



JOYFUL LIVING NEWSLETTER

Encouraging, Equipping and Empowering Women to Joyful Biblical Living

God's Love For Us

Between Friends by Joy Rice Martin

I wonder how many of you received a Valentine in February. I received one which is very precious to me. It was written in very large letters by my sweetheart of more than 57 years. Roger is blind—he cannot drive to the store to pick out a card for me—he couldn't read them if he got there. But he carefully took a piece of decorative paper and wrote a simple love letter!

“TO MY SWEETHEART, JOY. ‘HOW DO I LOVE THEE’ (A quote from Elizabeth

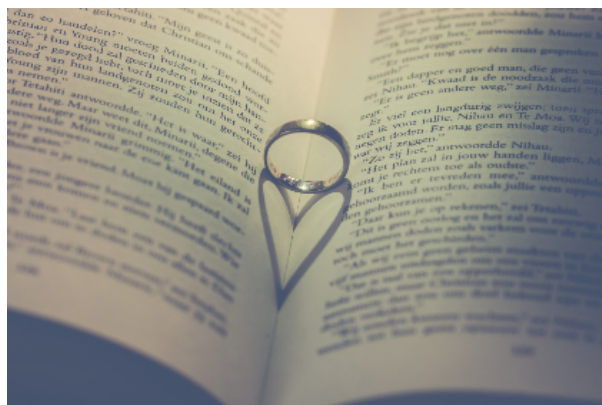
Barrett Browning). Then he made an acrostic of the word SPECIAL and wrote a quality he loves in me, one for each letter. It was a wonderful, sweet token to me. These loving words, written with great difficulty and a few missing letters, meant more to me than a dozen roses or a box of my favorite dark chocolates or any expensive but beautiful Hallmark card!



Do I believe he truly loves me? O, yes—he proves it not only in words but in thoughtful actions—bringing me a cup of coffee when I first wake up, scrambling an egg for me, washing some dishes, giving me unlimited hugs and kisses, complementing me, giving me backrubs, teaching me truths from God’s Word, answering my theological questions, and so much more. I am a blessed woman, and I treasure his love.

I know that not every woman experiences that kind of love. It is precious, but there is no greater love than what our dear Savior, our Father God, and the sweet Holy Spirit pours out in our hearts. As we read the Bible, we discover it is packed full of wonderful expressions of faithful love. As I read it, I am deeply touched by God’s great, unconditional love for me and all those who put their trust in Him. The God who cannot lie, who cannot break a promise, who cannot be unfaithful, tells us over and over how dear and precious we are to Him.

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I was deeply touched by a verse I read recently in Romans 5:3–5: It says that we can rejoice in the midst of our problems and trials,

because we know God’s purpose is building endurance: “And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our hope of salvation....Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit...” That is a special work of the Holy Spirit, pouring God’s love into our heart. It goes on to say, “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners....So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God” (vss. 8,11). Isn’t that amazing—we who were enemies of God because of our sin are now friends of God and dearly beloved!

And more than just giving us the words, the Lord demonstrates this love over and over—in answers to prayer, in complete forgiveness when we don’t deserve it, in the beauties of the world around us as the flowers began to bloom, in sweet hugs from grandchildren or close friends, in the friendly lick of a dear pet, in delicious strawberries and grapes and crunch sweet apples, in good books we read and in encouraging messages we hear on the radio! All these are tokens of His love and grace.

So, my dear friend, rejoice in the knowledge that God loves you, unconditionally, forever. Romans 8:15 asks, “Can anything separate us from Christ’s love?” and then replies in verse 38: “I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love....No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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