditional, or all are saved in the heavenly kingdom of God because His love is unconditional."

In this statement, he lists five terms used to describe God's love for His children – four are from the scriptures and one has come into use over time. He describes some of the concerns about using the word unconditional when referring to Heavenly Father's love. But in saying what unconditional love doesn't mean, he tells you that He loves you even when He can't accept what you are doing. That suggests that somehow He can separate

you from your behavior – you aren't defined by what you do. So even in times when you may feel that, because of what you have or haven't done, He can't love you, please remember that He does.

As I spent time thinking about the four terms Elder Christofferson selected from the scriptures, I wondered why those words were used. I will talk about each of them over the next few days.

[God's Love Post #3] – Redeeming Love

There is a verse in hymn 188, "Thy Will, O Lord, Be Done", that reads,

"When in the wondrous realms above
Our Savior had been called upon
To save our world of sin by love,
He said, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done.'"

The Savior described His atonement like this, "For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—'."

Can you even begin to imagine the depth of love it would take for Him to go through that ordeal?

That same love is available directly to us today – and it can be part of our life if we pay the price.

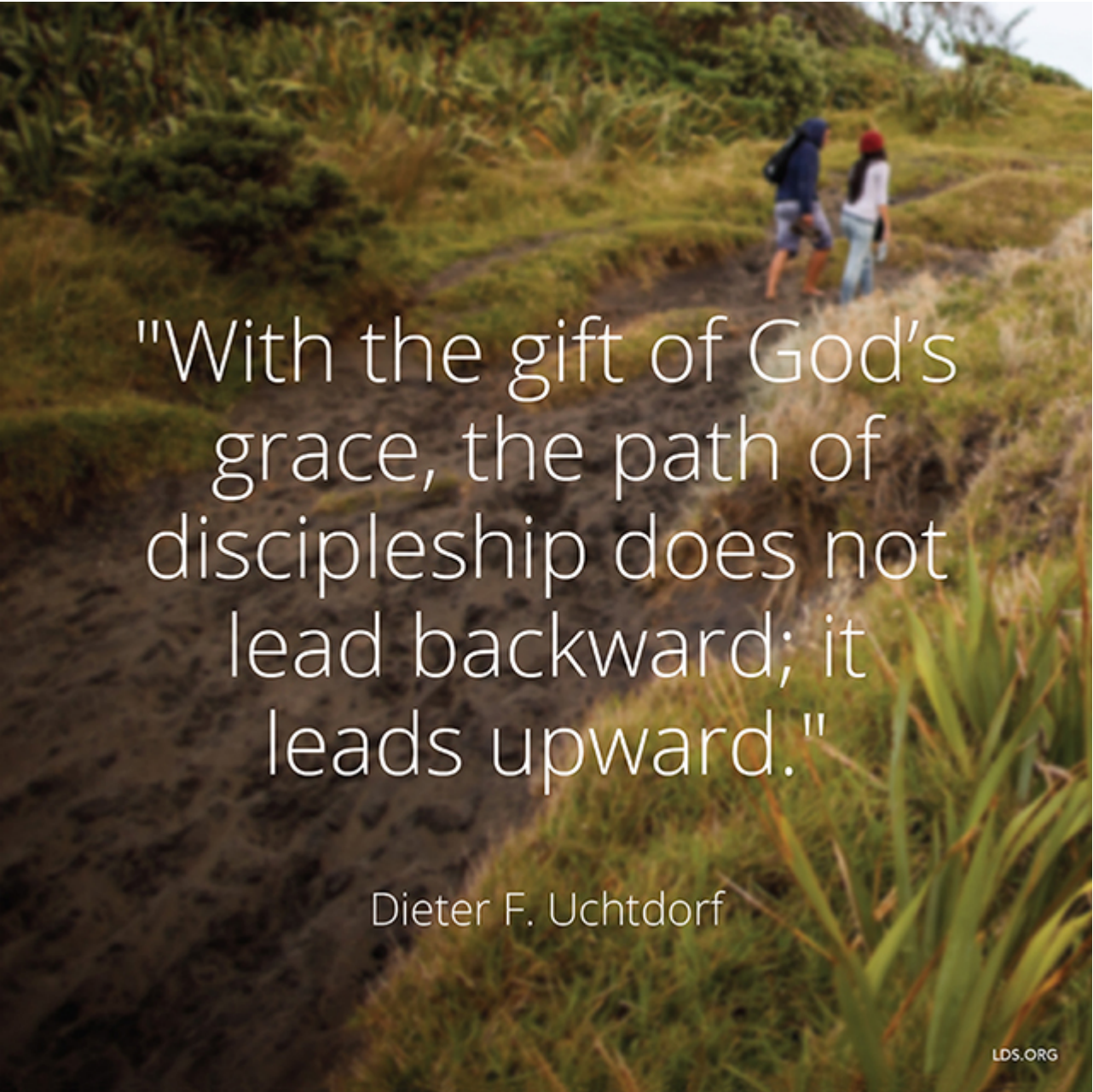
President Thomas S. Monson has given us some insights into

