

Recipe for love



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I Want to Know What Love Is by Foreigner
Addicted to Love by Robert Palmer
All You Need is Love by The Beatles
Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places by Johnny Lee
You Give Love a Bad Name by Bon Jovi

Do you “know what love is”? Are you “addicted to love”? Maybe you don’t yet have love and are pursuing it relentlessly, thinking “all you need is love” to be happy? Perhaps you are “looking for love in all the wrong places”? Or have you or someone else given “love a bad name”?

Have you ever really listened to the lyrics of these songs? Some are comical and even sad, especially when thinking of what love really is. What is your definition? Do you live it out daily?

In August, my husband and I celebrated twenty-five years of blissful marriage filled with complete happiness, packed with abundant joy, void of any problems, infused with peace, and overflowing with perfect love for one another. We rarely fought and when we did, we came back together with words of love and affirmation before the sun went down on the day. We built a business together that grew our love as we worked in perfect harmony. We raised our four children in a loving home lacking any disunity and saturated with love and abundant parental wisdom.

Isn’t this incredible? Well, it would be if it were true. But the only time such a fairy tale happens is in the world of Disney or in a Hallmark movie. If you’ve read my writings before, especially my article from October 2019 about the renewing of our vows, you know that it’s quite the opposite of what was.

Let me share with you the actual truth of our quarter century of marriage: There were moments of happiness, joy, and peace. But there were also arguments and fights, sometimes volatile in nature. There were misunderstandings, miscommunications, missteps, misfortunes, misery, and missed opportunities. There were many moments of sin. We built a business that challenged our love and threatened any harmony. As parents, we made many mistakes, dealt with strife more often than not, and lacked wisdom in critical moments.

What is also true is that we had to learn “what love is”, understand that being “addicted to love” in ways the world and how we knew it, needed to change, know that “all you need is love” could not come from one another, see how we were “looking for love in all the wrong places”, and stop giving “love a bad name”.

If you’ve read my writings before you also know that I enjoy creating poems and have written one on the Fruit of the Spirit. I’ve shared portions of it before and now here is the portion on love:

LOVE is the first and most important,
For it is written in God’s commands:
To LOVE your neighbor and your God,
And to serve them with your hands.

LOVE is patient and LOVE is kind,
It’s the way that you treat others.
LOVE is in your words and actions—
Towards your family, friends, and brothers.

LOVE does not envy or boast.
It’s not proud or dishonoring.
LOVE is deep down in your heart,
And it’s never, ever mean.

LOVE is not selfish, it is not angry,
And it keeps no record of wrongs.
LOVE does not delight in evil—
But it rejoices in truth and getting along.

LOVE always protects and trusts,
It always hopes and perseveres.
LOVE never fails to encourage others—
Your LOVE is music to their ears.

God tells you to LOVE everyone—
Even when they are acting bad.
You should LOVE your friends and your foes—
LOVING them makes God so glad.

If this little ditty is the truth about love, how are you doing in loving others? My poem is not only talking about marital relationships but relationships with a whole spectrum of other people. How would you rate yourself on a scale of one to ten? Have you learned to do it better over the years? Are you able to love even when others are not loving toward you?

That’s where the goodness is—when love also includes grace.

What I know from my time here on earth with my Creator is that God is love. When we come to know Him, He is in us. And when we use the power of God in us, we are able to love as He does.

1 John 4:7-12 says, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.”

Oh! Let that just wash over you. Read it again.

Loving well is something that we cannot do without God—because He is love. When we are in a relationship with Jesus and learning by His words and His ways as the perfect example, we can then love others well—in every relationship that we have.

The Bible is filled with so many truths about love and it even reveals the recipe to love others well. Do you know the recipe? Are you loving others according to God’s recipe? Or do you need the recipe so that you can learn how?

I’m not one of those people who keeps recipes to herself. In fact, I feel that sharing is caring. And I find it completely annoying when people don’t share their recipes so that everyone can be blessed by the goodness!

One of my favorite recipes to share is my Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Truffles—perfect for Christmas treats, Valentine’s gifts, Birthday presents, or just because. I make these all the time and am often asked for the recipe. I have three options: #1) Refuse to share because I want to be the joy-keeper. #2) Share with those who ask so that they get to make them and spread the love. #3) Spread the love even more by allowing everyone access to them.

