

Show Your Love...

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What is love? If someone were to ask you to define love, how would you explain it to them? Do you really understand what love is and do you know what it means to love? Do you put love into practice in your life? As followers of Christ, we know that we are supposed to have love, but do we show it? Do we even know how to show it? Do we show our love to our families and to our mates? Do we show our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ? Love is an integral part of the Christian life and Christians are to be known by their capacity to love. As Christians, we are supposed to extend love to one another, but how can we say that we have love for anyone else, if we are not even showing our love to those that are the closest to us?

What is love and how do we define it? We could go to a dictionary and find a definition and meaning there, but that just reflects the understanding of those men who research words and who publish the dictionary. We need to look deeper than that...we need to look to the source of all knowledge and wisdom...the word of God.

1 John 4:7

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God is love...God defines love. It is through God that love entered the world. That is amazing to think about! God created love. God is the very definition of love, so to know God is to know love...the true love which is of God the Father. The love of God brings perfect harmony and unity and it will be so at Christ's return when the love of God flows out and covers the entire earth and the healing process will begin. One of the reasons that this world is so sick and is in such a sorry state, is because of the lack of love. Love overcomes and conquers all things. Hate, war, crime, envy, deceit, lawlessness, covetousness, greed, none of these things can exist where love dwells and where love reigns supreme.

Everything that God does is motivated by His love. God gave man His law, because He loved him and wanted him to receive eternal life. The entire plan of God was conceived so that man could enter God's kingdom. Think about that! Think of the opportunity you have....do not take it lightly! God planned from the beginning to offer eternal life to man. Everything that He has done has been motivated out of His love for us and to pave the way and to make it easier for us to attain His kingdom, but He is not going to do it all for us. We have our part and God can only bring us so far, after that He has to leave it up to us, as to whether we are going to take advantage of what He offers us, or not.

God gave the law to Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. He brought them out of Egypt and freed them from the bondage of sin...it was an act of love! God heard their cries, He saw their misery and He responded in a mighty and powerful and incredible way. God loved them, they were His people and they were suffering. God gave them His law out of love. For the first time God was working with the entire nation of Israel and not just a few select people. They were given the gift of God's perfect law of love, to guide and direct their lives and the lives of those who would come after them and the future of the entire nation of Israel. God's law is a law of love...of perfect love, because God gave it. God brought them out into the wilderness where there were no other distractions and then He taught them how to live and how to relate to each other and to Him. He taught them to put love into practice.

Deuteronomy 10:12

¹² "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul (with your entire being), ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good (out of His love for them)? ¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. ¹⁵ The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day.

God loved them with a personal love; a genuine caring and compassionate love, a nurturing love, they were special and dear to Him. God had chosen them as His people and He was displaying His love for them! God gave them the law and the regulations that governed their everyday lives out of love! He wanted them to have full and abundant lives, full of happiness and fulfillment and full of peace and contentment; He was showing them how to make that possible. There are those that criticize God's law and they say that there is no way that Israel, or even that we, in this time now, can ever keep God's law perfectly. Guess what...God knows that! Without the law we would not even know what sin is.

1 John 3:4

⁴ Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. ⁶ Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

Even so, that does not mean that we should not strive for, or try to keep God's laws and commandments to the best of our ability to keep them. God knows there are areas where we are going to fail and He made provision for that. He wants us to succeed in every way!

God gave us His law so we could see when we were going the wrong way and correct it! It is not and it never has been a set of burdensome rules and regulations handed down by some heartless and cruel dictator, to torment and oppress His people. It is just like the rules and regulations that parents give their children, it is done out of concern and care and love. God is our parent, He is our Father who only has our best interests in mind and He loves us. We reflect God's love back to Him in part, by keeping His law and by living our lives the way that He told us to. The word of God that Moses brought to Israel still rings true for us today!

Deuteronomy 11:1

¹ "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.

