Better Than Unconditional

Why God's love has conditions, and why that's the reason you can rest in it

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.”

John 10:17 · NIV84

21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, **he is the one who loves me.** He who **loves me will be loved by my Father**, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” 22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” 23 Jesus replied, “**If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him**. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

John 14:21–24 · NIV84

9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now
remain in my love. 10 **If you** obey my commands, **you
will remain in my love**, **just as** I have obeyed my
Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told
you this **so that my joy may be in you and that your joy
may be complete.** 12 My command is this: Love each
other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one
than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:9–13 · NIV84

God's love isn't unconditional.

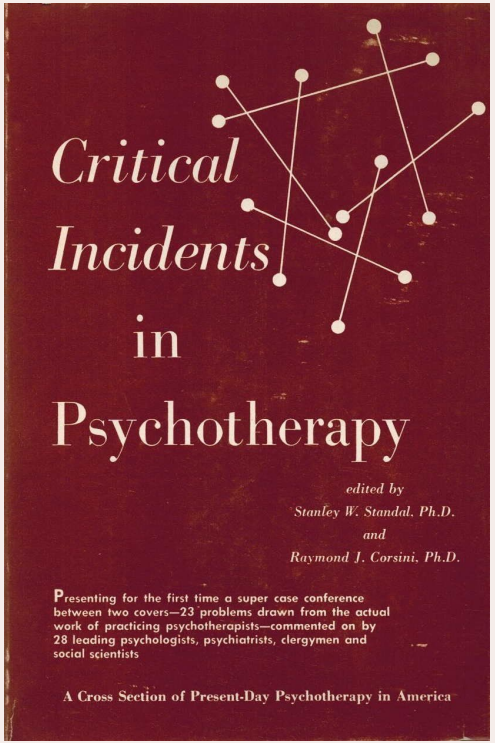
It's better than unconditional. It's Righteous.

I

“Unconditional” came from the therapy movement

“unconditional positive regard”

Stanley Standal, 1954



“no conditions of acceptance”

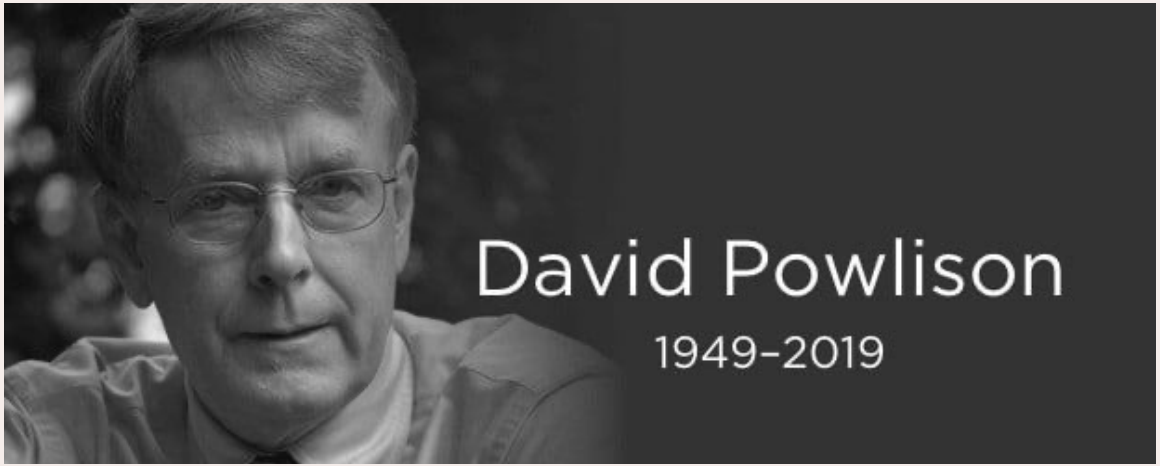
“at the opposite pole from a selective evaluating attitude”

Carl Rogers, 1957

A tool for the counseling office isn't a rule for all of life.



Unconditional positive regard is “the seedbed of contemporary notions of unconditional love.”



(Which has mutated into “unconditional affirmation”)

II

God's love has conditions, because love has conditions

(Because everything has conditions)

“Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

1 Corinthians 13:6 · NIV84

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.”

Romans 12:9 · NIV84

“Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.”

Jude 21 · NIV84

“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”

Proverbs 13:24 · NIV84

10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they
thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, **that**
we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems
pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it
produces **a harvest of righteousness and peace** for
those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore,
strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees!

Hebrews 12:10–12 · NIV84

Common grace

Covenantal love

“very great and precious promises”

2 Peter 1:4 · NIV84

25 Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ** loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 **to make her holy**, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25–27 · NIV84

III

Love has to be rightly ordered to be love.

This is Righteousness.

Unconditional love isn't too much love. It's disordered love.

Virtue is “ordered love” Ordo Amoris

Righteousness is the condition of love, because righteousness is the only condition in which love can grow.

Sin is the attempt to make God choose between his loves.

(This is ultimate self destruction)

“But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Matthew 6:23 · NIV84

“…that Hell should be able to veto Heaven.”

C. S. Lewis, The Great Divorce

IV

God's holy love is better than unconditional

It is a love that embraces redemptive suffering.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or
hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?
36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are
considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we
are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am
convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height
nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35–39 · NIV84

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among **many brothers**. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. 31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:29–31 · NIV84

“The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place.”

2 Chronicles 36:15 · NIV84

9 But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they
did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the
Israelites. 10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no
attention. 11 So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of
the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose,
bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. 12 In his distress
he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly
before the God of his fathers. 13 And when he prayed to him, the LORD was
moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to
Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God.

2 Chronicles 33:9–13

15 He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the
image from the temple of the LORD, as well as all the
altars he had built on the temple hill and in
Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. 16 Then
he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed
fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and
told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

2 Chronicles 33:15–16 · NIV84

This kind of love is better than unconditional “love”.

God is full of holy love

Righteousness is the only condition in which the harmonious life of Joy can everlastingly flourish.