

I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS (Inspired by the Foreigner song)

Final Week of the 6-Week "Songs of Life" Series

Rev. Richard Maraj

Sunday, May 17, 2026

LYRICS to "I Want to Know What Love Is"

I've gotta take a little time

A little time to think things over

I better read between the lines

In case I need it when I'm older

Now this mountain I must climb

Feels like the world upon my shoulders

Through the clouds, I see love shine

It keeps me warm as life grows colder

In my life, there's been heartache and pain

I don't know if I can face it again

Can't stop now, I've traveled so far

To change this lonely life

I wanna know what love is

I want you to show me

I wanna feel what love is

I know you can show me

Oh

I'm gonna take a little time

A little time to look around me

I've got nowhere left to hide

It looks like love has finally found me

In my life, there's been heartache and pain

I don't know if I can face it again

Can't stop now, I've traveled so far

To change this lonely life

I wanna know what love is

I want you to show me

I wanna feel what love is

I know you can show me

I wanna know what love is

I want you to show me

I wanna feel what love is

I know you can show me

Let's talk about love

The love that you feel inside

And I'm feelin' so much love

No, you just cannot hide

Yeah, I wanna know what love is

I want you to show me, I wanna feel

And I know, and I know

I know you can show me

MESSAGE:

How many people have ever had your heart broken so badly you felt like giving up on love? Anybody ever have that one? How many people have ever consciously withheld love from someone you loved? Anybody ever consciously withhold love? And how many people would agree that the thing we all want more than anything in this world is love and to be loved? How many would agree with that?

You know, every one of us has a desire -- has a need and a drive -- to experience love. And we would do almost anything for it. You ever seen one of those movies where this man and woman are getting married; one is nervous about some stuff; so they lie and pretend to be they're something other than themselves, so the other person would still fall in them and marry them? Anybody ever see that scenario?

Kind of reminds me of this wealthy 70-year-old man who went to his golf and country club to show off his new 23-year-old bride to his friends. And when they saw him, one of the friends said, *"Hey, how did you convince her to marry you?"*

And he grinned and smiled. He said, *"Simple. I lied about my age by 25 years."*

And his friends gasped and said, *"Wait! You told her you were 45?"*

He chuckled and shook his head and said, *"No; I told her I was 95."*

So, this is Week #6 of our six-week series called "Songs of Life," taking famous, popular songs that we love and extracting a spiritual message from them.

The first week, we did The Beatles' "Help"; then Bob Marley's "Redemption Song"; then Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven"; then Bob Seger's "Against the Wind." Last week, we did Dire Straits' "Sultans of Swing."

Today we're going to look at the 1984 hit by Foreigner, "I Want to Know What Love Is." It was written by the guitar player, Mick Jones, who was having a lot of issues with failed relationships. And he was kind of down and really struggling. And he created this to express and find a way to process his feelings of hurt and pain in a relationship, and also to understand love.

And it started off as his own process and desperate quest to know more love. But it started expanding into something greater. And he was inspired to bring in a gospel choir, and he felt that he wrote a spiritual song; that he was guided from within to create this. It came through him.

The song really expresses some deep emotions of pain and heartache. And it also expresses a lot of hope, I think, and a desire for love still after being hurt, and an optimism that things will not only get better, but he will learn what love is.

And so, this morning, we are going to look at three wonderful lessons inspired by this great song.

And the first one is to **RELEASE THE FALSE AND NEGATIVE AND LIMITING BELIEFS THAT WE HAVE AROUND LOVE.**

I think we've all been taught some unhealthy false beliefs and practices when it comes to love -- and the nature of love -- that really cause us ... Because of the pain, they drive us to reflect and review and reevaluate some of those beliefs regarding love to see if they're helping us or if they're in fact actually hurting us and causing us to repeat some pain patterns over and over again.

I love the beginning lyrics:

**I've gotta take a little time
A little time to think things over ...
Now this mountain I must climb
Feels like the world upon my shoulders ...**

**In my life, there's been heartache and pain
I don't know if I can face it again**

And so, clearly, he is not in a good place at that moment. He's hurting badly. He's down. He's feeling desperate. And he's feeling like maybe he can't go on or maybe he just doesn't want to face or experience the pain that can come from a relationship. And so, he needs some time to think, to think things over, to take a step back and revisit and look at it from a few perspectives.

Kind of reminds me of the line Socrates had: *"The unexamined life is not worth living."* And what he's saying is that life is such a precious gift that it behooves us to pause and examine and look at the way we're living ... and ask: Is this the way I truly want to spend this gift of life? This time I have?

And so, sometimes when we look back at certain patterns we see in our lives, we have to ask ourselves: What are the things that I need to change? What are the things I need to improve? What are the things I need to let go and release?