Israel had to pay physical penalties for their failure to keep God's law. God instituted the sacrificial system to teach them that there were consequences for their actions. Some of the penalties even resulted in the deaths of those who transgressed, but all of these things were done by God, out of love. Israel was a physical people, they only understood physical things. Except for a select few, they lacked spiritual knowledge and understanding. God set them aside for a purpose; He wanted them to be a Holy people to Him. He wanted them to be a kingdom of priests to Him.

Exodus 19:3

³ And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Does that sound familiar? God has set aside a people for Himself...for a holy use and purpose. Through His love for them, He will place them into positions to serve Him and put into action the things that will be instituted during the millennium and beyond, to bring salvation to all of mankind. God will place them into those positions, because He loves them and He trusts them and they return that love and trust. They are committed to His purpose and will.

Revelation 1:4

⁴ John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth (Christ reigns supreme over all men).

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This has been God's intent all along. God desires companionship and a relationship with man and it will carry over into the kingdom and last for all eternity! That is God's love! That is our future! God created man out of love and then gave him the keys and the knowledge to join Him in His kingdom and live for all eternity.

1 John 4:17

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world (we are set apart, we are selected, we are different, we are destined for a much bigger purpose).

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

Fear is the enemy of love! Love conquers fear, it conquers evil...it conquers death and the grave! Satan uses fear to intimidate, to corrupt and to drive man to sin. Satan uses fear to try and force us to go his way and to get caught up in sin and corruption. We have nothing to fear, not even death, because we have God's perfect love.

Psalms 19:7

⁷The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired *are* *they* than gold,

Yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,

And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

God shows His love for us in many different ways, we never have to doubt, or wonder if God cares about us. God's love is sincere and it runs deep and it is a genuine heartfelt love. God loves each one of us on a personal level, just like parents who have many children, God loves each one of us on an individual level, He knows us...He cares about us and He shows that love and concern for our well-being and our future.

God's love should reside in each one of us and God's love should be reflected in each of us and through each of us, to everyone that we come into contact with and especially to those that are closest to us. God's love is generated in us through His Spirit that dwells in us. God's Spirit is also a gift that He gives to us, through His perfect love for us. God gives us His Spirit to guide us and direct us and lead us into lives of righteousness. God, through His Spirit, is with each of us all the time in a very personal and individual way.

1 John 4:12

¹² No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

God shows His love for us continually, we only have to open our eyes and our minds and look around. We can see His hand in our lives in so many different ways. God shows His love. What about us? Do we show our love? Can those around you see God's love reflected in you? What do people say about you and how do others see you? Maybe you do not even care what others perceptions of you are, but you should. It is important that we let our love show. If you profess to be a follower of Christ, yet you do not practice what He taught then you are not truly following Him and you are fooling yourself.

Luke 6:43

⁴³ "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit (something that is good, does not produce something that is bad), nor does a bad tree bear good fruit (something that is bad, does not produce something that is good). ⁴⁴ For every tree is known by its own fruit (whatever you produce, that is what you are known for, that is what people remember, that is the impression that you leave them with and that is what you are known for). For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush (people do not go seeking good, from that which is bad). ⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good (because God's Spirit dwells in him, that is the good treasure in his heart, God's love and the fruits of the Spirit); and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil (evil exists where God's Spirit is not present and His love does not dwell). For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks (whatever is in a person's heart; is what comes out of their mouth).

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say (we cannot just say that we are followers of Christ and continue to go our own way)?
⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great (it would have been better for this person to never have professed to be a follower of Christ at all)."

There is much more involved here than just an outward profession of being a follower of Christ. We have to not only be followers, but doers...there is action required on our part...sincere action and not just going through the motions. Faith without works is dead; it takes both together to do as we have been told. Do you show your love to those around you? One of the greatest human needs is to be accepted and wanted and cared for...to be loved. Being loved gives us a sense of security and safety. Being loved gives us a sense of belonging and self-worth and acceptance. It is very important that we show our love and especially to those closest to us.

