

# ALPHA COUNSELING SERVICES

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Dear Friends,

February brings thoughts of love. Love can be a splendid thing, but I am afraid that many Americans have turned it into a mushy sentimentality that doesn't even represent true love. I think it is sad that we have to have one time in which people are pressured into expressing some small amount of affection for their spouse or some other loved one!

Do you know that love is mentioned over two hundred times in the New Testament. The best known are:

**Love Verse = John 3:16;**

**Love Chapter = I Corinthians 13;**

**Love Book = Ruth**

**Actually the whole Bible is a book dedicated to love and how it can go wrong!**

Now before you get ready to lynch me for this statement let me finish. It is God who initiated love and care for Adam and Eve only to be spurned. God counseled Cain to be careful about his anger toward his brother and His advice was ignored. The Old Testament is full of God's overtures to mankind only to be rejected repeatedly by the vast majority of people.

The New Testament isn't much better. Again, God reaches out in love sending His Son to love and restore mankind and He is cruelly killed.

When asked to summarize the Old Testament Law Jesus said: "*Love God, and love your neighbor.*" Matthew 22: 35-40. John writes quoting Jesus, "*This is my commandment that you love one another just as I have loved you.*" John 15:12

Later Jesus confronts Peter with the pointed question

"Simon... do you love me?"

Peter answers, "Lord you know that I have affection for you."

This is repeated three times, Jesus asks Peter if his love for the Lord is God's highest form of love and Peter answers that he has brotherly affection for Jesus. I am sure that we all struggle as Peter to love the Lord and others with a love fitting our calling as Gods Children. God's love for us is kind, patient, unending ...as mentioned in I Corinthians 13 and we are to aspire to give that love to others. 1 John say we are not to love the world in chapter two and then most of the rest the book is about our need to love God and one another. I am not sure about you but I still struggle loving the people in this world and I definitely struggle to love in a way that makes God pleased.

**1 John 4 7-11**

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another!!*

"Am I prepared to be identified so closely with the Lord that His life and His sweetness will be continually poured out through me?"

Oswald Chambers

May God fill your month with His love and I hope you share His love with others. Thank you for sharing your love and prayers with the needs of those who come to Alpha!

*Richard*