



February 2012 - *The Risk of Love*

In a world of smart phones, text messages, Facebook, and e-dating, many are creating virtual relationships which mask a person's true identity in an attempt to protect themselves from the reality of real relationship. They want to avoid the possible heartache and pain that can occur when love is not reciprocated. Others fill their lives with work, recreation or entertainment in an attempt to avoid deep relationships. And yet, as we attempt to protect ourselves, we become less human, and wander farther from the Creator's purpose for our lives which is to love both God and neighbor as ourselves.

In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis writes:

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket - safe, dark, motionless, airless - it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.

I believe that the most lawless and inordinate loves are less contrary to God's will than a self-invited and self-protective lovelessness. It is like hiding the talent in a napkin and for much the same reason 'I knew thee that thou wert a hard man.' Christ did not teach and suffer that we might become, even in the natural loves, more careful of our own happiness. If a man is not uncalculating towards the earthly beloveds whom he has seen, he is none the more likely to be so towards God whom he has not. We shall draw nearer to God, not by trying to avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves, but by accepting them and offering them to Him; throwing away all defensive armour. If our hearts need to be broken, and if He chooses this as the way in which they should break, so be it.<sup>1</sup>

As we look at the relationships in our own lives we might ask the following questions. Am I holding back my love toward God and others out of the fear of being wounded in the fray? If so, am I willing to begin to trust God with my life and open up the gateways to my heart so that I can both give and receive love as God intended me to do?

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.*

I JOHN 4:18-19 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Lewis, C.S. *The Four Loves*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1960), 169-170