

Some Things About Love

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SOME THINGS ABOUT LOVE

The greatest thing in the world is love. *And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.*

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves (or has) punishment (the King James Version says, "torment"), and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If some one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. (The literal translation is, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is begotten of God; and whoever loves the one who begets loves the begotten of Him.") By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. I John 4:16-5:2.

"We have come to know and to believe in the love which God has for us." I was praying about this and I think it is most difficult for people to really believe God loves them. It is the whole message of the Bible, but it is very difficult to believe.

"Oh, we believe that God loves."

But do you believe He loves you? And even when you are convinced that He must love you a little, you are continually worried about your own unworthiness of that love.

"How can He really love me?"

You must come to know and believe you are loved. The whole problem is believing you are loved, and believing God's love is in you. Not only believe you love God and that He loves you, but believe in the love He has put in you. Turn it loose; let it work. Turn loose that love which is in you. God has loved you and has put His love in you so that you can really love. The inability of human beings to love as they really should is something you should face.

"Well, I just can't love certain people."

The faithful, enduring, abiding love is not a natural human attribute. People do not love that way. They are moved with love for a time, and then it fades away. The human being in his depraved state is incapable of long sustained emotions, of real depth of emotions, apart from God working it in him. We were never meant to be complete apart from God; we were meant to love because He puts it in us to love. *We love, John said, because He first loved us.* All we are to do is drink it in and say, "Yes, Lord, I accept that You love me."

We must also know and believe the love of God that is in us. We reflect in kind. He does not love us with a divine love that we may love Him with a human love in return. He does not say to us, "I know you are weak and frail little human beings, so love Me the best you can. It does not make too much difference if you backslide a little once in a while, because I know you are only human. I consider your frame that you are but the dust of the earth." We could quote Scripture concerning that and get the idea, "Well, God is going to love us perfectly, but we don't have to be faithful." Yes, we do. Divine love is based on that.

How can a man be faithful to God, or how can a steward be faithful to the Lord? How can we be steadfast to the point of giving our lives to the Lord even unto death? We cannot do this on a human plane. Yet because He loves us, we can know and believe in the love of God that is in us and say, "Father, I love You with Your love. I love You perfectly because Your love is a perfect love. I love You faithfully, Lord, because I love You with Your love."

To start a new line of thinking, in every case where the human element has been the factor, I propose that we get to the end of it as soon as possible and get into the divine factor. God speaks to our hearts of what we are to do, and we think we can fulfill it with our own abilities. Instead, we must realize it will have to be all God and seek the Lord for impartation from Him to accomplish it.

You may have thought, "The Lord says I'm going to be a wise man, so I shall read some books and go to school. After awhile I'll be wise." That will not make you wise, not with the wisdom God wants. It will have to come from the Lord.

You purpose in your heart to love. "I'm going to be perfect in love: I shall love my wife, my children, and my enemies. I'm going to love everybody." How are you to do that? Make up your mind right now that no matter what is involved, you will do it with God's love; God will give you the grace to do it. You have to know and believe in the love He has put within you.

The love of God in us enables us to rise up confidently, without any self-confidence, pride, or arrogance of the flesh to say we can do it. We can do it because He has put it in us to do it. We do not have it in ourselves in the flesh to love; we have it within us in the Spirit.

It is time for us to heed what a walk with God is basically all about. It is the Body flowing in the love of God, the Body that makes increase of itself in love (Ephesians 4:16). We reach that through the divine flow.

And we have come to know and believe the love which God has in us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. Try to understand this principle of abiding. Why is it that the Apostle John is always talking about abiding? In the fifteenth chapter of his Gospel, he speaks of this abiding principle, learning how to live in God: "When we live in love, we live in God. When we live in love, God lives in us." This is not some philosophical, mystical concept. Consciously directed and channeled divine love fills you and surrounds you with God. That is what John is saying in effect.

The will is involved in love. I do not think it is true to say, "I just can't help loving them." It would not be true for long. You can fall deeply in love with someone on the romantic plane, but there comes a time when you decide to love. This is what counts. It is not based on how you are swept along by your emotions, or that certain chemistry between two individuals, but how you come to the place where you say, "I see and I love this one." You consciously direct your love. You consciously channel your love, and you say, "This one I am going to love."

