



## DESPITE THE PAIN

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*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

1 John 4:9-11

When we look at the scripture above, we read how God showed what his love is like through his son Jesus. Jesus is our example to follow—in how he lived and how he gave of himself. When we who suffer in our own way look at him and how he suffered, we may be able to identify with him to some degree. But can we too, love—as Jesus did—despite the pain we so often experience?

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What is this love that comes through Jesus, the servant of God, who suffered so greatly? (Isaiah 53:3)  
What is it like? How can we grasp its immensity?

God's love is not like a friend's love—not even like a father's love or a mother's love. God's love is divine. It rises above all other kinds of love you may receive. A friend's love may disappoint, but God and his love will never fail or leave us. Mothers and fathers will not always be with us, but God will always be. God loves us deeply, through and through. Now and forever.

Through Jesus, God has shown us that kind of love. By following his example, we can pass along this love to the people around us.

But how can we do so when we're hurting from depression or some other kind of pain? Can we love despite the anguish we feel?

I think we can learn.

You may remember the other-centeredness I've talked about in the past. There's another way of looking at it. There's a way in which we can turn our pain around. There's a way that will help us forget.

When you find yourself hurting, try looking outside yourself to others. Spend some time with them. Connect with them. Instead of focusing within, at your own pain consider what is happening inside them.

Get to know them. Love them with the love God has put inside you. That love will return to you in full measure. God's love is alive. It never ceases to flow.

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