

# YOU ARE LOVED

8-13



Way down deep inside, that's what we really want more than anything else in the world, isn't it? Not wealth, fame, power or pleasure, but someone to love us without reservation, unconditionally, and forever. Someone who really cares, who knows us completely (our ideals and frustrations, our hopes and fears, our strengths and weaknesses, all the good and all the bad) and loves us anyway. We want someone who makes us feel complete and whole inside. Someone who makes us feel worthy and special just by loving us. Someone whose love makes us stronger, freer, and more loving. We tell ourselves that such love exists only in dreams and fairy tales, that we must be realistic. We feel that the desire, that need, is an immature, unhealthy thing. Yet, in spite of all that, buried somewhere beneath all the denials and suppressions, remains this overwhelming need to be loved and accepted. And part of us never ceases to search for it.

## The Endless, Fruitless Search

We search for it in parents, friends, lovers, husbands and wives, and children. We even scan strange eyes at parties or on subway trains, wondering, hoping... Sometimes, for a while, we think we've found it. For a couple of days, or weeks, or months, we think we've found that unbelievable thing--someone who truly loves us, who really cares about us, who wants only the best for us, even at his own expense. But somehow, sooner or later, every single one of them ends up letting us down and disappointing us. They take advantage of us, or deceive us, or perhaps they just end up being "human" a little selfish, a little unkind, a little unreliable. And we disappoint them, too, if we're honest with ourselves. It is a very curious thing, is it not, that all human beings old women and newborn babies, Harvard graduates and aboriginal tribesmen, corporation presidents and beggars--all experience this need, and yet it is a need for which there is not apparent fulfillment. For every other need we have, there exists some thing to fulfill it. We hunger, and there is bread; we thirst, and there is water. We need challenge, recognition, companionship, creative expression ... and for all of these there are possibilities of fulfillment. Is it logical that there should be no possibility of fulfillment for our need to be loved, perhaps the most powerful and universal of all our needs? such love must exist somewhere. Perhaps we've just been looking in the wrong places, and at the wrong people.

## One Man's Love

There was only one man who ever loved like that--completely, without reservation, and unconditionally. Only one man who was willing even to die for those he loved. And this love wasn't confined to his mother, or his friends, or a particular woman; he loved everyone like that. He shocked people with that love. They didn't understand how he could love criminals, prostitutes, drunkards, and corrupt bureaucrats. They had never seen such powerful love. Nor had they seen such transforming love, for once it had touched people, they were never the same again. Once they knew they were

loved, the prostitutes became godly women, the drunkards stopped drinking, and the bureaucrats returned their stolen money. The religious people called him a blasphemer. The self-righteous called him a son of the devil. Others called him insane. But his friends called him...**Jesus**.

## Absolute Love

Everything he did, everything he said, revealed an extraordinary man, a man who loved as no other man or woman before or since. When people were hungry he fed them, and when they were sick, he healed them. When they were weak and fearful he gave them strength and courage, and when they were discouraged, he gave them hope. When they mourned he comforted them, and when the sin and death in their lives was too great to bear, he took their death in himself and gave them his own eternal life. You say, that's all very well for those who lived with him, but what good does that do me? He died two thousand years ago. And that's the most extraordinary thing of all--because he isn't dead. He's **alive**. So he's not just a loving man, or a great moral teacher, or a dead prophet; he's the Son of the Living God, the resurrected Messiah, the creator of all life and the giver of all love. He's alive. And he has promised to protect, strengthen, comfort and love you for ever. One of his followers said that nothing would ever be able to separate you from that love: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:35 That is why we experience that overwhelming need; we were created to be loved by God, whose very nature is Love.

## Yours For the Asking

There is only one condition. God has always loved you, but in order to experience it personally, you must ask Jesus into your life and into your heart. He gave you a free will, and he will never violate it. He will never force himself on or his love-upon you. The choice is yours to invite him in, or shut him out. There's no middle ground. Some people think that inviting him in is a great risk, but it is only the risk of abandoning yourself to perfect love. It's a gift, this love. Nothing you do can earn it. He doesn't ask you to give up anything, to clean up your life, or to get yourself together in order to receive it. He only wants to love you, and to let you know that there is nothing separating you from the life and love and joy and peace of God but your own choice. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

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*Exodus 3:4... And God called to him out of the bush.*

**Burning Bush Ministries**

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