

Reluctant to Love

Ps 139:23-24 — Let's search our hearts. Here is the question: Is there anyone here who has a reluctance to love? Having a reluctance means that you are disinclined or unwilling, due to not putting love into practice, which is opposed to the commandment that we have received to love. If you are reluctant or hesitant, you are lacking the will or desire to do something.

Is there anyone that you are reluctant to love? Are you holding back from loving? Maybe you sense alienation or indifference toward someone. Are you reluctant to show your love to him? Do you have to struggle to show him love or kindness? Are you unwilling to draw close to that person? Are you reluctant to get involved with his life? Are you disinclined in that way? Do you lean toward unwillingness when it comes to getting involved in people's lives? If you show reluctance, then you are holding back your love from a brother or a sister. You are reluctant to be friendly.

It could be that the person you are reluctant to love, above all others, needs to have your love bestowed upon him. To bestow your love means that you put your love to use and into action. You do not keep it for yourself, but you apply it to the greatest need in the Body, wherever that may be. You convey your love as a gift to others.

How brave do you have to be to love someone who, in your own mind or heart, you have a reluctance to love? Who is the greatest sinner? The one you find hard to love, or yourself, for not loving the one who needs love the most? Would not love overcome such reluctance? You may think that *he* makes himself unlovable, or *he* has a wall around him, a wall of independence. You might think *he* is a "know-it-all," a person who is hard to give suggestions to. Should not love be able to face or endure such a proud one with courage, overcoming that reluctance to love?

This sister or brother may be unlovable in your mind and in your eyes. Maybe it is *you* who are the unlovely one. For someone to be unlovely is simply to be unlikable, due

to some aberrant way in his personality. The unlovely one appears so unlovely that you don't love him. Perhaps he is not so likable in the natural, due to an inherited iniquity. People are going to continually come into the Body with inherited iniquities. So what are you going to do about it? Are they just going to feel your reluctance, or are you going to overcome that reluctance in order for them to prosper? If you don't overcome and love, then you are not going to prosper.

We Reap What we Sow

People need mercy. Maybe they are a little unpleasant due to some aberrant way in them, some little strange way that they are, a little peculiarity, something that deviates from what you would call *normal*. Of course, you see yourself as one who is certainly not aberrant at all. You are the standard of what is good and righteous. If you are so righteous, then how come you are reluctant to go to that brother or sister who needs your love? That is what the word *hypocrite* is really all about. Maybe he is a little unpleasant to be around, or he could be a disagreeable sort of person. That is what *aberrant* means. He probably is kind of unpleasant and disagreeable at times. Maybe you would say he is draining you. But how draining is he, really?

Jn 17:22 — Remember, glory is all about how you see a person. It is *how* you see him and *how* you hear from him that causes a reluctance in you to lay down your life for him. Your glory comes from how you see him and how you hear him. How do *you* speak to him? Maybe you *don't* speak to him. If you don't speak to him, that means you don't have glory.

There are a lot of people you might consider to be draining. Maybe some wives are draining. Or, there may be some husbands who do not love their wives, who are not receiving grace to love, and *they* are draining. What does it mean to be a drain? If someone is draining, it means he is exhausting physically or emotionally. Usually, however, you are drained by your own lack of love and patience, forbearance, and long-

suffering, and that is why you feel so drained. It is not the unlovable ones in your midst, but it is your own lack of love that is draining you. You really have too high an opinion of yourself (Eph 4:2-3; Phil 2:2-4; Gal 6:1-2; Gal 6:3).

Gal 6:7 — A man is going to reap *exactly* what he sows. If he is reluctant, he will reap reluctance from our Father, and will be missing out on His love, and he will not prosper. How can we prosper if we are reluctant? This reluctance will overtake us. If we don't overcome, we will not be able to see our brother properly. This is not the glory of our Master that He has given to each one of us. We are to emulate His glory by His Spirit. He gave His glory only to His special people. If we are reluctant, we do not have the love that He commanded us to have. Reluctance is not the way by which all men will know who His disciples are.

Loving in Community

Jn 13:34 — Certainly it takes a community. This is the only place where that love can be lived out. Jn 14:15 also takes a community. Is it only the lovely ones whom we are to love? Or are the unlovely ones the ones who need it the most? Are the most troubled the most needy? If you see a particular thing in someone's personality that irritates you, something that makes him aberrant, maybe you should look in the mirror at yourself instead of just looking at that aberrant one. You know you treat him with a little bit of disgust deep within your heart, and you alienate yourself from him. You let him go his own way, and you do nothing about it.

