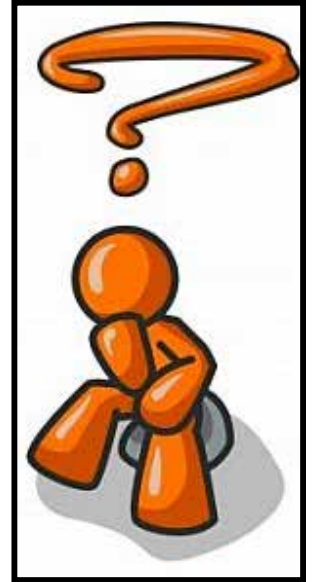


# What About ... the Idea, “Love Makes Us Vulnerable”?

By DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

On July 1, 2019, Bud Brown, President and Co-Founder of “Turnaround Pastors” wrote an article called “Hurt by Those Who Are Close.” Here’s some of what he said:

It is those who are close, to whom we have entrusted our hearts, who devastate us by betrayal... The danger of betrayal is inherent in the nature of love. When we love others, we lower our defenses. We allow them in past emotional barriers designed to protect our frail hearts. We trust them with our most vulnerable selves. When you are betrayed, you face a difficult and painful choice: either deal with the pain of betrayal and learn to trust once again or condemn yourself to a life of loneliness and hopeless anguish. [faithalone.org/grace-in-focus-articles]



Wow! Love sounds like a really bad idea! If I love somebody, I become “vulnerable,” I open myself to being “betrayed,” in which case I’m faced with two really tough options: (1) “deal with the pain of betrayal and learn to trust once again” or (2) “condemn yourself to a life of loneliness and hopeless anguish.” Well, the first option sounds better, and that’s the point of Mr. Brown’s article. But that means if I love someone, at best, I face the possibility of dealing (somehow) with the pain and learning (somehow) to trust based on no assurance (or even good evidence) that I will not be in the same place again. It sounds like love is a hazardous venture.

OR, there is another possibility. Maybe he has the wrong idea about love. There are several kinds of love mentioned in the Bible. There is at least romantic love, friendship love, and loyal love. But in every case, the act of loving is always an act of giving. Therefore, I suggest:

**There is nothing in loving that makes us vulnerable. It’s not love that makes us vulnerable, it’s the desire to be loved that makes us vulnerable.**

Paul defined love this way:

*Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a*

*wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).*

What part of being kind to someone and not jealous makes me “vulnerable?” What part of not bragging, not being arrogant nor acting unbecomingly leads to a “danger of betrayal?” How does not being provoked and not taking into account a wrong suffered affect my “emotional barriers?” How does rejoicing in the truth, or faith and hope in the context of one who endures all things, “lower our defenses?” More likely, it’s when I want the one I love to be kind to me, not jealous of me, not provoked by me, or not take into account a wrong they suffered from me, that makes me vulnerable. It’s when I want affection, attention, and appreciation that I become vulnerable.

Love is all about giving without the expectation of reciprocity. Expecting something in return is swapping, not giving. Love focuses on the better good of the one loved. Love is us obeying God’s directive for relating to others (Luke 6:31), not wondering what I’m going to get out of it. Love looks for its return from God in heaven (Matthew 6:4). That’s why we can also love our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35). I suggest we are only “Hurt by Those Who Are Close” when we turn love into a desire to be loved.