Extravagant Love

No coupon. No sale. My heart was pounding with the unfamiliarity of the situation.

But I had finally found the replacement wedding ring I had been searching for. It was for sale in a very swanky jewelry store, on the main drag of downtown Franklin, TN, which is storybook cute town, and super touristy.

The ring was art deco style, white gold, and modest sized diamonds. I'm not into the car-jacking-invitation bling, that's for sure.

But this was so not like my shopping habits. I never buy anything unless it is on sale, and/or I have a coupon code, and I am purchasing through a shopping portal like Rakten, or Swagbucks, so I can get the points from the purchase, which will add up to an eventual gift card of some kind.

It all seemed so extravagant.

There was that word again: extravagant. God has been showing me this characteristic of His love for several months now.

A few months back, I wrote here in THYME Magazine, about how God showed me His extravagant love by restoring my ability to eat my favorite foods, through providing a supplement that quelled my food allergy. So gracious! I didn't ask Him for it. He just gave it to me because His love is extravagant. I didn't realize that aspect of His love, even though as a worship leader, I frequent sing a song called "Your Love is Extravagant." Ouch, in my soul.

Buying this ring was another lesson about God's extravagant love, and for once, I understood it.

"Yeah me!" for not panicking when my husband and I were paying for the ring. We were spending close to $1,500, which was a lot more money that I was carnally comfortable spending on a piece of jewelry. But I silenced my ignorant flesh. This was special.

This was the replacement wedding ring for my current damaged ring. A gift from the man who is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh for over 20 years, and who works really hard, and loves me with all of his heart.

Such a sweet and significant gift from him. And from my God.

Now, I am certainly all for being a good steward with the provision God gives us. As I mentioned, I try to save money whenever I can, and I try to pray for God's guidance before I buy anything. After all, all money is His. But I also recognize when God is taking me out of my comfort zone to teach me a deeper lesson, which I needed to learn.

God's love is part of who He is. In fact, the Bible says, God IS love (please see 1 John 4:7-21). His love knows no bounds or conditions. Extravagant and empowering.

“There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror!” says 1 John 4:18 (AMPC).

Wow! Such love. Certainly a verse I need to remember.

Last week in church, our pastor was teaching about how God loves His people, even when they are being evil. A verse in Jeremiah 31:20 describes God’s love and mercy for His people with a deep yearning, even in the midst of their disobedience. And then Pastor Lyle showed us in Ephesians 2:4-6 how God is rich and mercy because of His GREAT and wonderful love with which He loves us. Such extravagant love.

I always tell my husband Tim what I am thinking and praying about writing in my next story for THYME. When I was explaining how grateful I am to God and to him for my new ring, he reminded me of something God spoke to me while I was praying, about four years ago.

God said, “There are gifts in everyday life waiting for us to unwrap them. They are proof—evidence—of His very real involvement in the lives of us, His creation.”

Such extravagant love the Creator has for His creatures. I am just beginning to grasp it.

A couple of days ago, this portion of Joyce Meyer’s daily devotional really helped me grab onto and apply the notion of God’s love. I saved it on the desktop on my computer, so I can readily reread it whenever I am struggling with any doubt or hopelessness. I am reposting it here, for you, and for me:

> “When you feel unlovable, it is hard to get it through your head and down into your heart that God loves you perfectly—even though you are not perfect and never will be as long as you are on the earth.
>
> There is only one thing you can do with a free gift: receive it and be grateful. I urge you to take a step of faith right now and say out loud, ‘God loves me unconditionally, and I receive His love!’ You may have to say it a hundred times a day, like I did for months, before it finally sinks in, but when it does it will be the happiest day of your life. To know that you are loved by someone you can trust is the best and most comforting feeling in the world. Prayer Starter: Father, I know You love me unconditionally and in the name of Jesus, I receive Your love, amen.”

Such sweet words. I really want to get a deeper grasp of God’s love for me. It’s so complete, so eternal, so extravagant. Amen.

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