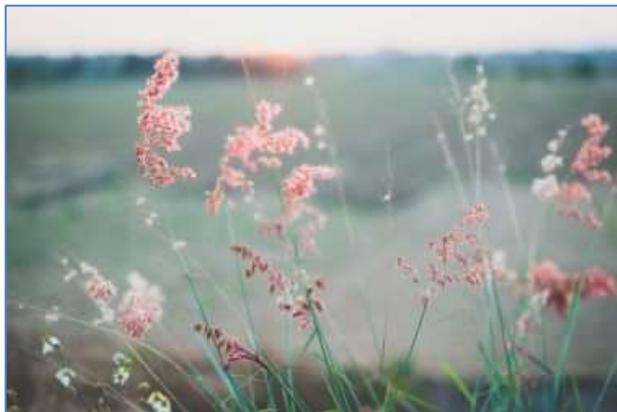


The Unconditional Love Club Grows

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When driving down to Nashua this past Sunday morning (a 30 minute trip) the Holy Spirit descended and gave me insight. I suddenly saw that everything exists within the amazing and bountiful grace of God, and that without this grace everything would cease to exist. In other words, grace is inherent in every atom and particle of matter; it is inherent in energy; it is a fundamental law of the cosmos, because it is an absolutely unchangeable aspect of God.

Without grace the universe would have self destructed a long time ago. Human beings, who have been so adept at warring with each other and abusing nature since almost the beginning of time, have miraculously survived and prospered due to this unconditional grace of God. Many people wonder, “Why does God allow evil to exist? If He is all powerful and loving, why doesn’t He stop the pain and suffering inflicted on the innocents?” It is actually unconditional love and grace that causes God to use restraint and not interfere with human autonomy.

Love is Complicated by Mixed Emotions

As we continue our study group in Nashua listening to the recorded version of *Real Love in Parenting*, by Dr. Greg Baer, we learned how the motivation behind our words and actions changes the nature of our communication. The same words such as, “I love you”, can be received as a selfish demand or as comfort and support depending on the motivation of the person saying them. Do you love with the expectation of being loved in return?

It takes a lot of self reflection to realize where you’re really coming from when you speak to your children or spouse. But since none of us were raised in a perfect love environment we unfortunately have selfish patterns embedded in our DNA and learned from modeled behavior. Words such as, “How many times do I have to tell you...” carry a critical tone that prevents the receiver from experiencing love. Why? Because those words come from a self-centered viewpoint such as:

“You’re annoying me because you’re not doing what I asked you to do. You must be stupid, lazy or inept. You don’t care about me, you only care about yourself. You should love me by doing what I say. I’m not going to love you unless you do what I ask you to do.”



Oh, but shouldn’t children do what parents ask them to do? Yes, but, people are primarily motivated by love. So a child who feels loved will be much more likely to respond positively to requests than a child who experiences only demands selfishly expressed by their parents. True parental love may desire a reciprocal relationship, but it does not expect love to be returned according to conditional measurements. True parental love is embedded with grace which allows for learning and growth.

It’s not easy because often our emotions are mixed. Most parents genuinely love their children, but family life can get stressful and parents often carry heavy burdens far beyond their children’s understanding. Work may be frustrating and bills may be piling up; your time is compromised and you’re not enjoying the daily grind. Your own love bank account may be running on empty as well. In this situation it’s hard to speak from a genuinely unselfish and loving motivation unless you’ve reached sainthood.

By the Grace of God there is Hope!

God as our Heavenly Parent knows that we are still growing and learning. God has absolute faith and confidence in our ability to grow to our full potential, and He/She takes delight in watching us grow. God has provided a perfect environment, has sent messengers with truth, and encourages our self discovery. But most of all, God is patient and lets us learn from our own mistakes.

We want the best for our children and sometimes that translates into wanting them to be on their best behavior all the time. The behavior we expect may not even be reasonable for their age. Our expectations may be coming from our own needs or learned patterns. These are the challenges we face as parents who are still learning to love as God loves. But as we try our best there is grace to carry us and our progeny forward.

The purpose of life is to grow in love, because only through true love can we experience real joy.