



## Unconditional Love -Selected-

A story is told about a soldier who was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam. He called his parents from San Francisco.

“Mom and Dad, I'm coming home, but I've a favor to ask. I have a friend I'd like to bring home with me.”

“Sure,” they replied, “we'd love to meet him.”

“There's something you should know,” the son continued, “he was hurt pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come live with us.”

“I'm sorry to hear that, son. Maybe we can help him find somewhere to live.”

“No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us.”

“Son,” said the father, “you don't know what you're asking. Someone with such a handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can't let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He'll find a way to live on his own.”

At that point, the son hung up the phone. The parents heard nothing more from him. A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide. The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francisco and were taken to the city

morgue to identify the body of their son. They recognized him, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn't know, their son had only one arm and one leg.

The parents in this story are like many of us. We find it easy to love those who are good-looking or fun to have around, but we don't like people who inconvenience us or make us feel uncomfortable. We would rather stay away from people who aren't as healthy, beautiful, or smart as we are.

Thankfully, there's someone who won't treat us that way. Someone who loves us with unconditional love that welcomes us into the forever family, regardless of how messed up we are.

Tonight, before you tuck yourself in for the night, say a little prayer that God will give you the strength you need to accept people as they are, and to help us all be more understanding of those who are different from us. There's a miracle called friendship that dwells in the heart. You don't know how it happens or when it gets started, but you know the special lift it always brings. And you realize that friendship is a very precious gift from God! Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed; they lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us.