

THE LANGUAGE OF **PROMISE**

WE ARE CALLED TO INHERIT.
THE LOVE LANGUAGE OF GOD
IS VITAL TO THAT DISCOVERY.

GRAHAM COOKE

AN INTERACTIVE JOURNAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this journal to all the friends, ministry supports and partners in prayer and finances who have sustained me and my family through many years of warfare, personal attack, pain and challenge.

When God gives you a voice, others will try to take it away. Thanks for being true, committed and faithful. May you inherit every blessing that the Father has planned and purposed for your life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Families are the bedrock of life. They supply the love, belief, laughter, determination and focus to enable each member to grow in confidence and take on seemingly impossible things. Wives, sons, daughters and grandchildren become the world that we look through along with our friends.

We work, persevere, build, persist and develop with them in mind. Their love, acceptance and support acts as a catalyst for all that we attempt. They lift us beyond measure into a place in Christ that contains more than we imagine.

Heather, Ben, Seth, Sophie and partners. Theresa, Alexis and Alyssa. Our wonderful grandchildren. All have contributed to the fullness of my ongoing life experience.

The brilliant friends that I have walked with for several decades. The amazing leaders and ministries that have graced my life. The Radiance Community in Santa Barbara, a grand company with whom to explore life and fullness in Jesus!

Finally, to the one in the coffee house who started this journey and the God who sustains it.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was getting used to operating under the critical eye of the Sadducees and Pharisees. He had encountered them many times in His ministry and had always used the beauty of God's truth to stay one step ahead of them. Today would be no different. The Pharisees had heard that Jesus had stumped the Sadducees, so one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a loaded question: *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"*

Jesus' answer summed up the call on every Christian who has followed Him in the 2,000 years since. *"The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these,"* Jesus replied in Mark 12: 29-31. Christianity can be boiled down into those two statements: our role in life is to love God, and to love everyone we come into contact with.

Jesus has not asked us to do something He has not already done Himself. God always obeys His own word—He cannot go against His own decrees. He does not ask us to do something He would not do Himself. We can therefore look at the first commandment and know that He loves us with all of His heart, all of His soul, all of His mind and all of His strength.

Never doubt that you are absolutely and completely loved by God. You are His beloved. Your role in life is to receive that love, return it to Him, and pass it along to everyone around you. It's a tough job, I know, but someone's got to do it. Love Him with everything in you—it all belongs to Him, anyway. And love anyone you come into contact with; anyone within touching distance. It doesn't matter what you're doing, where you're going, or who you're meeting—you are called to love others. It is irrelevant whether they are Christian or pre-Christian; they are your neighbors and you are called to touch them with the love of God.

God has taken the lead in this. He has come to each and every one of us and poured His love into our spirits: *I love you with all of My heart, all of My soul, all of My mind, and all of My strength. Everything in Me is dedicated to loving you. I've poured this love into you and you're going to have the pleasure of giving it back to Me.*

This is our greatest blessing: we are loved passionately by God.

Graham Cooke

THE LANGUAGE OF
PROMISE

IN YOUR BEGINNING

Love is a topic that has been explored, pondered, considered, and written about for as long as humans have been around. It has been looked at from almost every angle, and is an experiential common ground for humanity: everyone understands the feeling of love. Many, however, have a distorted view of the power of love. They have tried to capture it without seeking out its origin, God.

The Apostle John understood well where love originated. *“We love because He first loved us,”* he wrote in 1 John 4:19. Before we were saved, most of us were going through life completely oblivious to who God really is. One day, suddenly and miraculously, God invaded our world; taking the initiative and reaching out to us in love. We responded by returning that love to Him, and found ourselves walking in salvation.

The way that we begin life in God is the same way that life continues with Him. God took the initial step: He loved us first. He came looking for us, spoke to us, sent those weird people to share the gospel with us. We looked at those strange people that were sent into our lives and thought, “Wow, they seem a bit out of step with the real world.” But there was something that drew us: God Himself.

Our relationship with God is sustained by the same force of love by which it was birthed. God doesn’t stop taking the initiative the moment we are saved. He is continually our Lover,

and we are continually His beloved. Our job is to be loved by God: only God can love God. He comes into our lives and fills them with hope, faith, and love. That pure love does something inside of us which we give back to Him.

“LIFE IS TO BE FORTIFIED BY
MANY FRIENDSHIPS. TO LOVE AND
TO BE LOVED IS THE GREATEST
HAPPINESS OF EXISTENCE.”
SYDNEY SMITH

GOD’S LANGUAGE IS LOVE

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God adores us because He wants our adoration. God loves us because He wants our love. God speaks to us by His love. This is the language we need to hear from the Lord so that we can speak it back to Him. It’s a glorious cycle—God takes the initiative by loving us, and we return that love to Him. God can say nothing without using this language of love.