The beginning of growth and transformation is an awareness followed by a willingness to release old beliefs. One of the most powerful -- and damaging -- things we have learned and been conditioned in growing up about love -- because it's been demonstrated so many times: that love is conditional. That if you say the right things, look the right way, do the right things, that you will get love. But if you don't say the right things or do the right things or look the right way, that you will sometimes not be accepted; you will be rejected. You'll be left out and you will not feel loved.

I mean, one of the big ones is, *"You're a good boy," "Good girl," "Bad girl."* You get more extra loving when you're good and you get less when ... And these things imprint themselves on us as patterns in how we live. And so, what begins to happen is: when we get hurt that way from love, we begin to withdraw. And we close our hearts off, so our hearts won't get hurt.

So, we're thinking this is a good protective move on our part. And unfortunately, it isn't. Because then we end up building walls of fear; walls of abandonment or hurt in all of its various forms. And then we start to identify more ... Instead of identifying with love, we identify with hurt. We identify with unworthiness. And we just keep going through this cycle and pain over and over again.

The Book of 1 John 4:18 says, *"Perfect love casts out fear."*

And so, we really need to get to the point of being aware of: What are the areas that we feel hurt and wounded by love and by relationships. And so that we could immerse it in love so it will purify; it will dissolve and unify our hearts with our awareness of the love that is already within us.

So, how many people had maybe like a slightly dysfunctional practice or behavior like you learned in your family? Anybody have that? [Congregants murmur and laugh]

Okay. So, I'll tell you one of the ones we had. And that was: there was an idea out that love means agreeing with everybody. You know, so if my dad said, *"Hey, da-da-da-da ...,"* we would not want to say, *"No, Dad, we don't think so."* That we said, *"Oh, yeah, that's good."*

And so, what ended up happening: it was like kind of a fear of telling the truth -- getting him upset cetera, or something like that. And so, it begins to shift your behavior. And as you get older and go into more relationships, you start acting that way: not being honest because you don't want to hurt them. And we have all these various things.

So, how many people have some dysfunction of some kind? Everybody would agree with that? Because I don't want the Maraj's to be the only one having all the fun. [Congregants laugh] No.

And so, what we need to do is: we need to become aware of what that pattern is. Even finding one pattern. And begin to immerse it in the light of love. Immerse it in the awareness that we are way more worthy than our belief and our conditioning has led us to believe.

And what we begin to do is stop identifying with the fear and the unworthiness and, *"You're not good enough,"* and begin to identify with Spirit. Because then it begins to have love flow more freely in our hearts and us think more of ourselves.

But we need to be willing to release and let it go. *"Take time to think it over."* Examine it and decide what are the things I need to let go that are just not healthy for me. What is the belief system or limitation I need to work on to liberate myself to actually love more wholeheartedly and not be afraid to tell the truth or whatever that might be?

So, the first one is to release the false beliefs and patterns -- limited patterns -- about love in our lives.

And then the second one is to **EMBRACE THE LOVE WITHIN US.**

We are told in Genesis that we are created in the image and likeness of God. And then in 1 John 4:16, it says, *"God is love. And those who live in love live in God and God lives in them."*

So, clearly it's saying if we're created in the image and likeness of God, and it's saying that God is love, it means that we are created in the image and likeness of love. That love is our nature! That you are love. You are lovable. And you are loving. This is the truth of all of us. When it says, *"The kingdom of God is within you,"* it means the kingdom of love is also within you.

"Love is my nature."

Together: [with congregants] *"Love is my nature."* Take a deep breath into that truth.

"I am love."

Together: [with congregants] *"I am love."* Take a deep breath into that.

"I am lovable."

Together: [with congregants] *"I am lovable."* Take a deep breath into that.

"I am loving."

Together: [with congregants] *"I am loving."* Take a deep breath into that.

And one more time: *"Love is my nature."*

Together: [with congregants] *"Love is my nature."*

Now, suppose I asked you a question, and that would be: How do you become more lovable? Think about that for yourself. How would you become more lovable? What would you need to do to open and expand your capacity?

The Unity answer would be: you don't become more lovable. You just awaken to the love that's already in you. That it is in you. It may have been covered up with a lot of junk, but it's still in us. The question is: Are we aware of it? Do we open ourselves to that truth and unify our hearts and minds with that truth?

How many people had like a little stuffed toy or teddy bear or blankie when you were kids and you just loved it? Anybody have some of those? You get the concept. And for years, they love all this, kiss on it, love on it. They're teenagers -- they're in their 20s and 30s -- and this thing still triggers love. Love!

And my question is: Where did the love come from? Was it from the stuffing or the fur or the little button eyes? I think we all know where this is leading. The truth is that that love came from us. The teddy bear was just a vehicle that we allowed ourselves and gave ourselves permission to direct towards it. But there's no question: all of the love came from us.

And so, the times when we feel like we're lacking love, or we need someone else to love me to make me feel happy and good, that really that is not a truth. That we need to embrace the fact that love is within us. We are created in the image and likeness of love. And to know, as we cultivate and expand our awareness -- as we immerse our mind through meditation in love -- that that love is so powerful. It heals.