We have to look at ourselves in the mirror, since we are the ones who are deviating from the only way by which we can know that we have passed out of death and into life. We know we have passed out of death and into life because we love one another, and that takes a community. We know what love is by this, that He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. This takes a community. We have been given a life-giving spirit; it is a river of life that is continually

flowing out of us. Jn 7:38-39 — This is talking about the Holy Spirit. Whoever has the Holy Spirit has a river of life that continually flows out of him, and that river of life disregards any reluctance, it goes beyond and overcomes it.

Love Doesn't Hesitate

Love never fails. Not loving the one in the most need of it is aberrant behavior for a child of God. We are straying away from being a normal disciple if we do not love. We may think, "Well, this person drains me. I don't want to be around him." To drain is to exhaust, to tire, due to what? Why do they drain you? You are drained because you are lacking patience and forbearance. So we have to have glory to know how to speak to these needy ones. It matters how we speak to them. It is not so much what we say, but how we say it.

Who then is the culprit? Who is the guilty one? "Oh no, here comes so and so. I am going to go the other way." That is not being a normal disciple. We have to learn how to speak to people who could possibly be a drain, but you need to look at yourself first. If not, we are straying away from being a normal disciple who has our Father's love poured out into his heart (Rom 5:5).

Have you read 1 John lately? Look at 1 Jn 4:20 and see what hate is. Hating is simply not loving. Not loving is hating. Hate is being reluctant because of the way you see someone. You might have great discernment, but make sure that discernment is from the Holy Spirit.

Do you see your sister or your brother in Messiah as one who is repugnant?¹ If you do, you will be reluctant to love him. Now we know what love is — love is the direction of your will. To love is to direct your will. Love is not necessarily good feelings,

¹ Repugnant — disposed to fight against; hostile; at war with; being at variance; contrary; inconsistent; refractory; disobedient; also, distasteful in a high degree; offensive; usually followed by *to*, rarely and less properly by *with*; as, all rudeness was repugnant to her nature.

but it is the direction of your will. Love directs your will to love someone. The definition of that love which is the direction of your will is this: We have to have His love in our hearts in order to love, and we know that love is a verb, which means love is an action.

Loving someone means you find your joy in someone. You find joy in loving him and taking care of him. When you love a brother, you will have joy as a result. Gal 5:22 talks about the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and forbearance. The “fruit of the spirit” is the result of your human spirit being controlled by the Holy Spirit in your heart. So therefore, you are not going to ignore a brother.

1 Jn 4:20 — It is plain, right there, that whoever does not love his brother is the prime example of hatred. The definition of love is to lay down your life for your brother. You know that you have passed out of death and into life because the Holy Spirit gives you that confidence. 1 Jn 3:23-24 — That is what love is.

To lay down your life is to overcome reluctance. If you don't overcome, you are alienated from that person and so therefore how can you love him? Admit it. You see that aberrant brother or sister, that repugnant one who makes you cower back, the great disciple that you are, he makes you cower back in distaste or aversion.² An aversion is a strong dislike or disinclination. There you are, cowering back in distaste, but the things you think about your brother are really just 99% over-exaggerated in your own mind and your own heart in the first place. The greatest sin is your lack of love for that brother who needs your love more than anything else. Instead of love you have repugnance or distaste for him.

Who are the Needy Ones?

That unlikable quality that you see in someone else, causes a small degree of an aversion in you, giving rise to antagonism. You may say it is just a small degree, but just

² Aversion — opposition or repugnance of mind; dislike; disinclination; reluctance; hatred. Usually this word expresses moderate hatred, or opposition of mind, not amounting to abhorrence or detestation.

a small degree of an aversion is not love. Not loving is equated with hate (1 Jn 4:20). Do you know people who are rejected, criticized, or snubbed? They need your love all the more. When you hear about someone's unlikable quality, do you alienate yourself from him more and more? This is an abomination, according to Pr 6:19. To say something about a brother that makes other people alienate themselves from him, and feel the same way you feel, is an abomination because maybe you have communicated an evil spirit to them, sowing strife or discord.

