

LUST, LOVE, and CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

By Paralee Eadie

I'm not exactly sure how the subject came up, but there it was, ripe with opportunity. Sending up a quick prayer that God would give me wisdom and the right words, I started a conversation with my teens on the difference between love and lust. I knew and gave all the right definitions and motherly insights, and I received all the correct answers from my teens. Yes, they understood. But I knew they didn't fully grasp the difference in what I was attempting to explain, so another silent prayer went heavenward.

"Lord," I prayed, "My teens need to know and understand the difference between lust and love. I can't very well tell them to go out and experience the difference for themselves! Right now they are exposed to so much garbage in the world. There are so many voices encouraging them to follow their wrong desires, even telling them there's nothing wrong with that. Unless they can really understand how very different and how very much greater love is, they may be tempted to give in to lust thinking it is love. I've done my best. I need Your help to get the point across. Thanks, Lord. I know You love them even more than I do, so I'm trusting You."

During a very tightly scheduled day came a request for chocolate chip cookies.

"No can do, kids. I've got too much else to do today."

"We'll get all the stuff set up, and we'll even wash the dishes, Mom. We're dying for some chocolate chip cookies. (They must be. Offering to do the dishes!!) Nobody can make them as good as you can."

"As **well** as I can." I corrected their grammar.

"See, even you agree. Come on, Mom."

With all that flattery I was tempted to give in to their request. I decided, however, since they were "dying" for chocolate chip cookies, it was a good time to motivate them to put their own culinary skills to work. Besides, not being much of a cookie lover myself, I wasn't "dying" for some chocolate chip cookies.

I helped them set up, gave them my secret recipe, and put them to work. They poured large glasses of cold milk in anxious anticipation of sampling the first batch out of the oven.

"Mom, you gave us the wrong recipe. These don't taste at all like your cookies!"

I assured them it was the correct recipe and suggested that, perhaps, they had left something out or measured wrong.

"We followed the recipe EXACTLY," emphasized my hates-to-be-wrong son.

"Impossible." I stated. "If you did, it would taste just like mine."

"We'll show you!" answered the always-right-one, whipping out a clean bowl and another bag of chocolate chips. (Amazingly, he usually is right. Takes after his daddy.)

Still pressed for time, but feeling the motherly obligation to help this always-right child find the path of humility, I offered to watch while they went through the whole process one more time. They did everything correctly this time. As we whipped the first batch out of the oven and were giving them a few minutes to cool, I was preparing my "See, you had to have done something wrong the first time." speech. We all grabbed a cookie and took a big bite. I was bewildered. My never-wrong son swallowed his cookie, took one look at my face, and gave me his "See, I was right." speech.

I didn't understand. How could the cookies taste so different? The kids had done everything just the way I did; followed the recipe to a tee. I was at a loss to explain why there was a difference. I was also concerned lest their domestic skills be discouraged, so I sent up a quick prayer. The Lord sent down a surprising and unique answer.

"Why do you go through all this mess and trouble to make cookies now?" I asked.

"Because we're dying for some chocolate chip cookies. We just couldn't wait!" they replied.

"Exactly," I said. "How often do I eat any of the chocolate chip cookies I make?"

"Hardly ever," my always-right son slowly answered, suspicious of this line of questioning. Was Mom going to try to get out of admitting he was right?

"Then why do I bother to make them if I don't even care for cookies?"

"Because you love us, and we love chocolate chip cookies." they answered.

"Precisely. You made your cookies exactly the same way I make mine, except that you made your's with lust, and I make mine with love! That's the difference. Lust produces a poor imitation of love that will always disappoint you. Lust can't wait to get. Love, on the other hand, will always give, expecting nothing in return. Love will fully satisfy the one who receives it and also the one who gives it."

I saw the light turn on in their minds. Now they could comprehend the difference between lust and love. Lust, love, and chocolate chip cookies? Only God could be that creative! "Thank You, Lord." I whispered.