

Love

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Introduction: Man often fails to see value in the things God has emphasized.

- A. What has a greater value than knowledge and faith? **(1 Cor 13:1-4)**
 - 1. This is not to exclude the other, because love comes from knowledge **(1 Jn 4:19)**
 - 2. Still there is a real problem with the Christian who stops at knowledge and does not grow in love. **(1 Cor 8:1-2)**
 - 3. If God gives this emphasis now, what will we give account for in the judgment?
- B. There is great power in love.
 - 1. The gospel is powerful because it shows us God's unmerited love. **(Rom 5:6-8)**
 - 2. Love gives worth to the one who believes he is unworthy. **(Jn 3:16)**
 - 3. Love gives strength and optimism to the one in weakness and despair.

I. Love is the Christian's foundation

- A. What is love?
 - 1. It is the way God views men! He seeks out what is best for us! **(1 Jn 4:19)**
- "Agape love is ... profound concern for the well-being of another, without any desire to control that other, to be thanked by that other, or to enjoy the process."
- 2. The only way we can learn this love is to get out of ourselves. When we become the focus then the love of God cannot be present. **(Jn 5:40-44)**
- B. This is a foundation which we must choose to build. **(Eph 3:17)**
 - 1. Which is worse: a problem with the foundation of the roof?
 - 2. You make the choice of the kind of foundation your life will have. The sooner you begin building, the better life you will have.

II. How do I know that I have love?

- A. There are components or characteristics of love. **(1 Cor 13:4-7)**
 - 1. **Love will not give up. (Rom 2:4)**
 - a. How do you view the weaknesses of other Christians?
"Love accepts people as they are; love can take insults without ill will."
 - b. Sadly some are like the scowling critic, showing their disapproval but offering no help. Others accept the sin and do not care. In none of these attitudes abides love.
 - c. Remember, when you love another, you are not in the center of things.
 - 2. **Love will build trust. (Mk 10:21)**
 - a. In love we will see our own condition with honesty.
 - b. Why can we rejoice in the truth? Because God's love provides a way to be forgiven.
 - c. I will trust one who loves me. They will tell me to my face what I need to hear rather than whisper it behind my back.
 - d. In this gentleness we will find lives and hearts opened to us. Without it we will find ourselves bitter and isolated.
 - 3. **Love will bring peace within (Jude 2)**
 - a. Those who do not have this love are restless souls. They are not happy.
 - b. The love of God allows me to fully involve myself in God's work.

4. **Love is the product of real maturity (Jn 13:34-35).**
 - a. Maturity produces a stability and reliability that allows one to be a pillar in the Lord's work.
 - b. This is why it "bears all things...endures all things."
- B. Consider some "tests" as to my personal possession of love.
 1. **The dining room table test. (The test of my words) (Mt 12:36-37)**
 - a. What words come from my mouth when I "let my hair down."
 - b. Some are very unhappy and critically sharp with their tongues! Why do men do this? They do not have the love of God which is not "provoked" (is not irritable or resentful RSV, "as keeping a mental record take into account, keep in mind, count (up)")

"Love looks through a telescope; envy, through a microscope."

 - c. How many save up accounts for years to be used later as a weapon?
2. **The test of standing alone.**
 - a. Love will speak the truth even if it means one must stand alone.
 - b. When we become weary of this we become weary of love. **(Gal 6:9)**
3. **The test of forgiveness (Lk 7:40-43, Mt 6:14-15)**
 - a. We must always lay aside personal vengeance. **(Rom 12:17-21)**
 - b. We are sorely lacking in love when we shun others, when we pull back from the work of the Lord because of others and when we find comfort in running from the presence of others.

III. How to repent and renew your love

- A. **I must be willing to see my condition. (Rev 2:4-5)**
 1. It is not just the world who runs from the light. **(Jn 3:19-21; 2 Cor 6:11-13,7:2)**
 2. Why not ask those who really know you? Those who really love you?
- B. **I must be willing to receive love. (2 Cor 2:6-8)**
 1. Some build a wall around themselves so the love of God cannot reach them.
 2. We need to be around others who will point us to God and share His love with us. **(Heb 10:24)** Some do not want this. They would rather be hurt!
 3. It is not uncommon to see people who are deeply hurt to in time to only associate with others who are hurt only to reinforce the bitterness and despair rather than to heal and move on. Some have described this as "the fellowship of the miserable." This will tear you down and make you a coward.
 4. Through God's love I can let go of the past. **(Phil 3:13-15)**
- C. **I must learn to look to God and renew my love.**
 1. If I do not choose to, my love can grow cold. **(Mt 24:12)**

"Love must be learned again and again; there is no end to it. Hate needs no instruction, but waits only to be provoked."

 2. In my daily worship and can see God and not be overcome by the despair over the actions of men. **(Psa 73:12-17)**

Conclusion: The way of God may look hard but is always the best way. **(Deut 6:24)**

- A. There is only one kind of faith that will avail. **(Gal 5:6)**
- B. Will you open your heart to the love of God?