

February in our part of the Western World has a call to romance - we call it Valentine's Day. As a celebration of love and affection, people send cards and gifts, give flowers and go on special dates. Some trace its origins to ancient Roman festivals, some to saints in the early Christian church known for their love and faith. It is not just a "Hallmark Holiday" - we have written references to Valentine's Day that are hundreds of years old.

It is in no way surprising that humans in various cultures search for and seek to celebrate romantic love. For at the heart of the universe is a Divine Romance, a true love story in which a Perfect Lover pursues and seeks to penetrate the very core of those whom He has created in his image. His passion for oneness compels Him to do everything possible to create a faithful and forever union of love with His creatures. He desires to captivate their hearts and love them into being all that He has made and re-made them to be.

You might say we were made by Love (Himself) and made for love - made to love and to be loved. Nothing less will satisfy our hearts. The Message says it like this, "The fire of love stops at nothing. It sweeps everything before it. Flood waters can't drown love, torrents of rain can't put it out. Love can't be bought, love can't be sold - it's not to be found in the marketplace." (Song of Solomon 8:6-7). A person without love, in other words, "will not be content, though you give him many gifts." (Prov 6:35, NASB)

The personal love of God must set the course of our lives. We must live for love's sake. Since we were not created for separation, our longingness to be joined to another is essentially an echo of our longingness to be one with God and His perfect love. God's perfect love has a name - Jesus Christ! To place faith in Him as Savior and Lord is to be made indivisibly one with Him for all of eternity. We no longer abide in the far country of false loves and inadequate lovers, but find ourselves at home in the ever true and always adequate love of God.

Romance is, in its essence, how we make our love visible, how we demonstrate and direct our love in meaningful ways toward the unique personal structure of the beloved. When God demonstrated His love to us in the gift of Christ, He freely and sacrificially gave all of Himself to meet our deepest core needs. If love, to you, is about trustworthiness and reliability, if it is about service and sacrificial giving, if it is about affirmation and acceptance, if it is about security and significance, if it is about constancy and commitment, if it is about grace and mercy, if it is about now and forever... then love is about Jesus Christ! He is the gift of Perfect Love. If you have received Him as the gift of God, consider yourself fully and perfectly loved. And, Happy Valentine's Day!



- **Tax-deductible contributions** - may be made to *One In Christ, Inc.* by mailing your gifts to the address above.
- **Messages and sermons by Steve** - can be listened to or downloaded at www.stevepettitmessages.com or may be requested on CD by mail at the address above.
- **Conferences and events led by Steve** - can be arranged by contacting Steve at the telephone number above.
- **To receive this newsletter electronically** - email your request to OICnewsletter@Gmail.com

Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

GREETINGS

On December 29th we were graced with our 5th grandchild (all 2 and under!). Landon Gabriel Pettit was deeply loved and warmly welcomed into this world by Joshua and Audry, as well as by the rest of the family. We are thankful to God for a healthy grandson and great parents!

So many of you have been praying for their family. Joshua has battled a serious stomach disorder and has been unemployed for nearly a year. His health is greatly improved and he just started working as a deputy for our county police department. Thank you for all you prayers.

I'm finishing up our year-end financial totals (2011) for OIC. I am so grateful to God and to so many of you for your generous and faithful giving. I am amazed every year as I come to this point and realize what God through you has done. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Finally, if you are coming to our Florida retreat, don't forget that the venue has changed! We are meeting this year at First Baptist **Gainesville** (14105 NW 39th Ave, 32606). Looking forward to seeing some of you there!



CALENDAR



FEBRUARY

5,12,19,26 CCF
14 Alachua Bible Study
17-19 Florida Retreat
28 Ocala Study

MARCH

2-4 Vero Beach, FL (772-563-0430)
9-11 Houston, TX (713-643-8014)



WINTER RETREAT



FEBRUARY 17-19, 2012



ALACHUA FLORIDA



\$275 couple (all inclusive)	Includes:
\$150 single (2 to a room)	conference fee
\$230 single (1 to a room)	& 5 meals
<u>or</u>	
\$65 person conference fee & 3 meals	(no lodging
<u>or</u>	or breakfast)
\$20 person conference fee	

RESERVATIONS:

\$50 per person DUE BY JANUARY 20th

No reservation fee necessary to attend meetings only

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