

September 17, 2017

Beloved

Movie love appears great. But what happens after the *happily ever after*?

Ephesians 3:16-19

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- Truly Being in Christ begins with God extending his love towards us.
- His love is a faithful love that is greater than we can truly know.
- Receiving and living from God's love is the source of the fullness God has for us.

Take Out Thoughts & Exercise:

- While knowing God's love is the foundational reality for being in Christ and maturing as a follower of Jesus, it is also one of the most difficult realities for us to grasp.
- No one can convince you that Jesus loves you with the kind of love we each *need* to truly grow up as a mature and healthy Christian - as a mature and healthy person.
- Consider this invitation:
 1. Prayerfully allow the God to weave the truth of his love into your heart. Pray daily that God would reveal his heart towards you.
 2. Look to Jesus - read the gospels (starting with John's gospel) and watch how Jesus responds to the characters that come to him longing for acceptance and love.
 3. Consider reading those passages, one at a time, using an ancient practice called gospel contemplation:
 1. *Select a short narrative passage of scripture.*
 2. *Relax and settle into God's presence. Breathe deeply and sit quietly.*
 3. *Read aloud the passage several times.*
 4. *Set the bible aside and allow yourself to take part in the scene, using the imagination.*
 5. *Immerse yourself in the scene - either as an observer or, if God leads, as one of the characters. Allow God to speak to you through this immersion.*
 6. *After the prayer period make a review, reflecting on what took place during prayer.*
 4. Whether you have been a follower of Jesus for years or are just beginning to consider who Jesus is, make this practice a regular part of your week in order to allow God to reveal his heart, on display through Jesus, to you.