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Reflections

February 2016 – *Love is Not Controlling*

In his book, *The Four Loves*, Lewis describes “*Storge*” or Affection Love that is typically displayed when someone is caring for someone else – a mother for her child; a nurse for her patient; a professor teaching his student. While it has many positive attributes, Lewis warns us that this kind of love gone can go sour by painting a picture of “Mrs. Fidget.” He writes,

Affection as a Gift-love has its perversions too. I am thinking of Mrs. Fidget, who died a few months ago. It is really astonishing how her family have brightened up. The drawn look has gone from her husband’s face; he begins to be able to laugh. The younger boy, whom I had always thought an embittered, peevish little creature, turns out to be quite human. The elder, who was hardly ever at home except when he was in bed, is nearly always there now and has begun to reorganize the garden. The girl, who was always supposed to be “delicate”... now has the riding lessons which were once out of the question, dances all night, and plays any amount of tennis. Even the dog who was never allowed out except on a lead is now a well-known member of the Lamp-post Club in their road.



Mrs. Fidget very often said that she lived for her family. And it was not untrue. Everyone in the neighborhood knew it. “She lives for her family,” she said; “what a wife and mother!”... There was always a hot lunch for anyone who was at home and always a hot meal at night (even in midsummer). They implored her not to provide this. They protested almost with tears in their eyes (and with truth) that they liked cold meals. It made no difference. She was living for her family. She always sat up to “welcome” you home if you were out late at night; two or three in the morning, it made no odds; you would always find the frail, pale, weary face awaiting you, like a silent accusation. Which meant of course that you couldn’t with any decency go out very often... She bore the whole burden of that daughter’s “delicacy” alone... The girl was to have no worries, no responsibility for her own health. Only loving care; caresses, special foods, horrible tonic wines, and breakfast in bed. For Mrs. Fidget, as she so often said, would “work her fingers to the bone” for her family. They couldn’t stop her. Nor could they — being decent people — quite sit still and watch her do it. They had to help. Indeed they were always having to help. That is, they did things for her to help her to do things for them which they didn’t want done... The Vicar says Mrs. Fidget is now at rest. Let us hope she is. What’s quite certain is that her family are.¹

Do you know someone like Mrs. Fidget? Have you ever felt like you were being controlled in the name of love to do things you really didn’t want to do? Have you ever been controlling in your displays of affection toward someone else? Hopefully the humorous picture of Mrs. Fidget will help us guard ourselves from controlling others in the name of love.

“Love does not insist on its own way.”
1 CORINTHIANS 13:5b (ESV)

¹ Lewis, C.S. *The Four Loves*. Inspirational Press: New York, 1986, pp. 239-240.