

## **Taking the Next Step to Reach Your Potential**

### ***What Makes You Like God?***

The college from which I graduated was about two thousand miles from my hometown and although there were lots of family and friends at my graduation, there were only two there for me. My best friend Art flew in to see me graduate along with my mom. I was amazed either of them came but in particular it was stunning that my mom was there. She was in fact suffering greatly from cancer. Radiation and chemo treatments had taken a severe toll on her and although she was only in her mid-forties, she was frail and had a tough time walking. There was no logical reason for her traveling to Missouri. This certainly was not a vacation. My mom was at my graduation because she loved me. Despite not seeing me in five months and being so far away, she still loved me. In the movie, "Interstellar", scientist Dr. Brand waited ten years for the man she loved to return from a journey into space trying to find a planet that would be inhabitable for humans. She knew he probably died in the search, but she still wanted to see if she could find him. After having gone through a wormhole to reach potential lifesaving planets and specifically the one where her love had travelled, she attempted to convince Cooper, the pilot for the spacecraft to try and make it to a particular planet where Dr. Brand thought he was. Cooper was unconvinced it was worth the try but Dr. Brand believed that love is a wisdom that is greater than what we can perceive in mere time and space. She argued, "Love is the one thing we are capable of perceiving that transcends dimensions of time and space." Is she right? Let's take a look at that thought.

The only one who transcends dimensions of time and space is God. **Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.** (Isaiah 40:28 NIV) The Apostle Paul makes a similar statement about God. **Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.** (1 Timothy 1:17 NIV) God is eternal and He is beyond time; He transcends time. He also transcends space because there is not a place where He cannot be found. **Am I a God who is only in one place and cannot see what they are doing? Can anyone hide from me? Am I not everywhere in all of heaven and earth?** (Jeremiah 23: 24 TLB) The Psalmist brings out the great joy this characteristic of God offers you. **Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.** (Psalm 139: 7-10 NIV) Now let's connect the dots. **But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children —** (Psalm 103: 17 NIV)

Do you see it? God is everlasting and so too is His love. But it is not love disconnected from space. It is love for everyone who fears Him. His love though goes even further than that and extends to His enemies too! Remember that Jesus has told us to love our enemies and surely God would not ask us to do more than He Himself does. It goes wherever God's people go. His love is similar to what Jesus told the disciples. **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**" (Matthew 28: 20b NIV) Just as Christ is with you anywhere and everywhere, so too His love is there also. Consider something you may not have ever given much thought and that is the expansiveness of God and His love in the description of the birth of Christ. Remember the account of the Magi and their discovery that the King of Israel had been born? **After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."** (Matthew 2: 1-2 NIV) The Christmas star informed the Magi while they were still in the east. We have no idea where they actually lived when they first saw the star but the expression "from the east" probably indicates it was far from Bethlehem. It was there that God reached out to the Magi, in some now forgotten metropolis or countryside village. Many ancients did not

even think they came from the same parts of the world. The Lord was not just in Israel, He was in a faraway country too. And there His love reached out and changed lives forever.

What did that magical, supernatural star accomplish? First, the gifts the Magi brought Joseph, Mary and Jesus provided the finances for their emergency trip to Egypt which lasted three and a half years. An act of love initiated by God and carried out by the Magi provided a safety net as the Holy Family waited for the murderous King Herod to die. Secondly, the great star was God's way of pouring His love out on the Magi, giving them the opportunity to meet and worship the Savior of the world. Remember, God did not need the Magi to provide for the holy family, He could have provided them gold coins in the mouths of fish if He wanted. The Lord poured out His love onto the Magi from "the uttermost parts of the earth" by giving them the honor of being in the circle of those who came upon the baby Jesus.

Let me give an example of how love transcends time and space. Consider this often neglected aspect of a famous sibling rivalry described in the ancient book of Genesis. A younger brother Jacob was greedy like the prodigal son and lusted after his brother's birthright. For a bowl of soup, he was able to get it from his older brother Esau. Esau bought the soup Jacob cooked for the cost of his birthright as oldest son. **Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.** (Genesis 25: 34 NIV) Esau didn't forever despise his birthright. He came to miss it quite dearly but there was nothing he could do to regain it. Later, Esau and Jacob's father told their mother Rebekah that he wanted to pass on a God anointed blessing to his son Esau. To Isaac, Esau was still his oldest and favorite son. Rebekah though was just as conniving as her son Jacob and figured out a way to trick her husband into passing on his divine blessing to Jacob, her favorite son. You probably already know what happened. Isaac sent his son Esau off to hunt some wild game and cook it to share as a meal offering before he blessed Esau. As soon as Esau joyfully left, Rebekah shared her plan with Jacob. **Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.**" (Genesis 27: 8-10 NIV)

The plan worked perfectly and because elderly Isaac was pretty much blind, Jacob tricked his dad into passing along the blessing intended for Esau to him instead. Esau's reaction was immediate and violent. Word got back to Rebekah that Esau planned on killing Jacob for what he had done. Jacob immediately fled and resettled far from home. He stayed away twenty years and when he finally returned home, he was deathly afraid his brother Esau would take vengeance on him and his family. He even tried to bribe Esau by sending ahead hundreds of livestock as gifts, but he didn't need to do it. Esau had love for his brother, love that transcended time and space. **But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.** (Genesis 33: 4 NIV) Stand amazed by the transformative power of God to turn rivals and even enemies into friends who love each other. There is no one you cannot love, and love is the most powerful indication that you are born again.

Jacob did not believe in the transformative, supernatural power of love. Despite Esau's emphatic embrace of Jacob, the younger Jacob didn't trust him it seems and refused his offer to send his men with Jacob to protect Jacob's family as they moved to their new settlement. He didn't even want Esau to go with him and his family. Jacob made a promise to Esau. **So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly at the pace of the droves before me and that of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.**" (Genesis 33: 14 NIV) Jacob told him that after he and his family got moved into their new home, he would come visit Esau in Seir. But he never went. It is sad but some people don't seem to learn how to love, how to trust others to love them. Jacob was like that, but God isn't. The Apostle John says this of our God. **God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.** (1 John 4: 16b, c NIV) Created in God's image with the Lord living within you, there is no one you are not capable of loving because that is your DNA. So love today and love tomorrow too. It's the way of God. It's what marks the believer's relationships for eternity.