



*Anyone who does not love does not know God,
because God is love (I John 4:8).*

The word “*love*” appears numerous times across many translations; the Evangelist, John, jumps straight to the point here, doesn’t he? LOVE appears 718 in my ESV Study Bible. Often however, the preoccupation of our nation is that February is known as the traditional “love month,” laced with Valentine's Day and Presidents Day.

Must we wait until March and April to be blessed with upcoming Ash Wednesday, Lenten services, and Easter? Absolutely not! February would be a fine month to throw off hearts, cupids, and the treasure trove of Hallmark, so overblown! This month, our ladies will seek to commit to memory their favorite scriptures, fixing our eyes on Jesus and such a blessed relationship and dependence UPON HIM, the priceless “Love Gift,” that He gave us with his endurance upon the cross. As John goes on then to share in vs.11: ***Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*** I know most of **you know all this.** I pray that repetition does not turn your eyes away! American author Zig Zigler said (and I used this on my suffering sixth graders): “Repetition is the mother of learning, and the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishments.” *

A very elderly friend gave me, several birthdays ago, a fine, inspirational, large spiral diary, celebrating “Beautiful Language in Scripture.” Every seven days there is a theme from the Bible, and the next week it changes! It greets me each dawn on my counter; I have large paper clips to aid in telling me what day it is! (A retiree must!) Example: today’s date is Friday the 24th and I gave myself today to fashion and get the HUG off to my editors and beloved Pastoral Counselors. THIS week’s theme is HOPE. January has gone from **Love to Joy to Hope to Trust.** On my 83rd birthday last Friday the word was TRUST; and the scripture was: ***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).*** Those who know me, know last month was indeed emotionally challenging, as I waited for a new family member to recover from difficult circumstances! I leaned on my Trust in **our Lord** and was so calmed and uplifted! Celebrations of love outpoured: cards, balloons, flowers, and calls to rob me of my voice by sundown! I am grateful every day; as I declared in my article in The Quarterly: God is apparently not done with me yet!

To that end, a dear friend gifted me “A Journal of Gratitude.” I sit down now at the end of every day to jot a few notes in the space provided. I had told her “I look for God in each and every day.” And that is a task I enjoy, reflecting on Him in MY day!! We are called to be grateful, knowing that God is in control hourly, daily — such JOY. I cannot ever count the many blessings of my faith family and sisterhood. When we meet this month on our LWML Saturday morning, everyone will receive one of my little red glittery hearts; on the back of each one, I chose some 38 scriptures; one will be theirs to commit to memory. It becomes an effective way to reinforce all the ways in which we are told to “love.” By the time we share each around the circle, ***we shall understand the scope in which and how*** WE ARE TO LOVE, KNOWING GOD IS LOVE. THEN, we take our Scripture home and tuck it deep in our hearts; that is the way God would have us, to be *architects of accomplishments: reaching out to others every day in some very simple acts of kindness! The rewards are unending!

We just need to thank Him every day for His outpouring of **joy and hope**, knowing we walk in **trust** and the **love** we get, and share with one another in laughter, kindnesses, phone calls, our presence in our Bible classes, and even sharing coffee and donuts after church. What JOY to BELONG to such a huge, earthly family!

God is love, and I know He so loves me.

All I can say is: WHAT JOY! Pat Reck, Hug Author