There is, of course, always the problem of immaturity. When a young couple in their very early teens are so much in love, the wise old people say, "They're not in love. They are in love with love." The idea of loving intrigues the immature. They are overwhelmed with it, but they do not know enough yet; they are not mature enough to consciously focus their love on another individual, knowing what it would mean. They love and embrace each other, but it is not a consciously directed and focused love because they do not know enough to do it. The whole idea of love intrigues them. If anyone comes along and says, "I love you," they say, "I love you, too." They are in love with the idea of love, but they do not know enough yet.

God moves on our hearts and says, "Now, when you love, you are to focus that love on someone. It will be in you to fulfill it; I will surround you. You are going to abide in Me, and I am going to abide in you." That is what I John 4:16 said. *God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* It is a living thing.

We will face many difficulties in the days to come. People will be motivated by many things, but predominantly fear will determine the actions and decisions of people. There will be fear and insecurity because they will not know what is going to happen. *Men's hearts (will be) failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* Luke 21:26. It is very important that we eliminate the negative motivation at this point and that we be not motivated by fear. Now we are coming to the purpose of this message.

By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.... When we want to serve the Lord with all our hearts, and we set our love upon Him, opening our hearts to Him, then that perfected love eliminates fear.

Fear exists in people because they are fearful of punishment. Fear has a torment to it. Fear involves things we do not always understand. Whenever you love someone, yet you are deeply jealous, or you find that the love is not only a blessed, sustaining thing but also has moments in which it seems to be a torment to you, then carefully weigh that love. It involves a variety of experiences and relationships. Whenever love exists in that measure it is not perfected; it is not a good, true love yet. Nevertheless, it may have its possibilities, because we read how God's love is perfected within us.

People come before the Lord and they have a fear of judgment because their love has not been perfected yet. If we have fear of the day of judgment ahead of us, our love has not been perfected. We will never approach that day with fear in our hearts. We will not be motivated to find a hole to hide in. Because we believe that God loves us so much, and that love is so perfected in us, we will be motivated by love to walk

with God through this time, rather than to approach it with fearful and tormented hearts, thinking, “What will happen to me now? Will God love me, does He really love me that much?”

When you worship and come with feelings of insecurity before God, it may be because of faulty love. Why not open your heart and let God love you so you can love Him back again with a perfect love? That may be the whole problem. The feeling of insecurity in your life may come because your love has not been perfected. Perfect love excludes fear. It will give us the confidence we will need before the Lord in the day of judgment. *We love because He first loved us.*

Would you like to love a little better? Would you like to be able to receive love better? Here are a few things about how to love:

*The first thing to do is to **accept love**.* We read in I John 4:16, ...*we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.* Unless you believe that you are loved, the whole process falls apart. When someone loves you, accept it. God loves you; accept that love. Believe in it. You cannot love without faith. You must have faith in the love that comes to you, even if it comes through an imperfect channel—which it always does except when it comes from God. But does God’s love flow directly to you? Not as much as you might think. Probably you never felt much flow to you until you came into the house of God. It was through worship and prayers and the manifestation of love in other people that you finally received it. When God invites you to accept His love, you may wonder where that love is. You may have tried to tune in to that love and wondered what kilocycles to dial in order to find it. You will not find it that way, but look at your brother’s heart and you will find the love of God reaching to you. Listen to the word, listen to your pastor, listen to the elders; accept the ministry. He has a thousand ways of manifesting love, and they are all through imperfect channels. So you have to accept people’s love. “But they said the most unlovely thing to me.” Look a little deeper and see if you can find the love they really had for you.

The second point is to **let yourself be needed**. I am applying this on a spiritual plane. If you want the love of God to be in your heart, then let yourself be needed. The first thing the Lord did was open the door for us to have an important place and a ministry. He tells us, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you; I have commissioned you and sent you forth. I am making you needed” (John 15:16).

“Thank You, Lord. You could have done all of this without me.”

“Yes, but I want you to be needed, and I want you to know that you are.”

That is an amazing thing which involves love even on the human level. When you love someone and you believe he loves you, let yourself be needed. Do not stand off nor withdraw; let yourself be needed. Some people run when told they are needed, because they do not know how to love. They get the idea that love is a strange trap which ties them down, which is true. Then they run from it. “Oh, I don’t want that! I want to get out of this situation. I don’t want anyone to need me.” You are supposed to be needed.

