

Love gets misunderstood and called all sorts of things it isn't. For example:

- ☆ Love isn't affection.
- ☆ Love isn't pleasure.
- ☆ Love isn't sex.
- ☆ Love isn't getting my way.
- ☆ Love isn't a path without bumps & bruises, accountabilities & consequences or unconditional everything & anything.
- ☆ Love isn't pacifying to please another.

Max Lucado

God loves us too much to indulge our every whim.

John 13:34-35

I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs.

Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. For now we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known. Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

I. The Need for God's Love

Notes: _____

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created...

1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and His love is perfected in us.

Augustine

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.

Phillip Yancey

One who has been touched by grace will no longer look on those who stray as "those evil people" or "those poor people who need our help." Nor must we search for signs of "love worthiness." Grace teaches us that God loves because of who God is, not because of who we are.

II. The Nature of Christian Love

Notes: _____

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs.

Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

F.F. Bruce

God bestows His blessings without discrimination. The followers of Jesus are children of God, and they should manifest the family likeness by doing good to all, even to those who deserve the opposite.

Jesus: Matthew 5:43-45

“You have heard that it was said, **Love your neighbor** and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God’s Grace Makes Us Just*

“We instinctively tend to limit for whom we exert ourselves. We do it for people like us, and for people whom we like. Jesus will have none of that. By depicting a Samaritan helping a Jew, Jesus could not have found a more forceful way to say that anyone at all in need – regardless of race, politics, class, and religion – is your neighbor. Not everyone is your brother or sister in faith, but everyone is your neighbor, and you must love your neighbor.”

III. New Creation & Eternal Love

Notes: _____

1 John 4:17-19

There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears has not reached perfection (“teleios”- *maturity or ripened*) in love. We love because He first loved us.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.”

N.T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*

“Our task as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to a world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to a world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to a world that knows only exploitation, fear and suspicion...The gospel of Jesus points us and indeed urges us to be at the leading edge of the whole culture, articulating in story and music and art and philosophy and education and poetry and politics and theology and even--heaven help us--Biblical studies, a worldview that will mount the historically-rooted Christian challenge to both modernity and postmodernity, leading the way...with joy and humor and gentleness and good judgment and true wisdom.

CONCLUSION:

C.S. Lewis

Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not.

C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.”

