

Saturation Love

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God gives commands to love. These commands are to be applied to wives, brothers, neighbors, aliens, and enemies. This love is **that** love that God had for us when Jesus Christ died for us. It is sacrificial; it is made up of its primary expression, **giving**. It is designed to be effective. It worked for our salvation.

Love requires an object, and love requires expression. “For God so loved the **world** that he **gave**...” (John 3:16). The **world** was love’s object, and **giving** was love’s expression. This love was not half-hearted or reluctant or “almost enough.” It was complete and more than adequate for all of the sins and sinners in this world. “But where sin increased, grace **increased all the more**...” (Romans 5:20).

In obeying these commands to love, we are to love as God loved. That is unconditional and without reserve or reluctance. We should **have** and **give** more love to the person needing love so that his need for love is satisfied. You may think that that is impossible. This person is so starved for love that to love him is like pouring water down a rat hole. You are convinced that you will run out of love before this love-starved person is satiated with it. This might be true if you are counting on his returning love to meet **your** needs. But if you get refilled by the Holy Spirit, you are never going to run out.

Now let us apply this principle to raising children. There are many different problems in raising children that require understanding and applying biblical principles. Here are a few of these problems.

1. Lack of obedience
2. Lack of effective discipline for disobedience
3. Lack of effective training and teaching
4. Sibling rivalry and jealousy
5. Attention-getting devices such as whining, crying, and tantrums
6. Signs of insecurity such as speaking loudly, warts, overweight, scratching, hitting, biting, picking at the body, and hand mannerisms.

Each of these subjects requires a book; in fact books have been written on each of these subjects. You have probably read some of them and implemented what you learned from the book, and, with some of you, what you applied did not work. It is easy to draw the conclusion that the book is wrong. The book may have been right, and your application may have been right. What event went wrong?

Here is the principle mentioned earlier. I will call it **saturation love**. Saturation love is different from adequate love, quality time, or quantity time. It includes the last two plus **undivided attention**. Saturation means that the maximum has been reached. A saturated solution means that the solvent cannot dissolve anymore solute. For example, if you continue to add and stir sugar into a glass of water, the water will eventually become saturated with sugar, meaning no more sugar will dissolve in it. After the saturation point, any additional sugar will fall to the bottom of the glass—the water **cannot** dissolve anymore.

It is the same with love. **It is possible** to saturate someone with love so that any additional love is not received. It is not rejected; it is just not needed.

Over the years I have asked audiences for a show of hands if they thought their parents loved them. Over 95% of the hands went up. It was never 100%, but it was always a high percentage. Then I asked this question of those who had raised their hands—“Do you think that your parents expressed this love to you **adequately**?” Only half of the hands remained up. The third question was: “Of those of you who think your parents expressed their love for you adequately, could you have used an even greater expression of love?” All of the hands remained up.

1. No love
2. Some love
3. Adequate love
4. **Even more love** is wanted

No one ever thought he received enough love from his parents. Their children will, if asked, say the same thing about them.

What are the results of not getting enough love? Disobedience is directly proportional to the shortfall in love.* Discipline for the disobedience, even if administered correctly, is not effective if the child is not loved enough. He thinks, "The last time I got any attention around here was the last time I got spanked." His disobedience becomes his means for getting attention. Therefore your training and teaching is ineffective if you are not giving your child enough love.

Sibling rivalry, competition, selfishness, and jealousy are inversely proportional to love toward your children. So when all of the kids are saturated with love, there is little or no rivalry, squabbles, or fights. The more love, the less whining, disobedience, and jealousy, and the less crying and tantrums. Also, the more love, the sooner the child will become a Christian.

"Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" (Romans 2:14)

God's means for leading us to repentance was to pour on the kindness and show us tolerance and patience even when we were sinners. How much more should we do this for our children.

What are our problems? We **do not want to give** hugs and attention to a whiner. We do not want to endorse bad behavior. That is true, but we are not endorsing bad behavior. We are curing it. This giving is not giving in to the child's dictations, but to his real need. His perception is more true than your perception. The "whiner" is asking for attention—loving attention. We will give a small baby attention when it cries. There may be nothing wrong; he is not hungry, wet, dirty, or sick; he just wants some loving. When the child is two or three or nine or ten and asks for attention, we do not want to give it. We do not think the child needs it. Believe me, if he asks for it, he needs it. When he is **saturated** he will quit asking. (On the other hand there are some children who need the attention but will **not demand** it. They need and receive even less than the *demand*. Because they are not demanding, you may think they are satisfied.)

Our problem is we run out of "give" before the child runs out of demand. We think he will **never** quit demanding our attention, so we quit giving it before we should quit. And if we kept on giving the attention, we'd find our child would get satisfied. The child will get full and consequently be very secure and ask for very little in the years to come. This security is of major importance in your child's obedience to you.