what our part is. He said, “Essential to the plan [of happiness] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost. It is not enough, however, merely to believe in Him and His mission. We need to work and learn, search and pray, repent and improve. We need to know God’s laws and live them. We need to receive His saving ordinances. Only by so doing will we obtain true, eternal happiness.”

President Monson identified the challenge. Are you up for it?

[Why We Need a Savior](#) Video

[God’s Love Post #4] – Redeeming Love

A photograph of two people hiking up a grassy hill. The person on the left is wearing a blue shirt and shorts, and the person on the right is wearing a white shirt and jeans. They are walking away from the camera up a dirt path. The hill is covered in green grass and some taller plants. The sky is overcast.

"With the gift of God's
grace, the path of
discipleship does not
lead backward; it
leads upward."

Dieter F. Uchtdorf

LDS.ORG

Jesus said: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

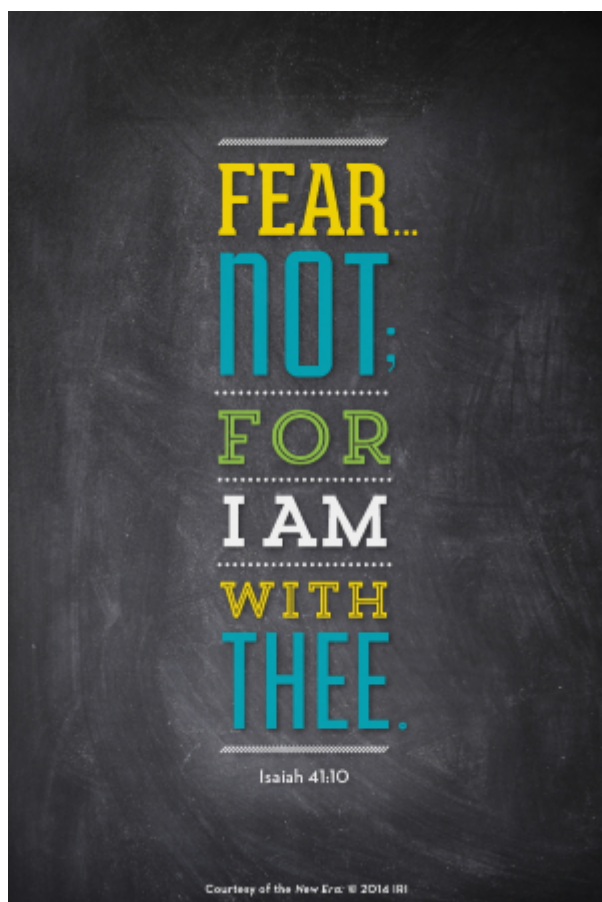
What is the phrase., " continue in my love?" Is it a request, a command, a statement of possibility, a promise?

He then continues with, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Notice that the Savior is speaking from personal experience here just like He does when He is helping you and me through the challenges of our life.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson expands on these statements by Jesus. He said, "To 'continue in' or 'abide in' the Savior's love means to receive His grace and be perfected by it. To receive His grace, we must have faith in Jesus Christ and keep His commandments, including repenting of our sins, being baptized for the remission of sins, receiving the Holy Ghost, and continuing in the path of obedience."

This shows that His redeeming love is always present, but, in many ways, how it affects us is our choice. This all may seem overwhelming, but remember that what God requires is possible. If we are on the path and progressing, we will make it. It is satan that wants us to believe otherwise.

[God's Love Post #5] – Perfect love



Elder D. Todd Christofferson said, "Beyond rendering the

penitent person guiltless and spotless with the promise of being 'lifted up at the last day,' there is a second vital aspect of abiding in the love of God. Abiding in His love will enable us to realize our full potential, to become even as He is. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf stated: 'The grace of God does not merely restore us to our previous innocent state. ... His aim is much higher: He wants His sons and daughters to become like Him.'"

