

Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 7

What Love Does God Expect of Us?

Some of us may interpret Jesus' command to love one another as simply to be friendly & kind to fellow believers, to serve in the church, and to give generously of our financial resources. God is not calling us to be philanthropists or to be charitable in the church community. Even those in the world know how to be charitable and to give generously. The standard of love God expects of His people is much higher.

There are 4 different Greek words for love. *Storge*: affection, for example, love between parent & child or between siblings. *Phileo*: friendship, between those like-minded or with common interests. *Eros*: sexual or sensual love between man and woman. *Agape*: self-giving, unconditional love that comes out of grace.

In the NT, the most commonly used word for love, occurring 116X, is *agape / agapao*. In the Upper Room discourse Jesus used these two words 30X to refer to the love expected of believers for one another. Jesus did not command us to have *storge* fond affection or to be *phileo* friendly but to extend *agape* love to one another. *Agape* love is an act of the will; it does not depend on how we feel about the other person. *Agape* love, sacrificial and unconditional love, is what Jesus has shown to us who are unworthy, undeserving sinners.

Read 1 Cor. 13

Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth that love is superior to spiritual manifestations. Exercising spiritual gifts or serving in the church is meaningless, if it is not done out of love. Love is not only superior; it is the only thing that will stand and last at the end.

Michael Green in his reflection on this passage said; "When the day of all our earthly gifts is over, when all prophecy has found its fulfillment, when tongues are taken up in the song of the redeemed, when we know even as we are known, when faith is swallowed up in sight, and hope is fulfilled in utter possession by the beloved, then love remains... **We shall not in the end be judged by our gifts or our learning, but by our love, by our likeness to Christ.**"

Questions to ponder

1. In 1 Cor. 13: 1-8, Paul urged the believers at Corinth to aim toward love above all else. Why is it important for us to serve out of love?
2. What did Paul say are the attributes of love (4-8a)? Which of these attributes are you strong in and which are you lacking? Decide on 3 things you can do to build your relationships with others in the church with *agape* love?

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