**John 13:34** (NKJV): “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you.”

**Love is not a feeling. Love is a decision.**

_The starting place for His love in my heart, my home, my relationships and ultimately, my world is to allow the seeds of His truth and His love to take root within me._

**Romans 12:2** “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
Three types of rocky soil that hinders growth not only in nature but also in us:

- **BEDROCK** – thin layer of soil lies over vast expanse of rock

- **STONY SOIL** – land littered with loose stones & boulders of various sizes

- **GRAVELLY GROUND** – land that is interlaced with layers of gravel or sand

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How can we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to till the rocky soil within us?

1. **REMAIN** in Him.
   
   [John 15:1-12]

   “remain” = to stick close even when it’s difficult
2. RESPOND to others with God’s supernatural love over your natural love.

[Romans 12:9,10]

“charity” = giving simply for the sake of giving

The Greek word for charity is “agape” = unconditional love

ROMANS 5:8 “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Reduce Me to Love by Joyce Meyer

Love is a decision we make to treat people the way Jesus would treat them.
1 Corinthians 12:31

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

1 Corinthians 14:1 (Amplified Bible) “Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest] …”

How do I “eagerly pursue” His love?

1. Let God love you.

2. Let God’s Word teach you.

3. Let someone else “show” you how.
1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:4-8, 13:12-14:1a (Amplified Bible)

12, 31... earnestly desire and zealously cultivate the greatest and best gifts and graces (the higher gifts and the choicest graces). And yet I will show you a still more excellent way [one that is better by far and the highest of them all--love].

4 Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.

5 It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].

6 It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

7 Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].

8 Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]. As for prophecy (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), it will be fulfilled and pass away; as for tongues, they will be destroyed and cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away [it will lose its value and be superseded by truth].

12 For now we are looking in a mirror that gives only a dim (blurred) reflection [of reality as in a riddle or enigma], but then [when perfection comes] we shall see in reality and face to face! Now I know in part imperfectly), but then I shall know and understand fully and clearly, even in the same manner as I have been fully and clearly known and understood by God).

13 And so faith, hope, love abide [faith--conviction and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope--joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation; love--true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for and in us], these three; but the greatest of these is love.

14: 1 EAGERLY PURSUE and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest] ...

Additional verses for further reflection:
- Ezekiel 36:26, 27
- Zephaniah 3:17
- Romans 12:9-21
- John 13:34, 35
- Galatians 5:13-26
- Ephesians 3:17-21 (read in the Amplified Bible, if possible)
- Philippians 1:9-11
- II Timothy 1:7
- Hebrews 10:24
- I John 4:7-21
"Hope Now" by Addison Road

(VERSE 1)
If everything comes down to love
Then just what am I afraid of
When I call out Your name
Something inside awakes in my soul
How quickly I forget I'm Yours

(PRE-CHORUS)
I'm not my own
I've been carried by You
All my life

(CHORUS)
Everything rides on hope now
Everything rides on faith somehow
When the world has broken me down
Your love sets me free

(VERSE 2)
When my life is like a storm
Rising waters all I want is the shore
You say I'll be ok
Make it through the rain
You are my shelter my from the storm

(CHORUS)
Everything rides on hope now
Everything rides on faith somehow
When the world has broken me down
Your love sets me free

(PRE-CHORUS)
I am not my own
I've been carried by you all my life

(CHORUS)
Everything rides on hope now
Everything rides on faith somehow
When the world has broken me down
Your love sets me free

(CHORUS 2)
You've become my heart’s desire
I will sing Your praises higher
Your love sets me free
(Your love sets me free)
Your love sets me free
(You love sets me free)
Your love sets me free