What can I seek in this life that will be more fulfilling than to reach my potential? That God will enable us to be our best seems to me to be an expression of His perfect love.

The journey to become what we can be, does not follow an easy path. It has many obstacles along the way that often seem impassable. But the perfect love of God who, through His Son Jesus Christ, has overcome the world, will help us overcome those things that seem to block our way.

One of the of the barriers we seem to have is fear. It affects many of the things we try to do so we can grow. It can be fear of the unknown future, fear of failure, fear of not being accepted or fear of almost anything else. Fear often will not let us do things we need to do so we can reach our potential. But perfect love can help. Both 1 John 4:18 and Moroni 8:16 tell us that perfect love casts out fear. That doesn't mean we won't have concerns about what we need to do, but it does mean that, with God's help, we can face the problems we have and make it through them. I know God will do His part if we do ours. I remember sitting on a commuter train about one year ago and making the decision that I was going to face my fear and do something I needed to do. That decision started an amazing journey.

[God's Love Post #6] – Perfect love

**WE ARE
INFINITELY
MORE
THAN OUR
LIMITATIONS
OR OUR
AFFLICTIONS!**

JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

© 2014 IRI

Yesterday's post was about God's perfect love which provides the way for us to achieve our full potential. "To abide in God's love in this sense means to submit fully to His will. It means to accept His correction when needed, ..."1

As I stopped to ponder these two phrase many thoughts have come to my mind to help me expand my understanding. I have listed a few.

– I remember many years ago wondering what I would miss in

this life if I chose to do only those things that were God's will. I came to the conclusion that I wouldn't miss anything that was important, so I decided to do that. I found that, even though making the decision was necessary, it was the easy part. Actually doing it is a lifetime journey.

– When you choose to “submit fully to [God's] will” it does not make you perfect or remove you from all pain and sorrow. It does, however, let you come “unto Christ, and be perfected in him...”²

– C. S. Lewis often used the metaphor that God is a sculptor working on us as a piece of granite. The adversity we face is like the blow of a hammer on a chisel knocking away the excess stone and exposing us in our full potential. It is painful but necessary.

– King Benjamin said a person must be, “willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”³ if he wants to get rid of the “natural man” within him.

It is His perfect love that can show us the way, support us through the journey with hope and joy, then deliver us in our most complete form into His presence. The journey begins with a decision. I hope you will decide to take the next step to bring this love more fully into your life?

References:

1- Elder D. Todd Christofferson said. “To abide in God's love in this sense means to submit fully to His will. It means to accept His correction when needed, ‘for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.’ It means to love and serve one another as Jesus has loved and served us. It means to learn ‘to abide the law of a celestial kingdom’ so that we can ‘abide a celestial glory.’”

2- Moroni 10:32

3- Mosiah 3:19

[God's Love Post #7] – Great and Wonderful love



Elder D. Todd Christofferson spoke of Helen Keller's life, who at the age of 19 months became deaf and blind, as "something of a parable suggesting how divine love can transform a willing soul." Helen was very difficult to be around , but one event changed her whole story. While her teacher, Anne Sullivan, was trying to teach Helen words, she wrote the word "water" on Helen's hand and then put her hand under a water faucet. Helen described the experience this way, "That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! ... Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house[,] every object ... I touched seemed to quiver with life."

I love the imagery of her statement "that living word awakened my soul." As you think of that statement and visualize what it means, what do you see? One of the things that I see is the love of my Heavenly Father awakening my soul so that everything around me becomes alive. Something I can use to bless my life and the life of others. His love is amazing!

Elder Christofferson followed up the story with these words, "Even so, we may be quite content with what we have done in our lives and that we simply are what we are, while our Savior

comprehends a glorious potential that we perceive only 'through a glass, darkly.' Each of us can experience the ecstasy of divine potential unfolding within us, much like the joy Helen Keller felt when words came to life, giving light to her soul and setting it free."

What will your soul be like when the love of God sets it free? Will it be worth the price you have to pay and the effort you have to exert to allow it to happen? Are you willing to do what is necessary so your soul can be free? These posts about God's love have and will continue to give you ideas on a way to start – no matter where you are now. Will you join me on the path to feeling His love more deeply?

[God's Love Post #8] – Redeeming Love



In reference to the relationship that Helen Keller had with her teacher Anne Sullivan, Elder D. Todd Christofferson said this, "Similarly, as we come to trust rather than resist our divine Teacher, He can work with us to enlighten and lift us to a new reality."

