



## From the Heart of the First Lady

### GOD's Love Letter to You

Jeremiah 32:40-41 (NIV) "I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul."

#### How Do I Love Thee...? Let Me Count the Ways

As we celebrate this month most known throughout the world for conjugal love and romance, it can stir up a variety of emotions within us. At no other time of year is there more emphasis placed on **being** loved than Valentine's Day. The barrage of ads selling diamonds, jewelry and flowers send messages that are intended to make us calculate our value and significance based on whether or not we receive their product. While some people meet this day with blissful anticipation, others are overwhelmed by feelings of sadness and loneliness. Whether you're single, divorced, widowed, newlywed or celebrating decades of marriage, one thing we all share is our profound need for true love.

The great news for us as disciples of Jesus is everyday is Valentine's Day. We don't have to go "looking for love", we simply need to acknowledge and receive the extravagant gift GOD gave us – Himself. Since GOD **is** love, we can rightfully deduce that He is both the giver and the gift. One of the LORD's many names is the "Lover of My Soul" and He calls us His "bride". He is jealous for us – not willing to share our worship and adoration with any other god. And He proved His love for us to the highest degree.

Prominent poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote the famous Sonnet to her husband that starts as follows: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways..." Though this piece gained global and multi-generational acclaim, it cannot hold a candle to GOD's "love letter" to us. The Bible is chock full of expressions of GOD's great love for His chosen. Let's explore this for a few moments by reading some excerpts from His (the Author's) perspective:

Beloved, You dominate my thoughts as I am constantly considering how I can bless and protect you. (Isaiah 65:24 (NIV) *Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.*)

It may surprise you how much I think about you. (Psalm 139:17-18 (NLT) *How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!...*)

I love you sooo much, I cannot contain myself. You cause me to burst into song. (Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT) *"For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you*

#### Prayer:

❖ *God, my Father, may I love You in all things and above all things. May I reach the joy which You have prepared for me in Heaven. Nothing is good that is against Your Will, and all that is good comes from Your Hand. Place in my heart a desire to please You and fill my mind with thoughts of Your Love, so that I may grow in Your Wisdom and enjoy Your Peace.*

*with joyful songs."*)

I obsess over you and know everything about you. I can't bear to be apart from you. I cannot let you out of my sight. (Psalm 139:7-10 (MSG) *Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit? to be out of your sight? If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there! If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon, You'd find me in a minute— you're already there waiting!*)

Everything that's important to you is important to me! My love for you completely confounds me in that though I forget all of your sins, I remember the number of hairs on your head (Isaiah 43:25, Matthew 10:29-31).

I have meticulously planned every moment of your life to bring about nothing but your prosperity and joy. (Jeremiah 29:11 (KJV) *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*)

You consume my thoughts to the point where I rise with you on my mind. (Isaiah 30:18 (NIV) *Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!*)

I've been shopping for you! – For the perfect gift. 'Cause nothing is too good for you. (James 1:17 (NIV) *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*)

If only you could grasp the extent of your value to me. There are nations of people whose significance don't equal the sum total of yours. I would do anything for you. (Isaiah 43:3-4 (NLT) *For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt as a ransom for your freedom; I gave Ethiopia and Seba in your place. Others were given in exchange for you. I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you.*)

Just wait, I'm gonna blow your mind!!! (1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV) *However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him!"*) XO, Jesus