I choose option #3. You see, a year and a half ago I started a website to share my favorite gluten-free recipes and teach people about living a gluten-free lifestyle. The problem is, it’s not complete and it’s far from perfect. I simply don’t have the time to share all the things I’ve learned and all of the recipes I have. But I still made it live so that those who want access to my truffles (and other recipes) have it.

I am choosing to do the same with my love recipe. I’m sure it’s not perfect and it won’t be complete because there is so much that God teaches about love that one recipe won’t encompass. But it will give us a good start and it will allow us to bless others with it.

First, let’s break down the ingredients so that you know what they are. Then let’s put it all together.

HUMILITY

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others before yourself, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others. – Philippians 2:3-4

Chew on that a moment. Do you think of others first? What would it look like for you to put others before yourself? When you are prioritizing your day, how much of it is about you and your own ambitions and how much of it is about others?

Of course, we want to take care of our needs also—but, I wonder, are we being too needy? Do we prioritize “me time”, overlooking the interests of others? When we are having “me time” do we include God-time in order to be filled with His love so that we can more fully care for others?

Do we take ownership of our mistakes and strive to do better in the future? Do we listen attentively to the thoughts of others in order to gain a new perspective? Or do we believe our thoughts, opinions, and ideas are more important and we must make sure we are heard?

Humility can look like a lot of different things in our lives—that’s what makes it a key ingredient to the love recipe.

SERVING

You, my brothers and sisters were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge in the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. –Galatians 5:13

How well do you serve others? Are you generous with your time, money, and all your ways by serving at every



opportunity? Do you seek ways to go above and beyond? Do you serve without expecting anything in return? Do you serve strangers? Do you serve your family, friends, and co-workers? Do you pray about ways to serve better?

Here’s the thing about this special ingredient—when we serve, when we give of ourselves, the goodness comes back to us ten-fold and everyone wins. Jesus even says in Acts 20:35, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”. He surely appreciates this ingredient in the recipe.

TRUTH

There are a couple of tablespoons to consider with this ingredient.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me to the way everlasting.
–Psalm 139:23-24

This first portion of truth is connected with humbling ourselves—if we are to love others well, we must first see what offensive ways are in us (truth) so that we can take ownership of them. When we do this, it lowers the defenses of others so that we can speak the truth in love to them (the second tablespoon).

Being loving does not mean agreeing with others and brushing sin or wrong ways under the rug. Being loving is speaking the truth in love.

We can only speak the truth in love when we know what is true. And knowing what is true can only come from God.

Truth is not our opinion on a matter and it is not the way we feel. Truth is the right and wrong from God’s perspective. This ingredient is perhaps the most difficult to add in, but when we do, it is the Pièce de resistance—the perfect ingredient needed to take the recipe over the top.

It’s time to put the recipe together:

Recipe for Love

1 cup **HUMILITY**
1 bucketload **SERVING**
2 tablespoons **TRUTH**

In life, wake up every day and ask God to fill your cup with humility. As you humble yourselves before others and God, seek opportunities to serve by the bucketloads. Finally, add one tablespoon truth of what you need to see and one tablespoon of truth in what you offer to others. Mix well and make often.

We can use this recipe in every relationship in our lives—with spouses, children, siblings, friends, co-workers, and even with relationships we have with businesses we go to.

Now, let’s take the love songs I mentioned earlier and use their titles to have a new look at love with this recipe. We now “know what love is”—God’s Word and His ways. Wouldn’t it be great for everyone if we were addicted to love—addicted to loving others, that is. When we live our lives like this, it’s true that “all you need is love”, because God is love. We will no longer be “looking for love in the wrong places” because we will be sharing the love with all the right intentions. And finally, we will never give “love a bad name” because everyone will enjoy our love recipe.

As we are sharing the love, let me also share this recipe that you might consider using to serve others on Valentine’s Day: yourglutenfreecoach.com/recipe/gluten-free-chocolate-chip-cookie-dough-truffles/

And if you have the blessing of being able to eat gluten—no problem, they are still delicious with gluten-filled flour too!

Let us go forth in this month of love and the rest of our lives, not singing the silly songs of old, but learning from the Author of Love, “Let all you do be done in love.”
–1 Corinthians 16:14

