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Loving Him Who First Loved Us

by Lindsey

Well, it's that time of year again. Stores have stocked their shelves with every kind of chocolate known to man. The aisles are adorned with red and pink gifts, and billions of cards with Cupid on the front have infiltrated our lives. Yes, it's Valentine's Day.

For the first two weeks in February, people everywhere scramble to find the perfect gift for the one they love. Guys endlessly search for the perfect flowers, candy, and cards that will make them "husband/boyfriend of the year material," while girls search for that supreme "manly gift." This love isn't limited just to couples. On this holiday, children and parents find themselves expressing their deepest appreciation for the ones around them. Regardless of the circumstance, everyone seems to get wrapped up in the feeling of Valentine's Day.

But somewhere amid the endless stacks of cards and gift wrapped boxes of chocolates, we seem to lose sight of the greatest gift that we've ever been given—a gift given out of love. As a result, we also forget to love the One who gave it to us. This unique gift is offered to anyone and everyone who is willing to accept it. That gift is Jesus Christ.

God's love for us was so great that He didn't wish anyone to die and go to hell. John 3:16 reminds us that, "For God

so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Out of His love, God gave us Jesus Christ to substitute as the payment of our sin.

While we don't have to do anything to earn this gift, often times we become so wrapped in our lives that we forget to love God back for what He has given us. When Jesus was asked what the greatest command was he responded by saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all they mind." Obviously, it is important to God that we love Him, and more importantly that we express that love. Just as we tell the people we love how much they mean to us, so should we, as God's children, show how much we love Him.

Our heavenly Father deserves all the glory and praise we can give Him, and as saved children of God, it is our responsibility to show that. As you celebrate this Valentine's Day with your loved ones, don't forget to show love to the One who loved you enough to send you His Son. As 1 John 4:19 says, "We love Him, because He first loved us."



"The opportunity to play basketball and grow spiritually on a Christian campus was an enriching experience. Playing teams from around the country helped us grow as a team and carry the camaraderie back home to Virginia," said Sameh, senior, at the closing of their trip.

There was a plethora of things to enjoy, but the most important thing was the preaching of the Word of God. Dr. Goetch preached a great message that especially spoke to me. Dr. Goetch asked a simple yet probing question, "What will you be remembered for when you die?" When a person dies and their tombstone is engraved, the most important thing is not the name, the years in which they lived, not even the Scripture. On the contrary, it is the simple dash in between the years of birth and death. It represents your life and all that you will be remembered for. That dash is worthless if one has spent his entire life doing only as he pleases. But by doing God's will, that simple dash becomes meaningful. My decision was to spend my life doing what God's will is for my life. I challenge everyone to live a life for Christ because "Only what is done for Christ will last."

artwork by Annie



Mr. Scott

by Meredith

This new teacher loves spinach, was born on June 2, and loves to wear bow ties. Sound familiar? Of course, the answer is Mr. Scott — the intern science teacher for Mr. Niggel's seventh through ninth grade science classes and Senior Physics. Throughout the nine weeks he is with us, he has not only busied himself in the classroom, but also on the basketball court where he keeps the books for each team.

Currently a senior at Northland Baptist Bible College (NBBC), Mr. Scott is obtaining a degree for science education. When not at college, Mr. Scott lives with his family in New Hampshire. Several years earlier, Mr. Scott's parents had been teachers at NBBC, which contributed in his decision as to what he wanted to do as a career. Looking back at the years of learning and spiritual growth he underwent there, Mr. Scott says "it reaffirms" that going to Northland was definitely not a mistake, but exactly what God intended for him.

As if it were not already noticeable, Mr. Scott is not just a teacher, but a unique teacher. For instance, one of his hobbies is collecting pencils from any place he or his family visits. Already he has over four hundred pencils in his collection. Another unique characteristic of Mr. Scott is his favoritism towards wearing bow ties. One day, he spotted the neck bows while shopping for ties, and decided to buy some. After feeling much more comfortable, he decided to stick with bow ties, thus beginning his widespread collection of them. To add to Mr. Scott's unique character as a teacher, he has a very gracious and merciful personality with his students, and has already established a great relationship with each one.

Who Couldn't Love California?

by TJ

The highly anticipated day had come. Disembarking a plane that had landed at LAX airport, the boys varsity basketball team was filled with excitement. Jackets flew off and faces brightened as California's perfect 75 degree weather greeted the team. After picking up our luggage, the team was escorted via bus to the West Coast Baptist College campus where we were to stay.

Of all places, the boys were assigned to "Heritage Hall." This was unacceptable! So to accommodate ourselves, the hall was officially dubbed "Fairfax Hall" in honor of the two victories over Heritage this season. It was clearly seen that the power and spirit of the Lord had moved upon the college campus. Such a caring spirit was seen in each person. The desire to grow was apparent and had its affect on the basketball team.

"I enjoyed waking up every morning and doing my devotional and praying with Coach Wilson in the 'prayer room.' I know it had a positive impact on our trip and the way we played," said Pete, senior.

On the court we were able to pull off a few wins. And despite the few losses the team still had a great time. Activities such as monopoly at 2 o'clock in the morning, Wal-Mart runs, and team bonding time at the nearest Chinese restaurant led some of the team members to believe the trip was definitely a major highlight of their entire school year.

Elementary Corner Valentine Thoughts

by Rebecca

"What do you think of when you hear the word valentine?"

Kindergarten — Caleb "Socks"

1st grade — Madison "Pink and chocolate"

1st grade — Joshua "Get married"

2nd grade — Connor "I feel like someone loves me."

2nd grade — Caleb "Fun Dip candy"

3rd grade — Enoch "God's love"

3rd grade — Ben "The word valentine with a fancy V"

4th grade — Haven "My parents telling secrets"

4th grade — Miss Sommerdorf "Hearts with white lace around them"

4th grade — Grace "Bears with hearts"

4th grade — Brian

"My parents were married on Valentine's Day"

5th grade — Jason "Candy"

6th grade — Jenneth "The 'gross' month"

6th grade — Camden "Nastiness"

6th grade — Amanda "Hearts"

6th grade — Timmy "Loving someone special"

6th grade — Casey "Saint Valentine"

6th grade — Mrs. Naylor "Sweetness"

Hush Heart Game

by Lindsey

Every Valentine's Day, the junior high and high school anxiously awaits the Hush Heart game. All high school girls receive a heart with their name on it to wear around their necks. Except for class participation or discussions, girls are not allowed to talk, acknowledge, or respond in any way to a guy. If a guy gets a girl to talk to him, she must give him her heart. The goal is to keep their heart for the entire day.

This year, student council decided to add a new twist. If a girl gets her heart taken away, but is able to get the guy who took it to talk to her, she gets her heart back.

At the end of the day, the guy with the most hearts, and all the girls who were able to keep their hearts, win a free homework pass.

On St. Patrick's Day, the situation will be reversed, and we'll see how good the guys are at keeping quiet!



artwork by Maggie