Many years ago there was a little boy who had warts on his left hand and arm. I think there were eighteen of them. He had had them for many months. One day his father asked him, "Johnny would you like me to pray to God to take away your warts?" Johnny replied, "No, they are my friends, I play with them." His father knew that these warts were evidence of the boy's insecurity and this insecurity was the result of the father himself not giving his son enough loving attention. The father made a decision and followed through with much loving attention. The warts disappeared in a very short time.

Many years ago I was close to a young family who had four pre-school boys, ages one, two, three, and four. One day the parents came to see me about their oldest son. He had two major problems that they did not seem able to correct. 1) He was hitting each of his little brothers all day long. He was corrected on each occurrence, either shouted at or spanked or both. 2) He had picked the skin off of his face in many places so that he had small red scabs all over his face. He looked like he had the measles. The spankings did not seem to work. Their question was obvious, "What do we do?" Although I took longer to say it than it takes for you to read this, the answer was as follows: "The next time the oldest hits a little brother, pick up the oldest and hug him." Her answer, "I don't want to reinforce that kind of conduct." "Don't worry, he already has gotten the message. Not only should you hug him the next time he hits his brother, I want you to hug him all day long. He hasn't gotten enough love since the second son was born, and now there are number three and number four. The only time he gets attention is when he is bad. So he hits little brother in order to get attention. He picks his face because he is insecure. I will guarantee that if you pour loving attention on him with overkill, his face will clear up and he will quit hitting his little brothers within two weeks." She said, "I don't think I can do that." "Why not?" "I don't even like him anymore." The parents confessed their sin and put this into effect. The predicted results came true.

A father with a very active 12-year-old son came for help. The son had had extensive discipline for misbehaving on small things and did not seem to have learned from the discipline. The son also had a difficult time getting along with his peers. The parents were giving a fair amount of love, attention, and time to the boy, but he still would not

receive correction or be repentant when spanked repeatedly. I told the father that he **could not pour on too much love**. The father, in desperation to see improvement, **poured on** the physical affection and **reduced** the constant verbal correction of minor things. The father then took the boy to a men's retreat where he held the son in his arms for the two-hour van ride there and back, plus holding the son during the speaking sessions. Upon their return home, the mother immediately recognized a change in the boy's attitude and his willingness to receive correction without pouting, as well as his desire to get along better with other children.

In years of asking questions and listening to answers, there is one answer that stands out. "I never heard my father admit that he was wrong about anything. In the meantime Mom knew he was wrong; we kids knew he was wrong; God knew he was wrong, and he himself knew it, but he would not admit it." This same statement may be true of some of you fathers whose children are grown and gone. You may be reading this and realize that you did not practice **saturation** love when they were growing up. In the meantime, they have had all kinds of problems. Others of you have children who are teenagers, not away from home, but not little "lovable" kids.

What can you do about it now? You can first confess to God **all** of your wrong actions such as overdiscipline, put-downs, ridicule, ignoring, yelling, anger, favoritism, lack of expressed love, etc. After this, you can write to each of your children expressing to them that which you have confessed to God. You can tell them you have confessed your actions and attitudes to God. You can also admit specific things that you remember. You can ask the children to bring to your attention things that they are **still** hurting about, just as **you** may still be hurting about how your father treated you. When they tell you, do **not** be defensive, just be sorry with a godly sorrow. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Then express love to them in **many** ways. If your children are still with you, do the same, except it should be in person in addition to the letter. The letter is important because 1) you can get it all said without interruptions, 2) the letter will get read many times, and 3) the letter will be kept.

Remember, both sexes of children need much love from both sexes of parents. If you are divorced, then saturation love is more difficult, but still necessary. If you are competing for the love and loyalty of your children by putting down your former spouse or by buying your children's love, this is counterproductive. Not only is it less than saturation love, it is not love at all.

One of the best means of expressing love to your children is by **not** fighting with your spouse. It is a major cause of insecurity. If you do disagree, the children should **never** hear it. Suppose you already have a history of fighting or disagreeing with your spouse in front of the children. Confess your history to God, then to your spouse and your children, and then forsake the fighting.

** We know that the child is born with, and later practices, a sinful nature. This sinful nature is the **primary** reason for his disobedience. This changes at his conversion. Both before and after conversion his disobedience is affected by lack of love.*

*Found in **How to be Free from Bitterness**, copyright James I. Wilson. I found that when I give people the booklet, **How to Be Free from Bitterness**, and ask them to read the brief essay within it, **Saturation Love**, as an answer to their discipline situation with their children, most do not read it. However, if I give them only the Saturation Love essay, they read it and they and their children subsequently benefit from its wisdom. **How to Be Free from Bitterness** is available in print at www.canonpress.org and online at <http://mediadownload.radiantwebtools.com/communitychristianministries/Articles/Bitterness2010.pdf>*