

Love without end (1 John 3:1-7)

The idea that God loves us seems so simple.

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I was 28 years old when I became a dad. That first moment of holding my tiny, brand new son in my arms created a fundamental shift in the core of my being. No area of my life was left untouched, unaffected. How did I love a person I'd never met so deeply, so instantly?

What I want all my kids (I have five now) to know is that I love them with a love that I can't really even fathom myself. It's based on not their performance or perfection but something far more solid: it is based solely on their existence. My hope as they grow is that they feel that love from me, that they trust it to be steady and sure, and that they know that nothing—and I mean nothing—can change that.

Becoming a parent changed my daily life and routine to be sure, but it was more than that. That singular moment also launched a theological shift for me, because it brought a new kind of clarity. It made the words of this declaration from 1 John all the more understandable and meaningful to me: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are."

The idea that God loves us is pretty simple, isn't it? Many of us grew up being told about God's love; maybe we even sang songs about it. It is something totally different to trust and internalize those words, to allow them to shape our way of seeing ourselves, our neighbor, and our enemy.

I know as my children grow there will be all sorts of moments that challenge their sense of worth and belonging. That is, unfortunately, inevitable. My hope for them is

that they will remember, through it all, the love their mom and I have for them and, in doing so, remember that they always have somewhere to belong and be loved without condition and without end. God longs for all of us to know the same.