



YOUR INSIGHT

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UNCONDITIONAL

BY KATIE POPE

Unconditionally:

without conditions or limitations; absolute and not subject to any special terms; it'll happen no matter what else happens...



The Bible tells us that...

John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Over the past few months, God has really been speaking to me about love and relationships. With the celebration of Valentine's Day, I thought it the perfect time to share my thoughts and how God has revolutionized my thinking and approach to the subject of love and relationship both in the natural and the spiritual. I was driving one night and as I turned my car on, a song blasted out from the speakers about unconditional love. I had to look at my display as I couldn't remember putting a Christian CD on – it was tuned to Radio 1.

The words were so powerful and I immediately felt such an overwhelming sense of God's love. "But how can this be?" I thought "Radio 1 doesn't play Christian music." As I drove, I couldn't help the tears pouring down my face as, through the words of this song, I felt completely and utterly loved by God. Of course I already knew that God loved me but in that moment I truly *felt* it.

I could feel His embrace, His overwhelming passion for me and right then I didn't need or want for anything else. It was as if God was writing His own personal love letter to me. The song ended and I heard the Radio presenter announce the title of the song – Katy Perry: Unconditionally. When I got home rushed to look up the words and found that there was so much more that God wanted to show me.

Throughout the bible, we are reminded so many times of God's love for us. We are told through words and we are shown through the amazing grace story that is the Cross. Perhaps the most well-known scripture about love and one that is so popular at weddings is the passage from 1 Corinthians 13. If I truly look into this passage, I find that I could so easily become despondent because no natural relationship can ever live up to all of these attributes that are set out – no matter how hard I try. However, I then realize that I am not supposed to – this is talking about God. This is how HE loves me and how HE views our relationship.

In all relationships in life, whether between spouses, siblings, parents and children or friends, there is a love bond. A lot of the time it is a strong bond- some might even say an unbreakable one. But it is always conditional – whether we intend it to be or not. No matter how much we love someone, we can't help putting conditions on that relationship. Natural love (with all its good intentions) will at some point let us down. I have come to realize that to fully enjoy and embrace all the benefits, beauty and fulfillment of natural love, I first have to understand how God loves me, and this is what I want to share with you.

Looking at 1 Corinthians knowing that this is describing how God loves me is so liberating. It means that I can fully rely on Him to fulfil ALL my needs. I don't need to look to natural relationships to make me feel loved, wanted, happy, worthy, because God's love does all this for me. That's not to say that I don't enjoy the love and friendship I get from those around me but I know I can't become reliant on it. I can't let it govern where my happiness comes from. I can't let it dictate my feelings of self-worth. I can't let those relationships define who I am – Only God can and will truly love me without conditions and without limits and until I truly receive and accept this love, I cannot truly love others. The journey of being loved unconditionally by God enables me to love others "because He first loved me." (1 John 4:19)

So, where does this all tie in with the song? Previous to hearing the song, a very good friend and I had been chatting. She explained to me about completely relying on God for all my needs and it sounded like a wonderful place to be in. However, I couldn't quite find myself there. I tried and tried to 'hand it all to God' but it was in my own strength and part of me still kept a hold of what I thought I needed to 'fix'.

From when I first heard the song, it played on the radio so many times. I also downloaded it so I could listen whenever I wanted to. Each time I heard it, God continued to show me more and more of his love for me – it was overwhelming. Issues that I thought I had dealt with were wiped away, fears that I had built up were cast out and His embrace was so sweet and I felt that on those days when I was struggling to understand my natural relationships, God was there, reminding me just how much he loved me.

The first few lines of the song describes how I used to feel about how God viewed me - how could He love me with all the guilt... shame... problems etc. that I had. But as the last line of the first verse says – God doesn't even blink at it. It's not a problem for Him. This has all been dealt with at the cross. Romans 8:35; 38-39 tells me that NOTHING can separate me from the love of God. He is not fazed by anything that I could possibly do, say or think or by anything that the world may throw at me in the future.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind;

Love does not envy or boast;

it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things,

hopes all things,

endures all things.



Love never ends...

'Unconditionally'

*Oh no, did I get too close?
Oh, did I almost see what's really on the
inside?*

*All your insecurities
All the dirty laundry
Never made me blink one time*

*Unconditional, unconditionally
I will love you unconditionally
There is no fear now
Let go and just be free
I will love you unconditionally*

*Come just as you are to me
Don't need apologies
Know that you are worthy
I'll take your bad days with your good
Walk through the storm I would
I do it all because I love you, I love you*

*Unconditional, unconditionally
I will love you unconditionally
There is no fear now
Let go and just be free
I will love you unconditionally*

*So open up your heart and just let it begin
Open up your heart and just let it begin
Open up your heart and just let it begin
Open up your heart*

*Acceptance is the key to be
To be truly free
Will you do the same for me?*

*Unconditional, unconditionally
I will love you unconditionally
And there is no fear now
Let go and just be free
'Cause I will love you unconditionally
I will love you, unconditionally
I will love you
I will love you unconditionally*

Katy Perry

I AM LOVED NO MATTER WHAT! Hallelujah!

However, it didn't seem that God was done with allowing me just to bask in the glory of knowing and feeling His unconditional love. During one of the times I was listening to the song (I was in the car again and 'it just so happened' to come on the radio), one line of the song jumped out at me. By this time I knew the song, I'd sing along to it, I read the lyrics but this line seemed to have escaped me:

"Will you do the same for me?"

BOOM! It was like an arrow to my heart. It was as if God was asking me directly. He was challenging my relationship with Him – He loves me unconditionally, but how about me? Do I love Him unconditionally and without limits? In that moment I had to ask for forgiveness because I realised that I hadn't loved God unconditionally. I had been bombarding Him with requests and petitions in the form of, "If you would just do this then my life would be..." or "If you would change this then my relationship would be..." and even though I didn't verbalise a physical condition or limitation, my attitude was that of subjecting God to special terms that would help me to love Him more. I didn't even realise I was doing it.

So where does that leave me now? Now I feel I have a deeper understanding of God's love for me. Now I don't look to my natural relationships to define my happiness, self-worth and who I am – I look to God. It isn't always easy and it takes a daily choice but with God's help and grace, the choice gets easier and easier until suddenly it is no longer a choice but a way of life.

Please don't think I'm trying to say we shouldn't enjoy our natural relationships and that they can't be truly amazing and fulfilling – of course they can. In fact it's quite the opposite. When we look to God for EVERYTHING, suddenly our natural lives with all its ups and downs doesn't seem so hard to bear. When we completely and unconditionally put our trust in Him, we find that things just fall into place. We have the peace that passes all (natural) understanding. No longer are we bound by our shortcomings in the natural – if we truly grasp what it is to be loved unconditionally and to have someone who not only is willing but wants to fulfil our every need then our natural relationships change because our perspective and expectations change.

If we 'open up our hearts and let it begin' then God will flood us with his amazing love. We may already have the head knowledge that God loves us but we just have to let it in...really let it in. Relish in it, let go of all the fear, stand against all the 'what ifs' and 'yes buts'. Acceptance is key and you will be amazed at the freedom it brings.

In His Amazing and Unconditional Love

Katie X



City Church Women
Leaving heart prints on our world

If you would like to share your story or something that God has been speaking to you about, you can send it to Meliza: melizahere@yahoo.co.uk. We would love to hear from you! x