



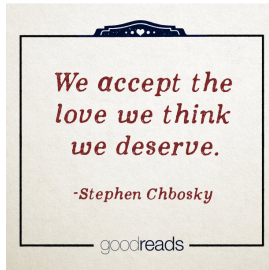
Today's Lesson

Knowing The Beloved

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Knowing The Beloved

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Advent. During this week, Unity as well as other Christian churches are celebrating the meaning of love in their life and affairs.



Knowing The Beloved



Now one of the scribes had come up and heard their debate. Noticing how well Jesus had answered them, he asked Him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?"

(Mark 12:28-29)

Knowing The Beloved



Jesus replied, "This is the most important: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and all your strength.'" (Mark 12:30)

Knowing The Beloved

It has been said that to know God one must experience God, and the most powerful experience we can have is the power of love.

This was, and still is, the main message that Jesus taught. Love is, and always will be, the answer to any and all situations, circumstances, and challenges we may encounter as we seek to know the beloved.

Knowing The Beloved



My dear friend, Bernadette Swanson has written many article's for Unity Magazine over the years. In one of her articles entitled: Seeking the Beloved she wrote:

How many of you have literally been knocked off your horse by the power of God?

Knowing The Beloved



I suspect not many. Yet I think that many of us are unconsciously waiting for God to get our attention in some physical way, to actually set us down in a chair, state directly into our eyes, and say: "Pay attention! This is important!"

Knowing The Beloved



But God rarely intervenes in this way. I believe that God is ultimately in charge of our lives, yet it is up to us to allow God the opportunity to work through us. If we are to develop an intimate relationship with God then we must, at some point in our lives, realize that it is our most important spiritual responsibility we have.

Knowing The Beloved

Have you noticed that when we fall in love, we try to spend as much time with the object of our affection as possible. We listen with heightened attention to their words, noticing each nuance and inflection. We hope they call. We look for them in crowds as we walk.

It is not coincidence that many mystics refer to that kind of love, as an expression of God, God as their Beloved in their lives.

Knowing The Beloved



As the story goes, Scrooge was an unloving, mean-spirited, unfeeling, cruel, unloved miser, who hoarded everything, not giving of himself, his feelings, or his possessions.

Knowing The Beloved

From a metaphysical point of view, when he is finally forced to recognize his greater self, he made a complete turnaround. As he begins to love others he found joy in giving and helping others. As he found himself caught up in releasing unconditional love it did not matter if anyone loved him back.

Scrooge felt good, not because people were loving him, but simply because HE LOVED.

Knowing The Beloved

The spiritual lesson contained the pages of Dicken's great novel is this:

Love is not a commodity that we can acquire and hoard. Love can only be released.

So how can we begin to know the beloved's unconditional love for us, to experience it and then release it onto other's? We start by knowing what Jesus knew and taught:

Love is what God is!

Knowing The Beloved

In the writings of all the great spiritual works on the attribute of God's unconditional love for His beloved, us, we find these spiritual truths:

Love is not a toy that we trot out when it suits us and then take back when we are through with someone.

Love is a divine activity, a cosmic force of order and harmony, a spiritual gift that is freely given by the Beloved to His beloved.

Knowing The Beloved

Love is God's ocean of life, and we have our being in that ocean.

Love is God's energy, creative, sustaining, all encompassing, that when allowed to be shared with others brings us into direct relationship with the Beloved.

As St. Paul once stated: "If I understand all mysteries and knowledge, have all faith to move mountains, but I do not have love, I am nothing." (I Cor. 13:2)

Knowing The Beloved

Knowing the Beloved starts with knowing the power that is love begins with God, and, as such we need to accept that love as our own before it can be sent out to others.

True self-love is not ego-centered love, but a love that is anchored in the knowledge that as channels of that love, we are able to bring the experience of God's unconditional love into our lives and affairs.

Knowing The Beloved

Through our own experiences we know that it is impossible to love others unless we can love ourselves. Without love of ourselves, we feel unworthy of any other love. "After all," we reason, "if I can't love myself, how can I expect anyone to love me?"

There is danger in this kind of thinking for it turns unconditional love into conditional love that causes us to look for someone to "fill the void" of our empty love.

Knowing The Beloved

Our experience of knowing the Beloved comes with the knowledge that love is not something you have to master, but only allow.

Once Scrooge was able to allow that love to be expressed through him, his whole life changed, and as it changed, so did the lives of those around him, towards him.

As the Daily Word stated: I am God's love in expression...and I extend the concept into the world by being loving.