Number three is to **need others**. Do not withdraw from recognizing your own need. It can be tragic when you are not able to convey to someone that you have a need. There are a thousand ways for it to be

expressed. Husbands and wives may have a sexual need of each other, but I think it is far less than other needs: the need they have for communication, for a oneness, a closeness together. In fact, to need another person and to face your need of it is a mark of maturity in love. It is not a mark of dependency and helplessness and immaturity. True maturity is not dependence nor is it independence; true maturity is interdependence.

A man may feel he can get along in life without a certain woman and the woman may feel she does not need him, that she can get along without him. Nevertheless, they fall in love and open their hearts to each other. They accept the love, letting themselves be needed by the other, opening their hearts to need one another. We can apply this to the spiritual realm. Do not be afraid to come and accept the love of the Body. In so many churches I have seen people slip into the back row fifteen minutes late and run out before the benediction, not wanting to get involved. They listen to the sermons; they even enjoy the sermons, but they do not want to be involved.

A person is foolish to think he can walk with God without becoming involved. You cannot even love God unless you love the brothers, so you must get involved. What gives people the idea they can sneak in, get their daily rations, and take off? You cannot do that. The church is a big family. Come in and be prepared to accept and to give love. Determine to be needed and to recognize your need for the others in the Body of Christ. Then you have love.

Point four: **Believe in love that is given you.** You have to have faith in love. I have seen many things frustrated because that was lacking. It is like putting up an insulation against the flow of current, then wondering why there is not the tingle you receive in love. You may not feel a thing. You may not be getting anything out of the service; nothing may be coming through to you. You are the one who is insulating it. You are the one stopping it. Love is flowing for a lot of people, but you stop it by your own emotions, your unbelief, your withdrawal. You are saying in effect, "I don't believe in this love that is being given me. They don't really love me; they just want what they can get out of me." That is not so. In a walk with God, you must have faith in the love of the Body. Remember our opening Scripture: *And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has in us.* You have to believe it.

No matter how many incidents or individuals, individually or collectively, seem to go against it, a walk with God comes by revelation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and a revelation of the Body. You cannot have a revelation of either one unless you have understanding that love is there. Believe in it, because it is divine love.

Another thing you must do is **express your love.** Act on it. Fulfillment is an action. Sometimes we wish it were not so. You can have feelings in your heart, deep emotions, deep attitudes, and they will not get you into trouble unless you act on them. Suppose a young couple falls very much in love. It is very difficult to keep their actions the way they should be. They may whisper in each other's ear, "I love you," and they may hold hands. But chances are, if they really love each other they want to act on it. And to channel their actions consistently the way God wants it to be is sometimes a problem, because the expression of love is very necessary. When a couple comes for counsel to see if their relationship is in the will of the Lord, they are taking good action. They want direction on how they can act on their love. In that very act of asking

guidance, they are taking action. In many New Testament churches, people have such faith in God and submission to the Lord that they will not take matters in their own hands and express their love in a way God does not approve, but they come and submit it to the elders. They come asking for direction about what they should do, about what should be the expression of their love, about how they should act upon it.

The same thing is true on the spiritual level. We are always comparing the natural and the spiritual because they are so interrelated. You come to the Lord telling Him that you love Him, and He tells you to act accordingly. If you want to get the love moving, then act on it.

In His message to the Ephesian Church (Revelation 2:4–5), the Lord said, “I have somewhat against you because you have left your first love. Repent from where you have fallen, and do the first work. Go back and do the actions over again.”

“I’m just building up a lot of love for the Lord.”

Act on it.

“I love my brother, and I have compassion for him. He has holes in his shoes and holes in his pants, and he’s hungry. I bless him.”

If you see your brother in need and shut up your bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in you? Let us not love in word, but love in deed; love in spirit and in truth (I John 3:17–18). This is what the epistle is talking about. Love must be expressed. It has to be expressed in action.

If you want to be part of a church, open your mouth and praise God; open your pocketbook and give until it hurts you. Involve yourself in work and labor for someone else, because love has to be expressed. Be concerned, get involved, express it. Fulfillment is always in action, never in your feelings and attitudes alone. Go do something. Do you love certain ones? Good, go pick a flower and give it to them. Buy a taped message and give it to them. When they ask why you are doing this, tell them it is because you love them. They may be amazed. They have a problem then, because the minute you act on love the other person has a problem.

