



# REFLECTIONS

October 27, 2019

**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.**

*John 15:12-13*

## Growing Up

Years have passed since the day I looked into her eyes and said, “*I, Richard, take you, Janice, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God’s holy law, in the presence of God I make this my solemn vow.*” And she pledged the same to me.

There’s no doubt we were in love then. But there is also no doubt that the commitment we made to each other and before God was far greater than we, in our youth, could have completely understood or imagined. Marriage vows are life changing. *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.* (Genesis 2:24) Marriage vows commit each of two lives to lay down their lives for the other. And whether or not we made our vows with complete understanding, we have grown to live them.

Marriage vows commit two people to live sacrificially—each for the well-being of the other. But sacrificial love reaches far beyond promises. One can visualize a war hero throwing his body onto a live grenade to save the lives around him. It’s an act of love for his friends; and truly, the deed falls within the sacrificial love Jesus describes. But sacrificial love is not only about physical death.

Sacrificial love comes with growing up. Growing up adds responsibilities to life; and responsibilities call for placing the well-being of others above self-desires. We sacrifice for our spouses, our children, our parents, and other family and friends. Love for them grows into an impulse and not a sacrifice at all. As we grow up, the well-being of others becomes life’s purpose and commitment with little sense of the sacrifices. And the quest never ends.

We are forever in pursuit of the example Jesus left us. *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:6-8) Matching his example requires a lot of growing up. And the pursuit of it is not optional.

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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