To show coldness towards your most needy brother or sister makes him feel more rebuffed, snubbed, rejected, criticized, and alienated. It makes him feel that way more than ever. Who, then, is the neediest one? It is the one who doesn't go to a brother in his time of need. One brother may be looked down upon a little bit, or this sister, but who does our Father look down on? He looks down on the one who doesn't lay down his life and overcome. The most needy one is you, if you are not loving.

Jms 5:19 — What if that brother hadn't laid down his life to go to that other brother whose sins were piling up as high as heaven? What if he didn't go to him and say, "Hey, brother, I love you. What is going on? You know you seem to be this way..." He did whatever he had to do, to appeal to the one who strayed away like a stray dog or a cat. The fact was that he strayed and was in need. You can see when someone is straying, because he is not really connected to the fellowship of the Body. It is evident.

Who is the most repulsive, rebuffed, or rejected? Who will it be? So there is one who is not abiding in the vine, like a grape that is getting a little bit wizened.³ Do you know about that word, *wizened*? He is getting dried up, like a grape, and it looks kind of bad because it is not receiving the nourishment, the essence of the vine. What if you do not go to such a one? Who is the one who is not really abiding in the vine? We have to really see it this way. If you are a spiritual man or woman, you will go to the one who is

³ Wizened — dried; shriveled; withered; shrunken; as a wizened old man.

drying up. You won't let a person just stray away, dry up, and die. You will do everything you can to bring that brother or sister back. They may not leave the community, but they can be drying up right here in our midst.

1 Jn 3:24 — We know by the Holy Spirit in us that we have passed out of death and into life. It goes from verse 14 to verse 24, so you see what love is. How do we know that we have passed out of death? Because we love our brothers. The Holy Spirit reveals this to us. He gives us that confirmation when we love our brother as our Master commanded us to love in verse 23. "Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13)

Imitators of Love

We are to reproduce His life here on earth. Our Master is in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and He has given it to us to be His representatives, His Body — the community of which He is the head. As His representatives, we must continue to reproduce and imitate Him, and present Him to others outside and inside the Community. We are priests who mediate His love to all we come in contact with. We must restore and revive the love that was once poured out into people's hearts. Rom 5:5 — The love of God has been poured out into *our* hearts. That life of love was demonstrated in Acts 4:32, which was the very thing our Master prayed for in Jn 17 — that His people would be one in heart and soul, one in essence.

This is the congregation, the community, which is what *congregation* means. It means that we congregate into one cluster. In Acts 5:20, the angels told them to go and tell everyone about their new life. This is the same new life that you have been given, and you demonstrate it every day. Tell people what it is all about, how we live this way, why we live this way, and the reason that we are able to live this way. 1 Jn 5:12 speaks about having the life and then verse 13 is the reason he wrote the letter — that they may know they have eternal life.

Get Grace to Love

1 Cor 13:1-8 — Love never fails. When love is in our hearts, we are abiding in the vine and it never fails to love. Love never fails to love. When you see an errant brother, make sure first of all that you are not errant; don't judge that brother. Judge yourself first, or else you will judge him wrong. If you are not abiding in the Vine yourself, and if you are not receiving His grace, you will judge him wrong.

Is there a brother or a sister you don't love? Don't judge him as not being a brother if you don't go to him and plead with him. Heb 3:13 says to encourage one another every day. You have to find someone and encourage him every day that you live together in the Community. *Encourage* doesn't just mean to pat him on the back. If you look in the Greek, it means to *beseech* that brother. Go and plead urgently with the one who is straying away, like a stray sheep from the fold. This takes a community, doesn't it? We have the opportunity. No one else has an opportunity like those who live together. We see each other daily, and we look in each other's eyes, so we know when there is something going on in each other.

You can pray for him, but you can also pray for the strength and the grace you will need to have for him (Heb 4:16). If you pray for him, then you won't be a coward, you won't cower back. If you don't think you can go to that brother, at least you can go to your leaders and say, "I really have a burden for this person, but I don't know what to do." You might be wrong about the person, but a leader can discern it. He may even help you to see that you *do* have the grace, and you just need to overcome and go to that person yourself.

Who Does He Oppose?

