

## Christmas 2017

### Defining Love (by Frank G. Adams)

What does the word Love mean today? How do we define it? In answer to my question, Sherry, my son's wife, sent me the results of a question-and-answer session held by a group of professional people with a bunch of 4 to 8-year olds, where they asked them, "What does love mean?" Some of the answers I selected will both amuse and startle you.

**Karl, age 5**, says: "Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving lotion and they go out and smell each other."

**Elaine, age 5**, says: "Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."

**Mary Ann, age 4**, says: "Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."

**Tommy, age 6**, says: "Love is like a little old man and a little old woman who are still friends even after they know each other so well."

**Bobby, age 5**, says: "Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

**Jenny, age 7**, says: "There are two kinds of love. God's love - Our love. But God makes both kinds." That last answer is worthy of a philosopher. Maybe we should listen to children more than we do. They see the world around them with clear, fresh eyes, and interpret it with clear, fresh minds.

### Love Is More than We Can See by Brett Blair

A man once observed a young boy out in a field flying a kite. He noticed that there was something odd about the way the boy was standing and holding on to the string. He walked up to the boy and then learned that the boy was blind. He said, "Do you like flying kites?" The boy said, "I sure do." This piqued the man's curiosity and he asked, "How is that when you cannot see it?" The boy answered, "I may not be able to see it but I can feel it tugging'!" We may not always be able to identify the love of God in this world. Like the little boy, we may not be able to see love but it has a tug that let's us know its there.

### At the Manger by Invitation by Leonard Sweet

I know of a certain family which has for years spent a Saturday in mid-December finding and bringing home the right Christmas tree. They do not buy a tree off a lot. Instead, they prefer to go to a tree farm. There they

spend much time selecting the tree that is just right--not too tall, not too thin, with just the right shape. Then the tree is cut down and brought home. Last year the choice was very difficult. Not because there weren't a lot of beautiful trees available. The problem was that the youngest member of the family, little Jeannine, didn't like any of the really pretty ones. Her attitude was different. She said, "I'm looking for a tree that needs me. Then I'll make it beautiful."

Little Jeannine was reflecting the attitude of God. I'm so glad that God does not cater to the beautiful people, the wealthy or educated, the morally superior. God takes us as we are, with our ugliness and selfishness, then takes up residence within our hearts and minds. Gradually he makes us beautiful, from the inside out.

The shepherds of Bethlehem remind me that God does not favor the beautiful people. The shepherds were as common as the sheep they cared for, and no cleaner. They were the rednecks of Judea. The scuttlebutt about them was that they borrowed things without intending to return them. Shepherds as a group were so notoriously dishonest that the law courts of that day did not allow them to give testimony. Yet, the shepherds were the only group which received a personal invitation to come view the baby Jesus. Luke is our guide today into the Bethlehem event. Because Luke was a good historian, he might have visited the shepherds of the Bethlehem area. Every character around the Bethlehem manger had a story to tell.