

Alpha Counseling Service
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Dear Friends,

February is usually associated with romantic love expressed with hearts, cupids, and red roses. Valentine's Day is all about feeling loved by someone. Over the years I have been surprised by some people's idea of romantic as well as friendship love. Once a man became angry with me because I agreed with his wife that a certain behavior he had was hurtful to their relationship. His words were something like this "I thought you were my friend! Friends are supposed to stick up for each other!" Even if the friend is wrong, was the implication. I discovered that his idea of love and friendship was to never disagree or say anything to hurt his feelings. Interestingly though, it was okay for him to say hurtful words. You can see why he was having problems can't you? We can see flaws in other people and miss them in ourselves. Unfortunately many people's definition of love doesn't fit with God's Biblical description of love.

I'm drawn back to a time, as a young pastor, when an older and wiser pastor quoted Proverbs 27:6 *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."* Then he proceeded to confront several issues, obvious to him, that were hurting my ministry. Evidently an enemy has the ability to make us feel good and yet not be a help. In Hebrews 12:5-11 *My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him. V6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines. V11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful but sorrowful; yet...afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

So much sorrow in life comes from our home spun ideas that are never examined in light of God's Word. We try desperately to make others understand our need for love and acceptance not realizing that God wants to be our Valentine first and always.

Matthew 22:37,38 says: *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment."* Wow! Could it get any clearer? When you rest in God's love you calm down inside and the love we have been looking for is finally satisfying.

You make it possible for us to be God's servants at Alpha, helping those struggling for love and acceptance to discover it in Jesus Christ.

1 John 4 "Dear Friends, let us continually love one another, because love comes from God...God is Love...whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him...In this way love is made complete". ISV

May God fill your February with His LOVE!

Richard and Debi