There is always a problem when a boy comes up to a girl with a bouquet of flowers and a box of candy. She says, “What’s that for?”

“Oh, I just wanted to do it for you.”

It starts her thinking. Now she has to weigh it: “I wonder what his motivation is? Does he really love me?” It bothers her. It disturbs her. Why? Because an action that expresses love brings the other person to the place where he has to do something about it.

Do you want to be loved? Go up to someone in the church and tell him you love him as you walk by. It will bother him. He must decide how to respond, what to do. If he accepts your love, then he must accept your need for him. He may wish you had not said anything, because your coming by and expressing your love to him may cause him to lose some sleep. He will have to pray and wait before the Lord on your behalf because you love him. He will pray for you if he accepts your love and your need to be loved.

It is a good thing to face love. You may feel that you fall short. We all fall a little short. But love can be perfected. It is a quality that can be developed. Don't you think that you can learn to act on love? Don't you think that you can learn how to be needed and to need others? You can learn to love them and to believe in the love God has given you. Know it, and believe in it.

You are not an unbeliever; you are a believer. You are His child, and it is possible for you to open your heart to the Lord and His love, looking for those who need to be loved. You can beam God's love to them. Not on a psychic level, but by the love of God that is in you, start loving and ministering to them. Love is the amazing quality in Body ministry that is very important. Many of you still live too exclusively from one another. You will have to let your walls down.

It is very difficult for some people to give and receive love because they have hang-ups from the time they were children. Have you ever watched a little boy come up to a little girl he likes? He knocks her down. A little girl next door came home one day, her hair tousled and her dress dirty. She said that a little boy at school loved her. She was asked how she knew he loved her. She answered, "He chased me all morning."

It is difficult to learn how to love. Come to think of it, some of the older people are like children, chasing and hitting each other. That is not the way we are supposed to do it. We are to accept love, believe that we are loved, and believe in the love that God has put within us.

Let yourself be needed, and do not be afraid to need someone else. Do not withdraw from recognizing your need of the Body. Believe in the love that is given to you. Have faith in it, just as you have faith in the love you give to others. Express your love; act on it.

Responding to this message can lift a church up tremendously. We can actually assure the level of the services rising to a much higher plane and higher level. We are prepared to be a people moving in more love than ever before. We are becoming more a family that needs to feel the closeness. Each church needs to be a close-knit family. A family loves one another, needs one another, and strengthens one another. For one person to have a need is for the whole church to rally together to see that need met in some way. Every member needs to find that the Body loves and accepts him.

Sometimes, when there is a need, rather than meeting it in ourselves, we will pray for people and show them we love them, but it may be very important for them to struggle out of the problem themselves. It takes love for a mother not to tie her son's shoes when he is learning to do it by himself. The little boy is working away at it and is liable to be late for school, but she only encourages him.

“Oh, you can do it, son.” Soon he is in tears, but she says, “No, just try it over again.” She lets him do it. When he begs that she do it for him and does not want to do it for himself, she comes to him and says, “Johnny, I love you. I’ll fix your breakfast for you.” She lets him struggle. It takes faith and love to keep praying for a brother and strengthening him, and to watch him learn to walk with God. This is a great family. We need each other very much, and sometimes the greatest thing we can do is faithfully stand by, in love. I do this with people in the church; that is the reason they are so healthy.

Sometimes there is a calculated neglect that love gives. It makes men out of boys and women out of girls. Then there are other times when love rushes in to help because they need something very much. God gives us wisdom so the Body can love each other and faithfully build one another up in the Lord.

Love is the key. When you see a person’s need, what is provoked in you? Do you judge him? Are you critical of him, or do you reach out and minister to him? *Love covers a multitude of sins.* I Peter 4:8b. Love helps us to redeem a brother or sister out of the pit they fall into. It will do more than restore them; love will strengthen them to go on and walk with God in the victory they did not have in their hearts before. We are not going to be legalistic. We shall not see people’s needs that we may judge them. We shall love them so much that we will lift them up and by the grace of God, see them stand, to come into the perfect will of the Lord and walk in that victory.

Love one another. Do not even look at yourself without love—I am not talking about self-love—but love what God has brought forth in you. You are begotten of God! He loves you.