Family is important to God; He gave us the family structure for a purpose. It mirrors the relationship between God and His Son. God intended a family to be a loving, nurturing environment that benefits each and every person who is a part of it. God intended for families to love, support, encourage and help each other always. Unfortunately, it does not always happen that way. Satan has been on an all out attack against families for some time now. He realizes that once you begin to break down and destroy families, then society and culture are doomed. Families are completely dysfunctional in this country and people do not even have a clue what it means to be a family anymore.

I worked with a man who had a very strained relationship with his father. During the time that we worked together the relationship continued to deteriorate and reached the point where he was no longer speaking to his father. He told me one time that his father never had time for him when he was growing up. His dad was a workaholic and considered any form of recreation, or time and effort spent on anything other than work as a waste of time. The family had no form of church affiliation, or regular religious worship, so there was not even that bond existent in their family to create any sort of unity among them. His mom was a believer, but his dad had no use for religion and so he suppressed her desire to attend anywhere.

He was involved with sports in school as he was growing up and that was the only outlet he had for recreation, or outside activities other than the time he spent out with his friends. He played all of the different sports and he was good enough at them that he always maintained a position on the team.

We were sitting and talking one time and he told me that one of the things that he had always wanted very badly; was for his dad to come and to see him play. Tears welled up in his eyes as he was talking and he told me that his dad had never even bothered to take the time. Worse than that, his dad actually told him that the sports activities that he was involved in were a waste of time. He told me that his family had never been close and that there was never any physical contact. He had never felt his father's arms around him...he had never heard the words "I love you" from his father. Can you imagine that?

He had two sons and because of the way that he was raised, he had trouble expressing himself and his feelings for his own sons. He was not able to relate to them how he felt, so he tried to show his love for them in the things that he would do for them. He was gruff and short with them a lot and very hard on them with the discipline he handed out, but he told me that his father had been the same way with him. That was all that he knew. He and his wife were over visiting at his parent's house one day and somehow their discussion turned to religion and biblical history. He and his father got into an argument and his father told him that religion was a waste of time. He left and he has not been over to his parent's house, or talked to his father since. That is really sad and it is tragic. Neither one of them is willing to extend forgiveness and put aside their disagreement and show love.

Families need love to survive and that love needs to be expressed and it needs to be shown. How long has it been since you have told your mate that you love them? How long has it been since you have told your children that you love them? What about your parents, your grandparents and your brothers and sisters? In contrast, to the family of this man that I used to work with, my family was always and still is full of love. My family has always expressed its love for each other, both verbally and in the things that we do for one another. There are always lots of hugs at one of our gatherings and all the children have been raised the same way. We need to show our love and not only to our families, but also to our extended families.

John 13:33

³³ Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Now, notice the term of endearment that Christ uses here, when He is talking to the disciples. He calls them "little children", He is not using that term literally, He is expressing His love and affection for them. Christ gives them a new commandment, He wants them to pay attention and take this to heart.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we also need to pay attention to His words here and take this commandment to heart. We have to show our love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, our extended family.

When you love someone you show them, you tell them. It is an outward expression and not something that you keep to yourself in silence like some sort of secret. You cannot just expect people to know how you feel about them. Do not leave people guessing! The last time that I saw my dad I hugged him, I kissed him on the cheek and I told him that I loved him. Less than two weeks later he died suddenly of a heart attack.

Romans 13:8

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "*You shall not commit adultery,*" "*You shall not murder,*" "*You shall not steal,*" "*You shall not bear false witness,*" "*You shall not covet,*" and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

When we show and express our love, we are allowing God and Jesus Christ to love others through us! Think about that! It is just like the foot washing service that we perform at Passover. When you are washing someone else's feet, it is Christ who is actually doing the washing through you. The way you approach doing that service and the way you perform it, is a reflection of your love. You have to be in the proper frame of mind and attitude when you perform that service. It should be performed in meekness and in humility and with tenderness and genuine love and care.