Eph 5:21 — Some translations say *Christ*, and some say *God*. The Good News translation says *Christ*, but it is originally *God* (KJV, NKJ, and YLT). Out of a good, clean fear of our Father we submit to one another. It says to submit, but some people are

reluctant to submit. What kind of fear do they have? Or, do they have fear? Do they have a good, clean fear, as in Eph 5:21? What if you don't submit, but you think more highly of yourself than you do of others? They might be the ones that you need to hear from, but if you are proud you are going to fall. He opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.

To be reluctant is to be disinclined or unwilling due to not putting love into practice. You might be hesitant and lacking the will or desire to do something that faith would compel you to do if you were in fellowship with the persuading Spirit in your heart and in your life.

We don't want to be estranged⁴ from anyone. Estrangement is indifference where there had formerly been love and friendliness. Estrangement is the loss of friendliness, affection, or interest. You go astray... astray... astray. *Astray* means to stray away, and estrangement comes from astray; it means strained. There is a sheep that is straying, and he is not serving a useful purpose.

You have seen people puttering around. They hold back and they are reluctant. They are holding back due to unwillingness, due to a conflict with their own opinion about a certain person because of distaste or a degree of repugnance that they have, or because they disagree about something. They ought to love. 1 Jn 3:16 tells us they ought to love, but they don't. Our Master always loved. He never failed, and we are to love the same way. If we have passed out of death and into life, we will. We have plenty of people to love every day — all of our brothers and sisters.

⁴ Estrange — To keep at a distance; to withdraw; to cease to frequent or to be familiar with; to alienate, as the affections; to turn from kindness to indifference or *malevolence* (*ill will, personal hatred; evil disposition towards another; enmity of heart; inclination to injure others*); to withdraw; to withhold.

Separating Ourselves from Life

To alienate someone is to be unfriendly, or to show indifference toward one where before there was fellowship. Something caused you to be withdrawn or to withdraw from him; an estrangement happened. Somehow you heard a message, a lie said about a person. Maybe you told the wrong person something about someone else, when you should have gone to your elders. But you didn't, so you spread it around, and now other people are a little bit estranged from that person, too. I have seen that happen. If someone tells me something about someone and then I see them, I am just a little bit estranged until we get it worked out, until we find out whether it is really true or not. You have to go to him to find out, because it may not even be true. Sometimes what we hear isn't true, but we let it in. This is what alienates us from one another; just from that little thing we hear. It affects how we see each other and is called prejudgment or prejudice.⁵

Love Makes Friends

If you want to have friends, you have to be friendly. There is a Proverb about that: *A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pr 18:24)*

If you don't think the best of your friends, you are doing wrong. First of all, we think the best of people, even though we might hear things about them. We probably will always be hearing things about people, so we ought to always think the best first. Our glory comes from *how* we hear, which affects *how* we see. We must hear things about people, thinking the best, searching out the matter before making a judgment (Pr 25:2).

⁵ Prejudice — 1) prejudgment; an opinion or decision of mind, formed without due examination of the facts or arguments which are necessary to a just and impartial determination; 2) a previous bent or bias of mind for or against any person or thing; prepossession; 3) mischief; hurt; damage; injury.

Even if there is something true to what we hear, we are all allied in the same cause and in the same purpose anyway. We are all brothers and friends, and a friend loves at all times. You must be friendly, so don't think the worst. We can love our brothers and our sisters and think the best of them, and not be afraid of them. Don't be alienated for any reason.

Remember 1 Cor 13 — Love never fails. If you don't have love, you can speak, you can sing, you can shout, you can do everything in the world, and it matters not. You can even memorize the entire Bible if you want to, but if you don't have love you are like a sounding gong or clanging cymbal. I am sure that we have had these clanging cymbals here in the Community, but they are no longer here. We hope it is not because we didn't love them. But maybe it is because *they* never really received the Holy Spirit, therefore *they* didn't have love. But we can't just say, "Oh, they didn't have love." It means that *we* don't have love if *we* didn't love them. We have to really make sure we are loving people. Love, love one another.

