LOVE

2 Timothy 3:1-4
But mark this: there will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous (cheaters), rash, conceited (proud of oneself), lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

What if the TV presenter for the six o'clock news tonight would start reading the news with a statement like this? Maybe it wouldn’t be so shocking after all. This verse seems to really capture what is happening around the world today.

I'd been thinking about the meaning of this verse for quite some time when I read an interesting story about the Rabbi of Kotzk.

The Rabbi of Kotzk came across a young man who was clearly enjoying a nice meal. Apparently he had caught a fish and was eating it. The Rabbi said to that young man: why are you eating that fish? And he replied because I love fish. So the Rabbi said: oh, you love the fish, so you took it out of the water, killed it, and boiled it. The young man looked at him with a puzzled look. The Rabbi said to him: don't tell me you love the fish, you love yourself. And because the fish tastes good you took it out of the water, killed it and boiled it. That is not love – it's fish love.

Since then this expression got stuck in my mind. "That is not love - It's "fish love".

Love is a word that in our culture has almost lost it's meaning.

We use the word love for almost everything. I love my cat, I love this food, I love my kids, I love God, I love my car, I love my shampoo, without even thinking about what it really means.

Nowadays people seem to have no clue what love is and many are disillusioned with the notion of love.

The Apostle Paul was spot on when we wrote that there would be a time when people would be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, without love, not lovers of the good, lovers of pleasure.

Behind many of the happy selfies in social media there is so much disappointment when it comes to love. People go from one relationship to another relationship on a regular basis.

A lot of young adults and youth in this generation have grown up in broken homes where love was never to be seen. Therefore many believe that this so-called "love" that people talk about or they've watched in some movie is only a figure of their imagination and many stopped believing in its existence.

The divorce rate is extremely high in our society. People supposedly stop loving one another - or they "fall in and out of love" frequently.

So much of what we call love is in reality “fish love”!
What is “fish love”? It’s a selfish self-centered love. What’s in it for me type of love? What makes me happy, type of love.

This type of love is conditional and it is also changeable. This kind of love is based on feelings and emotions that can change from one moment to the next.

What is true love?

1. GOD IS TRUE LOVE

1 John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Outside the knowledge of God no one can understand what true love is.

God is the source of true love – God’s love is not "fish love".

Love is not something that God does. It’s who He is.

2. GOD LOVES US INDIVIDUALLY

Psalm 139:15-17
15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. 17 How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! (NLT)

When did God start loving you? God loved you before you even came to existence.

1 John 4:19 "We love Him because He first loved us".

God loves us with a great passion. His love is relentless, persistent, unstoppable, never ending and it pursues us since the day we were born.

To believe that God loves you has to be an anchor in your heart. Establish this truth in your mind and spirit once and for all – Jesus loves you and you are valuable to Him.

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (...) John 15:9

The apostle Paul wrote: Romans 8:38-39 “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul also wrote: Ephesians 3:18-19 (that you) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
3. TRUE LOVE GIVES

God gave what was most precious to Him – Jesus.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Jesus loved us to the point of giving His life for us. He died on a Cross because of Love. When we believe in Jesus the love of God flows from His heart to ours, He gives us His love.

Romans 5:5 “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

God’s kind of love even enables us to do something impossible: to love people that we would never be able to love.

Luke 6:27- But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, (…)

Luke 6:32 “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

True love is always about giving, not receiving.

Later in verse 38 Jesus said “Give and it shall be given unto you”. This is a kingdom principle that works in all areas of our lives, specially when it comes to relationships.

True love looks like this:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails.

4. TRUE LOVE GROWS

God’s love in us has the potential to keep growing in us.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

We cannot have “fish love” operating in our lives. We need to display God’s love in the way we treat one another, how we treat our family members, our spouses, our children. People out there are looking for a testimony of true love!