

The Purple Corner

He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me. He loves me not.

Many of us can remember as a child reciting these words and wondering if he really did love us. Can't you see yourself pulling the petals from a flower and anxiously awaiting the very last one just to see where the riddle would stop? If it stopped on "he loves me not" we would quickly throw that flower down, pick up another and start the riddle over again.

A woman who is in an abusive relationship doesn't pick petals off a flower and recite this childish riddle, but she does question whether she is loved by her intimate partner. Instead of petals falling to the ground as the words are repeated over and over again, the abused woman sees pieces of herself falling off. She wants to think and yes, to believe that she matters to her partner but in between the flowers, nice dinners, other gifts and the slaps, name calling and accusations it's difficult to think straight. She finds herself wondering just what love is and she desperately longs to be shown. She wants to believe her partner when she's told, "I'm sorry. I'll never do it again." However, when the next abuse occurs she can't help but wonder what the truth is.

For a woman of faith the search for answers may be sought in the person of her spiritual leader or someone else in her own faith community. What are some of the answers that she may be given? Will the person she seeks answers from really know how to respond to her? Will the response give her hope and the help she needs or will it further victimize and send her reluctantly back to the arms of her abuser?

If you or someone you know is being abused there is help available. Abuse knows no boundaries, it can and does rear its ugly head anywhere. If you suspect someone is being abused please don't stand silently by and do nothing. Educate yourself to the red flags to look for and also to the resources available and if you really want to know the truth about what love is and is not, remember just as oil and water don't mix, neither does abuse and love. 1 John 4:8 tells us that God is love. Don't look to the world or humankind to define who you are or to define love for you, look to the one who created you in his image. He loves you and made you to be loved, not to be abused by anyone in anyway. He loves you!