It is not something that we should view as a necessary part of the Passover that we just have to endure and then get it over with as quickly as possible. Christ was expressing His love for His disciples as He washed their feet and we have to be of the same mind and attitude as we go about performing this service for someone else. It is showing our love and allowing Christ to show His love through us.

Ephesians 3:14

Here Paul has just explained the mystery of how the Gentiles were also to be heirs and partakers of the promise through Christ.

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family (we are all one family through His name and His Spirit) in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height — ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The love of Christ truly does surpass all knowledge and it is hard for us to comprehend that love completely. To think and reflect on what Christ did for each one of us and for all of mankind, even those who blaspheme and profane His name. That is a love that defies comprehension, at least for us now in these fleshly bodies that we inhabit. The more we put love into practice in our lives, the more we come to know and understand that perfect, unconditional and passionate love that Christ has. He came to this earth, God in the flesh and endured all that he suffered and never, ever wavered from what He knew that He had to do. He showed His love...

John 15:11

¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (they did not understand it at the time, but that is exactly what He was preparing to do). ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another.

There are people who do not believe that it is important to show love, in fact there are those that view it as weakness to show love and compassion. Well, I feel sorry for them. I have come across those who do not think it is manly to show your feelings and express them in the form of a hug, or a caress, or to actually say the words "I love you". They think it is macho to act tough and push and order people around and I have known some that even treated their own families that way. That is a sad thing and they are missing out on a complete and fulfilled life. You cannot know love, unless you express it unconditionally to those around you.

I never cease to be amazed, when I read the passage of scripture that we just went through and try to comprehend what feelings and emotions Christ must have been having, knowing what was just ahead of Him and knowing all that was dependent upon Him doing what He had come to do. He was subject to all of the same emotions that we feel, yet he overcame and fulfilled what He was sent here to do. That is love...that is the epitome of expressing and showing love. Every time that we sin and we go to claim forgiveness, every time that we go to God the Father in prayer, Christ is saying "I love you". He provided those things for us with his life.

Who would you rather imitate? Show your love, it is what we are told to do and it is what we should want to do. No one is going to force us to do that, but it is something that we should deeply desire to do. God creates that desire within us to show our love and to express our love to others.

Can you imagine how this world would be changed if everyone were to express their love and have compassion and concern for each other? It sounds far-fetched, but that is exactly how things will be during the millennium. Those people who are living at that time will learn how to live God's way and that is a way of love and showing love. The entire world will finally be at peace and those people will be living happy, full and joyful lives and dwelling together in peace and harmony. It will become a reality and it will involve showing and giving love.

1 John 4:20

²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

God means what He says; this is a very serious indictment here. We cannot just give God lip service on this. You cannot divorce loving God, from having love for your brother. You just cannot have it both ways and if you have true love in your heart, you would not be able to be in this condition anyway...that is what this scripture is getting at.

1 Corinthians 13:1

¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

I would like to pause here for a minute and ask you to do something, sometime later on today, or tomorrow, or whenever you sit down next to study your bible turn to this same passage. Read this passage to yourself, either silently, or aloud and in verses 4-8, everywhere that you see the word love, substitute your own name there. As you read through those verses think about that list of attributes and then resolve yourself to try and achieve those things in your life.

⁴ Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

Think about Paul's life and who he was and where he came from. This is incredible what he is saying here. This gives us some amazing insight into the transformation that had overtaken Paul. There was a time when Paul fit the description of 1 John 4:20, he claimed to love God, yet he hated his brother and not only that, but he was actively involved in hunting them down. This is a beautiful passage of scripture and shows the level of spiritual maturity that Paul had attained. He wanted us to know that love matters.

Ezekiel 33:30

³⁰ "As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD .' ³¹ So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, *but* their hearts pursue their *own* gain.

This should serve as a warning for us. Do not be like these people, do not speak empty, meaningless words. Show your love, to your families, to each other and to those you come into contact with. That is how we are to be known, that is how we are to be recognized and that is a sign of God's Spirit dwelling within us.

(All scriptural references cited from the New King James Edition of the Holy Bible)