So recently we decided to get a kitten. I wanted to try it out for a few weeks to see how the kids reacted in terms of allergies. So far that seems to be going well. What I didn’t fully expect, however, was that this kitten would cause a different sort of reaction from my kids. Of course I knew they’d have various levels of excitement toward him and that the younger ones may even fight over him, but I’m a little surprised by how irritating their excitement has become.
Now, I love when my kids are excited about something. In fact I love to provide experiences for them that lead to excitement. However, when that excitement overrides their ability to listen and obey, it becomes a problem. Usually all of my kid’s listen and obey pretty well. Obviously, they’re kids and not soldiers so there is certainly room for growth. But when it comes to that kitten I’ve lost even more control. My ‘No’ and ‘Put him down’ and ‘Stop’ are met with deaf ears too often. And that’s only part of the problem.
The other problem is that the kitten doesn’t response as my kids often hope, which causes even more drama. He’s already learned to run and hide from certain children because they chase him and carry him and treat him more like a toy than a cat. And obviously I try to correct it when I can, but the cat also tries to correct it, too…by hiding.
And so, it surprises a couple of my kids that the cat will come voluntarily to me when I sit down and he won’t go to them unless they track him down and man-handle him. I do spend more time with him, but also I don’t often track him down and carry him around. When he does come to me, I pet him and talk to him, but then I let him leave when he wants to run. He comes and goes to me of his own free will, usually…unless he’s trying to eat my breakfast, then he needs to get out of my way.
And I think that’s just the nature of love. The verb ‘love’ not the feeling ‘love’. When we truly chose to love someone (not necessarily romantically), we chose to let them come and go as they desire. Obviously we should express our expectations and our feelings to other people, but if we truly love them, we allow them the freedom to come into our lives as they choose. And when they choose to come close, we do whatever we can to care for them, but when they choose to go away we can let them go freely. I pray that we express our love well with that, just as Jesus allows us that same freedom in love. God bless.