



SO IN LOVE

By Vincent M. Newfield

Have you ever been in love? I mean *really* in love? Do you remember what it was like when it began? The joy . . . the excitement . . . the anticipation of being with that special person?

When I first met my wife, Allison, it seemed like all I could think or talk about was her . . . her smile, her laugh, her beauty—both inside and out. Whenever we could be together, we *were* together. And when we weren't together, we were usually on the phone. When one date ended, I was already planning the next. Our lives became intertwined. We were **so in love!**

Did you know God is even *more* in love with you and me? From the beginning, we were created for intimate fellowship with Him. But when man sinned in the garden, it broke God's heart. Sin separated us from Him.¹ He longed to restore the intimate friendship we once had, but there was only one way to do it. Man could not (and cannot) come to God through any effort of his own.² Therefore, God came to man in the person of Jesus Christ and built a bridge back to Himself through the cross.³

By *believing* Jesus died, was buried and rose from the grave and by *receiving* His grace to live right, our relationship with the Father is restored.⁴ This is the *Good News* of Jesus Christ, and evangelism is the "open declaration of this Good News."⁵ Out of genuine love, thankfulness and excitement, we who've experienced a restored relationship with the Father gladly share with others what God has done in our lives.

Intimacy with the Father is what fuels the fire of effective evangelism. Without a growing *heart to heart* relationship with Him, we're limited to only a *head to head* exchange of doctrinal statements with others. This is one of the greatest obstacles to evangelism today. Many Christians are trying to tell others about Jesus, but they don't really *know* with their heart who He is.

Think about it. When a man and a woman love each other, they enter the God-ordained covenant of marriage. Jesus says in Matthew 19:5 *For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be united firmly (joined inseparably) to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* God gives us this image in the natural to show what He desires for our relationship with Christ in the spirit. As Christians we are the *bride* of Christ, and Christ is the *Bridegroom*.⁶ The relationship between a husband and wife helps us understand the great mystery *...concerning [the relation of] Christ and the church*.⁷

Just as God's divine design for a husband and wife is to continually draw closer together and reproduce after their kind, He wants us to continually draw closer to Jesus and reproduce after our kind. The fruit of a passionate, intimate relationship is **new life**—in the natural and supernatural.

That's what it means to be . . . His witnesses . . . fishers of men . . . and makers of disciples.⁸ Through the witness of our lives and lips, we plant seeds of truth in others. As we do, many become *pregnant* with the Divine Seed of Almighty God, and new lives are birthed in the spirit.⁹

Healthy, effective evangelism—giving birth to new believers—will take place naturally as we abide in the Vine, living in close fellowship with Jesus. In other words, as we, the Bride of Christ, are passionately pursuing the Bridegroom, Jesus, we'll see new lives added to the family of God. We won't have to *jam* Jesus down anyone's throat. Those who are hungry will willingly swallow the truth of the Good News.

God desires an intimate relationship with you that's second to none. And out of that intimacy, evangelism will naturally flow. So stop and ask yourself a few questions: "Are new lives being birthed through me? Have I lost my first love? Am I still passionately pursuing Jesus?" If this describes you, don't feel condemned. It happens to all of us at times. Just ask the Lord to reignite your fire of desire for Him. He will because **He is so in love with you!**

(1) See Ephesians 2:12. (2) See John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8,9. (3) See John 3:16; Hebrews 9:12; 10:12,14 (4) See Romans 10:9. (5) Adapted from *American Dictionary of the English Language*, Noah Webster 1828 (Foundation for American Christian Education, San Francisco, CA: 2000). (6) See Revelation 22:17; John 3:28,29. (7) See Ephesians 5:31,32. (8) See Acts 1:8; Mark 1:17; Matthew 28:19. (9) See 1 John 3:9.