

Driving Force

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When most of us think of the word *force*, it is very common to envision the concept of doing something against resistance or exerting pressure against another, frequently against their will. We think of forcing a child to go to bed, or using great strength against an opposing army. We even use the term, *opposing force*.

Among other definitions, Webster states that force is “the capacity to work or cause change; a capacity for affecting, influencing, or persuading the mind or behavior.” I believe that the most effective force is the one that influences, rather than coerces. In fact, it as I write this article, I find it very difficult to convey the concept without using the word *force* in the definition. We use the word frequently, but usually with the idea of coercing another against their will. We rarely use the word to mean a means of subtle influence or gentle persuading.

I think that there is one force that is greater than all others. I believe that it is actually the driving force behind every action. That force is *love*. Love compels people to go hungry in order to feed another person that we love. It drives people to be willing to lay down their lives for the love of country, people or deeply held principles and convictions. Love can cause us to give up our own basic needs for another.

The reality is that we will always act for the benefit of the person or object that we love the most. If I would sacrifice another person for my own gain, it is probably because I love myself more than I love the other person. If we eat box after box of macaroni and cheese so that we will have extra money to customize our car, it is because we love that vehicle above all else. It can make us eat grits three meals a day to pay for an engagement ring.

Love causes parents to sacrifice themselves for their children. It makes one spouse willing to sacrifice for the other. It is the element within us that dictates how we will live our lives and how we prioritize everything around us.

The Bible frequently characterizes God as love. While God is far much more than just love, I believe that to say that God epitomizes love is accurate. God shows us time and again how much He loves us. Love causes Him to provide for our needs, to comfort us and to want us to be with Him. Love caused Jesus to give His life for us.

I believe that love is probably the greatest force known to us because it is something that is within that causes us to want to act, not an external force that simply makes us do something grudgingly. When I was a young child, I remember getting in trouble and for punishment, my parents made me – ugh- HUG MY SISTER! I had to be forced to do it. It was not something I would have done of my own free will. So how is it that now, I freely hug both of my sisters without anyone else making me? I am driven by the internal force of love and a desire to express that to the rest of my family.

Love can truly do amazing things. It can makes us do things that we would not do otherwise—give up our lives, feed another while we go hungry, even hug our sisters. But the greatest act of love is the one expressed by God when he freely gave His own Son to pay the price for our sins. That gift is the greatest expression of love of all. Happy Valentines’ Day.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.