It soothes and calms. It uplifts. It reassures. It enriches. It forgives. And the most important thing: it awakens. It helps us see the truth that we sometimes don't allow ourselves to see, because we have bought in and been conditioned in some limiting negative ways around love.

Our soul's journey is to recognize the love in and around us and know that it has always been there. And to know that we are innately worthy. Nothing we've got to do to gain or attain it. We are innately worthy of God's love and God's abundant good.

One of the most important things to get to this place -- to embrace that love -- is to open our hearts. To allow ourselves to be vulnerable and to share ourselves. Because even when our heart gets broken, we still need to keep our hearts open. Even when we get disappointed, we still need to keep ourselves open so we could learn, so we could heal, so we could grow.

Difficult experiences, I think, are powerful and important, because they help us awaken compassion and humility, spiritual insights. You know, our ego says when we get hurt, *"Protect yourself; close off; cocoon."* And Spirit says, *"Open your heart and allow yourself to trust love again."*

You know, our broken places can absolutely be channels of grace. But we need to open our hearts and allow ourselves to be vulnerable. We need to embrace the love within ourselves. And we need to get to that place of trusting love again. Trust love again!

The third thing is about **DEMONSTRATING AND PUTTING LOVE INTO ACTION.**

Back to some of the lyrics:

**I wanna know what love is
I want you to show me
I wanna feel what love is
I know you can show me**

In James 2:17, it says, *"Faith without works is dead."* And so, what he's calling for is to figure out: How do I put love in motion in my life? How do I bring it forth and demonstrate it and apply it in my life?

Love is not just a feeling. It's actually a way of being. It is a way of acting. It is a way of demonstrating. Often we think we've got to wait until I feel loving before I do something loving. And that is not the truth. That we can do something loving and kind and thoughtful for someone, even when we're not at our best. That love still counts. That consideration still counts and absolutely matters.

A teacher asked her class, *"What does love look like?"* And one child answered, *"Love looks like helping someone before they ask."*

I mean, there are all kinds of ways that we experience and express love. And life is calling us to put *"Faith without works is dead"* -- Let's bring alive that sense of love in us.

You know, one of the things they say when we pray ... We always think that when we pray, we change the outer situation. And it's not true. When we pray, we actually change ourselves: our consciousness; our awareness; being more centered and aligned in God; being more immersed in the sense of love. And so, the more we meditate on divine love, we actually become kinder. We become less reactive. We become more generous. We become more forgiving.

And so, love -- even though it's a feeling -- it needs to get to the point where it becomes visible and it is an action in how we live. So that, through us, more love will be in our homes. More love will be in our work. More love will be in traffic. More love will be online. More love will be the way we treat strangers. And the way we treat ourselves.

A woman came to Mother Teresa and said, *"I can't do great things."*

Mother Teresa said, *"No, but you can do small things with great love."*

I think we underestimate being kind and expressing love and doing good. Something as simple as opening a door for someone can make their day. Or letting someone in in traffic. Or buying them a coffee. Or complimenting their outfit. Or remembering their name. That is such an important way of acknowledging someone and saying, *"You're important to me"* is by remembering someone's name.

Greeting everyone with a warm smile. Saying, *"Hello."* Calling someone that you love and just saying that you love them. Or texting them something that you appreciate about them. Or buying them a flower and wishing them a good day. There are an endless number of ways that we can express and demonstrate love in our lives.

And so, the question: What are some new ways you would like to demonstrate -- or even some old ways, and just kicking them back up again to bring them to life and take action?

**I'm gonna take a little time
A little time to look around me
I've got nowhere left to hide
It looks like love has finally found me**

And how love was found was to awaken to the truth that we are created in the image and likeness of love.

One Sunday in church, the pastor's sermon was about forgiveness. And he asked everyone in the church to stand up. Then he asked those who had any enemies to sit down. Everyone sat down except this one old lady.

"You have no enemies at all?"

"Not a single one."

"Please come up and tell everyone how you reach such an age without having any enemies!"

A deacon helped the elderly woman to the pulpit, and when she got there, everyone started applause. They were celebrating and acknowledging her. And as she slowly made her way up to the front, the pastor adjusted the microphone and said, *"You must have done a lot of forgiving in your life. Please tell us your secret. What is your secret?"*

And the old lady said, *"Oh, I outlived all those old hags."* [Congregants laugh] All right. All right. [Laughs]

So, we all agree and know that love is the most important thing and it is powerful. But we also know that it's not easy; that it does take work. It takes effort. But we don't have to earn it. We don't have to chase after it. But we do have to allow ourselves to awaken to it, and to be able to embrace it, to show it, to express it, and to share it. And it is by releasing the false beliefs about love; embracing the fact that love is truly within you; and to demonstrate and share in many ways small acts with great love behind them.

And those are the lessons from the song, "I Want to Know What Love Is."

God bless you all, everybody!