Neviah bat Aquila — This teaching really convicted me, because I know there are some people who are easy for me to love, and other people I am more reluctant to love. But I know those people I am more reluctant to love are the ones who really need my love. I know I hear it all the time, but it is hard to really put it into practice. Even though I see someone as the least of the brothers in my eyes, I might be the least of the brothers in everyone else's eyes. The way I love the person I see as the least is how I love our Father. I could give you facts and reasons and everything about that person that I don't love, but it's just my own subjective reasoning. He is going to be judged for what he does and how he lives his life, but I am going to be judged by how I react to him and how I love him. I really want to put that into practice and learn to love people. When they come my way, I don't want to cringe and walk the other way. I want to have grace upon me, so that I can talk to that person and love him and reach out to him. If he leaves, I don't want to say, "You know, he probably left because I didn't love him." I want to increase.

Ben Nabi of Yehudah — We have all kinds of reasons to be reluctant to love this person or that person in our life, but when it comes right down to

it, there is never any good reason not to love someone. The evil one is a deceiver, and his chief occupation is to lead us astray. We love our Master just as much as the one we love the least. If you just go ahead and love the one who you have loved the least, you are going to find out that person is really quite lovable. Then you can go on and get close to another person you think you love the least, and you will find out that he is very lovable, too. As we all do this, one by one we start eliminating all this deception that the evil one has thrown over our heads that causes us to think that we can't love one another. It is such a trick! I hate the way I have been deceived into having good reasons for withholding myself from someone in the Body who our Master died for and loved enough to save from death. I hate the way the evil one works in us! I want him driven out!

Amen! Amen is a commanding prayer. It says, "Let it be, Father!"

Netsach — Our Master came to undo the works of the evil one. Everyone who comes in from the world will have some peculiarities. The work of the enemy is to get right next to you and follow you around and tell you that you are a horrible person, that you can't be normal. Then you end up walking around feeling totally awkward because this enemy is right there on top of you. When you walk into a room in this state and your brothers and sisters are there, and they are all looking at you, you feel as if they think you are so weird. That is how the enemy devastates a person. But my heroes, my favorite people on planet earth, are the ones that were able to get me disentangled from that enemy. They showed me the way to overcome whatever spirit it was that was causing that peculiarity in me. That is the work of our Master Yahshua. If we are the Body, then we are undoing the work of the enemy. I am so thankful for my friends over the years that have helped me. I want to be a true friend to my brothers and sisters in the same way.

David Shemuel — I liked hearing about how the person you love the least is how much you love Yahshua. So I need to love the person I love the least more than the person I love the most. That shows whether you really are connected to the Holy Spirit.

Ishah Ruth — All the schemes of the evil one were just exposed. I used to be so confused about why I can't love, and why I am reluctant, and why I withdraw. When Netsach was talking, we heard the battle plans of the evil one. Someone just sat us down and said, "This is his plan to get you and you and you." His plan is to get all of us somehow to turn on each other. The tactic of the evil one is to get me to not love, and then people don't

feel loved, and then we are not the Body anymore. I am so thankful for what we heard because I know this is the only place where we can put love into practice. Reluctance is just unwillingness to make the effort. I see that so many times, I am a coward. I just don't want to use my will to love the one that takes more effort for me to love. I am so thankful we can see what the evil one is trying to do in our lives and we can overcome.

Sarah of Benjamin — Our Father has given us His Spirit that causes us to not be able to have rest unless we have peace with every single person in the Body. As I heard the teaching, I could just feel my heart turning towards the person that I know I struggle with. Our Father wants to turn our hearts towards each other. I was just so encouraged by this because that is a struggle I have, and I know it doesn't give me a good conscience when I don't love that person. I am so grateful our Father wants us to undo the works of the evil one and cause us to be better friends. A friend is someone the evil one can't use to get to you. I am so grateful our Father wants to turn our hearts to one another and set us free in this way. I know it all starts with humility, having a proper estimation of ourselves, and then we won't have any fingers to point at others.

Yonadab ben Haggai — You can't expect people to change before you start loving them. You have to love them first, and then people will start changing. Our Master said that if we take the first step, He will take a thousand towards us. That is the only way we are going to make it, if we take our first step and then we can get there.

Bathsheva — The standard hasn't changed since the beginning, and it is not going to change until the end of the age. Our Father didn't make an unlovable person. It is just in our own eyes that anyone is unlovable. I am thankful that He doesn't have an unattainable standard for us. He gives us grace to love everyone that we live with.

He loved Peter, He loved Judas, and He loved the renegades of society. He loved the demon-possessed. We have to love as He loved, it says. He just wants us to love.