

God, I don't understand when I don't feel loved or valued
Refuted Service April 23, 2023 Pastor Pufahl

Lord, as we come to study your Word, remind us that our worth or value is not found in who I am, but in who you make me. My value is found in you, in your love! Amen

When was the last time someone told you they loved you? You didn't think we were going to get that deep, huh? Perhaps the ladies out there, especially if you have a significant other, you are thinking, "Yeah, when was the last time someone said they love me?" The men out there may be thinking, "I just DID that! It's called Valentine's Day!" But in all seriousness, when was the last time someone said they love you...and actually meant it? It doesn't have to just be between a husband and a wife. In order to feel loved, then you must also be valued. And in order to be valued, love needs to be there too.

Now, let's see if that statement is true that all people want to feel loved and valued...how many of us want to feel loved? How many of us want to know, not just hope, but really KNOW we are valued? That someone would miss us if we were not here? Raise your hand if you feel that is you? We all want to feel loved and valued. And there is nothing wrong with that. But what happens if you don't feel loved or valued? I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand if you have ever felt that way because I think I know the answer. There have been times in all of our lives when we didn't feel loved or valued. Sometimes it is just a short period of time; sometimes it lasts. God, I don't understand those times! I don't understand when I don't feel loved or valued in life!

Think about our first question: What does it mean to be loved or valued? Perhaps before trying to answer the question what does love mean, we should instead be asking what love is NOT. So many people look at love like, "I will love someone as long as they do something for me." Perhaps a child will say, "Mom/dad, I love you...because you bought me...(fill in the blank)." When I think about love, I think that love is loving someone or valuing someone IN SPITE of who they are. Ok, that does seem negative and wrong, but think about it. No matter what you have done, no matter who you are, you will be loved...for You being YOU! Ever feel that way?

I think about all the different issues going on in our world today. People are blaming everyone else, but everyone wants to feel loved and valued by other people. However, it almost seems like we are heading in the wrong direction. Just think about all the different, I will call it, identities today. People identify in so many different ways. Ever wonder why? Is it because people feel valued or loved for who they are? Or is it because they don't? I would argue it is because they don't feel valued or loved. They don't feel that the person God made or created could possibly be loved by others. That they could never be valued or appreciated for who they are.

Do you feel that way? Do you ever feel like no one could love you or value and appreciate you for who you are? Go back to where you work. Does your boss ever say, "Thank you" for the hard work you do? How about your children? Do they actually appreciate you and love you, even if you don't buy them stuff? Maybe at times, but maybe not more often. It can make us feel not valued or loved. Look at the statistics right now on the suicide rate. Would you say those rates are much lower or higher now? They are much higher. Dramatically higher. Why is that? Why is it that so many people want to give up the very first gift God gave them, which is their life? I would say it goes back to this topic...they don't feel loved or valued.

We really could do an in-depth study of the word LOVE in the Bible. The Bible talks about four different types of love. Eros love, the romantic love between a husband and wife. Storge (STORE-jay) love which is the special bond in a family. Philia love which is that brotherly love and bond that we can share. But no matter which type of love, the Bible is very clear what love IS and what love ISN'T. Love isn't just a feeling you have. Love actually is an ACTION! Romans 12:10 says: **Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.** These are command words, action words to show love.

I do find it interesting when Jesus summed up ALL the commands, he did it with one word...LOVE! We want to be loved! We want to experience love. We want to know that, when we put our heads on our pillows at night, we are loved! So, do you feel loved or valued? Always? Before we may start to get negative thoughts about all those people who do not show us love, allow me to change the question a little. So far, I have been asking if you feel loved or valued. But maybe I should be asking, have you always made others feel loved and valued? Love is an action. Remember Jesus' command. Jesus said: **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** Have you always LOVED others? Have you always made others feel valued?

