



April 17, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
Psalm 139:23,24

INFO

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Why Do We Hurt the Ones We Love

It's a sad fact --- the people we love the most are often the targets of our most vicious outbursts. Some of us bear scars from childhood abuse by parents who actually loved us. Others can point to divorces as painful evidence. Harsh words expressed in the heat of anger can never be unsaid.

We need to remind ourselves that loving someone always makes us vulnerable. It's part of the process; we can't experience love without opening ourselves to being deeply wounded. That's why we have so much trouble saying "I love you"; it's an invitation to painful rejection. *Love Hurts* is a popular song, first recorded by the Everly Brothers in 1960, which puts it simply and profoundly:

*Love hurts. Love scars.
Love wounds and mars
Any heart not tough or strong enough
To take a lot of pain.*

A recent anonymous meme expressed the extreme irony: "It hurts the worst when the person who made you feel so special yesterday makes you feel so unwanted today."

One reason we hurt the people we love is because life itself is often painful, and we need to vent our feelings of defeat, failure and loss.¹ The easiest place to let off steam is where we feel most comfortable, and that's with the people we love. Even when the hurts we've experienced have nothing to do with them, we tend to dump on them because they're so close. Many times they become the undeserving targets of our frustrations and feel we're attacking them. They instinctively react with a counterattack, and the war is on.

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Of course, those of us who are super-sensitive have a greater problem. It's as if we have an automatic weapon in an open carry state, and even a slight offence can cause a quick-trigger reaction. We're always locked and loaded, and the emotional order we live with is: "*Ready! Fire! Aim!*" The victims are usually the ones nearest to us, the people we love.

The gospel message is that God loves us! This means that we can easily hurt him. He makes himself vulnerable to our misplaced anger and tantrums. Here are some words of reassurance from the Bible:

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:13-14)

He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive

mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Hurt is the thanks God gets for loving us. It's built into the relationship. Yet, unlike our earthly loved ones, he's infinitely able to accept the blows he suffers from loving us. He can take it. As another Bible passages puts it,
Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Pastor George Van Alstine

¹ If you want to dig deeper into this idea, please read the on-line article, "8 Reasons Why We Hurt the Ones We Love the Most," by psychiatrist Joanna Pantazi
<https://www.youniversetherapy.com/post/8-reasons-why-we-hurt-the-ones-we-love-the-most>

Her conclusion is helpful and hopeful: "Hurting the ones that are closer to us is something that happens naturally for many different reasons. Becoming more mindful and conscious of the **ways** that you may hurt the ones you love the most, and the subsequent **reasons** behind your behaviour, may bring tremendous positive outcomes to your relationships. **Awareness is the first and absolutely necessary step towards positive change.** Ideally, a great focus could be to understand yourself to such an extent, that allows for minimizing both intentional and unintentional hurt to the ones that are closest to your life and heart."