There are three phases in his statement that really intrigued me when I read the talk. When I stopped to think* about them, I decided they were worth looking at in some detail.

1 – "trust rather than resist" – My assumption is that you believe in Jesus Christ – that He is your Savior, that He is your example of how to live and that He loves you. But do you really believe that He can and will help you accomplish those things you want to do that are good? Do you trust Him? Last night, as my wife and I were reading about the 2060 warriors of Helaman who had all received many wounds in battle but had all lived, we came across an explanation of why they were preserved. Helaman said, "their minds are firm, and they do

put their trust in God continually.” As I read that verse of scripture and thought about this concept of trust,** it enlarged my understanding of how powerful trusting God is. It is our choice whether we trust or resist God. What will it be?

2 – “He can work with us” – Because of the principle of agency, the Lord is not able to do things for you or me if we do not open the door to Him. The word can in this phrase means that we have given Him permission to work with us because of our trust. I imply from this statement that I cannot and God will not lift me alone.

3 – “enlighten and lift us to a new reality” – The only limit on what this phrase is saying seems to be our trust in our divine Teacher. That indicates that anyone can be elevated to a new place. That new place is not always in new surroundings, but it always includes our spiritual, mental or emotional condition.

So trust in Jesus Christ becomes another tool to help us more deeply immerse ourselves in God’s love. Have you written a list of those tools we have discovered so far? If you haven’t, will you?

*Stop and think is an effective learning tool. This is often used when something catches your attention while listening or reading.

** Connecting ideas is another effective learning tool. One reason it works well is because the mind stores information by connecting it to associated memories.

[God’s Love Post #9] – Everlasting

Love

The last phrase that Elder D. Todd Christofferson selected from the scriptures to describe God's love is everlasting love. Think about what that says. It means that you and I will still be able to enjoy His love after we leave this life, but the depth to which we can experience it then largely depends on choices we make now.

Elder Christofferson said that, "the intent of Christ's suffering – the ultimate manifestation of His love—was 'to bring about the bowels of mercy, which over powereth justice*, ...'" What an amazing concept. While I am learning to meet the demands of justice (which means living life perfectly), because of mercy I can still move towards living with God (which means feeling the full effect of His love) after this life. And so can you.

Only Christ was able to meet the requirements of justice in mortal life. So the question is, will you trust the Savior and follow the path of mercy without resistance?

*This is another statement where I had to use the "Stop and think" learning tool. Simply put, I learned that I don't have to beat myself up because I can't currently keep all of the laws of God, because if I continually qualify to receive the mercy provided by Christ, which is something you and I can do, eventually I will live those laws completely. And I will only have to pay the price of repentance for my failures.

[Beautiful, Beautiful ~ Francesca Battistelli](#) Song

[God's Love Post #10] – Everlasting Love

In an article I read the other day, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf told of watching some archers practice their sport. Then he made this observation, “I don’t think you can develop a reputation for being an accomplished archer by shooting at an empty wall and then drawing targets around the arrows. You have to learn the art of finding the target and hitting the bull’s-eye. Shooting first and drawing the target afterward may seem a little absurd, but sometimes we ourselves mirror that very behavior in other circumstances of life.”

I had planned on writing about this statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks that was quoted by Elder D. Todd Christofferson, “The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have done. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have become.” Then I decided I needed to use both of them because they were related. I could get the connection, but I felt that they were.

Last night as I began to write, I skimmed through President Uchtdorf’s article one more time, and found the piece that I needed to connect the two statements. After quoting the scripture where Christ said that the two great commandment are to love God and love other people, he said, “Please note the last sentence: ‘On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’ The Savior not only showed us the target, but He also identified the bull’s-eye.”

The focus of life should be love for God and love for others. When you and I act based on that love, we will become a person filled with love. As we love God and others we will feel God’s everlasting love in our life and see it work in the lives of others. With the passing of time, these experiences will cause our love to become everlasting as well.

If I paint my target around work, or sports, or anything else, we will miss out on many important opportunities.

I hope you will take away at least two things from this post: 1:- By loving God and others, our own own life will get better; 2 – I wrote in this post the process I went through in preparing it. There are study skills involved – connecting related ideas to create new understanding, pondering, follow the feelings from the Spirit, and reading things again to see if there is something that was missed.

[I Feel My Savior's Love](#) Video