Is that a harder question? Anyone actually want to own up to not always showing love to others?! "Yeah Pastor Greg, let me stand up in front of all these people to declare how unloving I am!" Ok, I won't ask you to, but I will. I know I haven't done that always. Me, myself, and I sometimes take precedence over others. What does that show me? I haven't kept Jesus' command. I haven't loved. How about you? Admittedly, we could spend a great deal of time confessing how we don't show love, but the point of this message is to get to why I don't feel loved or valued. And that really is our next question:

Why don't I feel loved or valued?

I want to show you an image – 👍 What do you think about this? Feels good, doesn't it? Perhaps you made a video or vlog/blog. What is the temptation if you have a YouTube page or post online? Isn't it to look and see how many of those little guys you get? Every now and then I sit with my boys and watch the videos they are watching. Pretty much every single video has in it somewhere...click on that like button and don't forget to subscribe! Why? Obviously the more likes, the more money you will make. But it feels good to have people LIKE what you have done. It is a reflection on you. They like your video...they like you, right? Well, how about this image? 👎 How does that make you feel? Pretty crummy right? Even the emoji looks disappointed in you. You start to question yourself, "What was wrong with that? Why don't they like that video? Therefore, why don't they like...ME?" Which one do you think is easier to click on? Thumbs up or thumbs down? They take the exact same effort! Yet just think how each one affects you. We can so easily get wrapped up in our worth being shown by how others feel about us. And it is sad when our worth, our value or the feeling to know if we are loved or not can simply come down to an emoji, thumbs up or down.

But that isn't the real reason why you don't feel loved or valued. If you made a video and 10 M people liked the video or retweeted your post, you would probably feel pretty good about yourself. But how long does that last? Until you make the next video. Until you get more positive feedback. In other words, it doesn't last. I think back to the time when people actually talked with each other FACE TO FACE! Remember those times? It took effort to show love, to show someone is valuable to you. And even at those times, we didn't always feel or know love. Why? Why don't I feel loved or valued? Why doesn't it last? Jesus, when talking about the end of time, says this: **Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold** (Matthew 24:12). Did you catch it? Wickedness. Sin. People tell me I am worth nothing. I don't measure up. I'm not as smart. I'm not as handsome or pretty. But when you boil it down, where does a lack of love come from? Sin in my heart! Why don't I feel loved or valued? Because I can never measure up. There is always someone better. Those little thumbs up/down emojis prove that.

I am not going to say we don't want to value what other people may say about us. But remember, every single person in this world is trying to find love, trying to feel valued. We are all searching for that truth. So as valuable as it may seem to hear from other people, the most important response would be to hear from the One whose opinion actually matters...from God. We will do that with this final question: What does God say?

When I was writing this message, my daily Bible reading on my phone said this: **When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them** (Psalm 8:3-4). Think about that. WHY would God even consider us? WHY would God find any value in us? What have you done to earn God's love? I have done nothing. It can make us question God's love for us. Do you know who never questions God's love for us? GOD!

Recently we celebrated Easter. Before that, Jesus said these words: **My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends** (John 15:12-14). It didn't matter what the disciples did. It doesn't matter what we have done. Nothing was going to get in Jesus' way to go to that cross. All because of his love for you. Or think about this one: **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us** (Romans 5:8). Do you see what is happening? Remember what love IS and is NOT. Love isn't just a feeling. It is an action. God took the greatest action of all. He gave up his son. Jesus took the greatest action of all. He gave up his life!

I told you there were four types of love, but I didn't tell you the fourth yet. It is AGAPE love. This is really love from God. When God is described in 1 John, it doesn't say that God shows love. It says that God IS love. That is his essence. That is his being. He IS love. I saw this definition about agape love: *God's agape love is unmerited, gracious, and constantly seeking the benefit of the ones He loves.* Talk about value! God's love is loving you for who you are IN SPITE of all you have done. That is love! And that is yours. What does God say? He says he loves you! He shows how he values you...that Jesus paid for you with his blood. Not just with money that perishes, but his very life blood. And Jesus doesn't just simply click the thumbs up on your page to show you his love. He raised all his fingers to a cross.

Are you loved? Are you valued? Don't take my word for it. Listen instead to what God says. **God so LOVED the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life** (John 3:16). Loved! Valued! By God! Amen.