What is true in the natural is also true by the Spirit. Isaiah described this beautifully in 55:9-11 (NASB):

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And
do not return there without watering the earth*

*And making it bear and sprout,
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

God's promise is as inevitable as rain falling, His words water our lives making us fruitful and productive. We return this blessing through our words of praise and thanksgiving, our testimony and witness to His Nature and also by our actions that may bring glory to the Lord.

James put it a different way, but it is still the same theme:
*Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there
is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His
will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that
we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.
(James 1:17-18 NASB)*

Everything that is good and right comes from a Father who never changes. It is His consistency and faithfulness that is the bedrock of our ability to receive. It simply does not depend upon us! He is the origin, the cause, the motive and the source of every gift. It will always be this way. He is the Beginning and the Ending for all of us, for all time. His passion is to make each of us a joyful carrier of His word through His promises so that we may enjoy the certainty of our receiving His gifts and goodness.

Think of it: we are the first fruits of His huge desire to have a people represent His Excellence. Our role in the Earth is to proclaim the fact of God's outstanding goodness by living the life of promise that He has set aside for us. All God's promises are yes! And amen! in Christ Jesus. Paul put it this way in his letter to the church in Rome:

...who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

(Romans 11:35-36 NASB)

It is not possible for us to initiate anything with God. Paul asks who has ever given to God first. God initiates, we respond by receiving and then we give back to God the very thing He gave us in the first place. From, through and to Him are all things. Everything He wants from us He gives to us.

This is amazing, wonderful, outrageous and mind-boggling stuff! This means that when the Holy Spirit convicts me of something, He is also relaying the Father's willingness to supply what I lack. Therefore:

- ◆ CONVICTION REGARDING OUR INABILITY TO PRAY ALSO RELEASED THE PROMISE THAT HE WILL HELP US.
- ◆ STRUGGLING WITH UNCLEAN THOUGHTS? CONVICTION ALSO BRINGS WITH IT THE PROMISE OF PURITY.
- ◆ PROBLEMS WITH DOUBT, UNBELIEF? WITH CONVICTION THE LORD SEEKS TO INITIATE FAITH.

Get the message? The promise releases the gift. Conviction seeks to re-establish the divine order. The Holy Spirit points

out our need and the provision at the same time. Conviction restores us to being open to the goodness of God. From Him, through Him and to Him are all things...marvelous.

Each of us must see ourselves in that cycle in the manner that the Father has declared. To live as part of His cycle of life we must understand that all of His language to us is full of promise to us. He delights to speak to us and is blessed by our expectancy.

The tragedy of modern Christianity is that much of it is performance-oriented. We think we have to do something to get something from God. "God can't possibly like me because

"LOVE IS BUT THE DISCOVERY OF OURSELVES IN OTHERS, AND THE DELIGHT IN THE RECOGNITION."
ALEXANDER SMITH

I'm not doing anything," we say. "God can't love me, I don't pray enough. I don't give enough. I don't worship enough. I don't read enough." But how much is actually enough? We

shouldn't be constantly quantifying "enough," but we should be serving God because He loves us. Present-day Christians are quick to fall into the same trap Martha did in Luke 10, thinking that we have to prove ourselves worthy of a relationship with Jesus. Being Mary, and basking in Jesus' love, is a severe challenge for us.

The language of love is something we must all learn. We have to understand how God sees us, so that we can see Him more clearly. God loves us and, because He loves us, we want to talk to Him. Everything we can give to God comes from

Him in the first place. It begins and ends with God, because intimacy is a cycle.

In the natural world, we see many examples of this type of cycle. Water falls from the sky, and returns to the heavens by the process of evaporation. The moon does not generate its own light, but reflects the light of the sun in the night sky. The image in a mirror is nothing more than a reflection of the actual object. Likewise, our love for God is a reflection of His love for us. Love begins and ends with God.

We cannot love God on our own initiative, but we can give back that which He has bestowed on us. When the Father of Lights gives us a gift that touches our heart, it does something inside of us. We end up returning to God the very thing He has given us. To love God, we must be loved by God. It's a wonderful thing to go through our entire lives being loved by God. We are condemned to be loved by Him forever. We can't escape it. We have no alternative but to put up with it: this is who God is.

Parents know an example of this principle: when our children were growing up, and our birthday was approaching, most of us gave them money to buy us a present. How do we know how to do this? It is in our DNA. God is the same way; His love is the currency He gives us so that we can love Him more fully. He gives to us the very thing He wants from us!