

# THE GREATEST IS LOVE

Today I want to look at the importance of Christians having a genuine love for others – A great key to our lives making a great difference in this world for eternity and to us enjoying healthy relationships with others



**The Apostle Peter wrote,**

*“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” (1 Peter 4:7-9)*

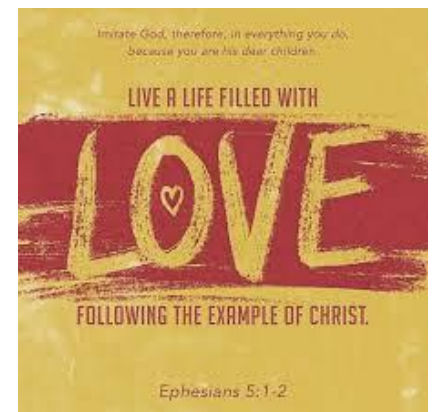


**The Apostle Peter also wrote,**

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” **(1 Peter 3:8-9)**

# The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. **(Ephesians 5:1-2)**”





**The Apostle John wrote,**

*“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”* **(1 John 4:7)**

*The bible clearly emphasises the importance of Christians loving others and how our love for others is actually an indicator of us having a genuine relationship with God*

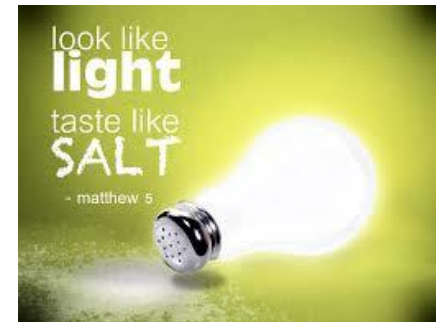
- A great sign of us being in the last days is the general lack of love and respect that we now see in the world for one another



**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” **(2 Timothy 3:1-5)**

- As Christians, as God's love has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) we can truly shine out in this world and make a difference in the times that we are now living in.

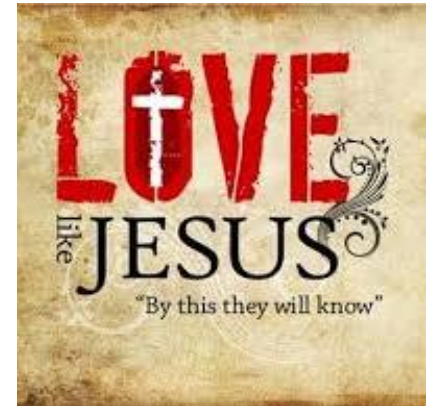


It is our unconditional love for and kindness towards others that will cause us to stand out as Christians. Jesus Himself said,

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**”

- It is our **GENUINE** love and concern for others that helps us to make a great difference in this world and that helps us to lead people to Christ

Let your  
**Light So Shine**  
before men, that  
they may see your **GOOD WORKS,**  
AND *Glorify* your **FATHER**  
which is in Heaven.



- There is a saying that people do not care how much we know but they do want to know how much we CARE
- *How important it is that we learn to be sensitive to the needs of others and that we are prepared to go the extra mile to help people going through trials*

- The early church grew rapidly and was characterised by all believers having a genuine love for one another which was also demonstrated in practical ways.

## PRACTICAL LOVE

In the book of Acts we read,

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42 & 44-47)*



- **The Apostle Paul made it clear that it does not matter what we do in life for others, if it is not undergirded or motivated by love, it profits us nothing**



**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 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. 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.” **(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)**

- **As Christians we must not allow the ways of the world to influence us and to stop us from loving others with the AGAPE love of God (That we do not become conformed to this world)**

***FOR THIS REASON OUR CHOICE OF FRIENDS IS OBVIOUSLY VERY IMPORTANT***

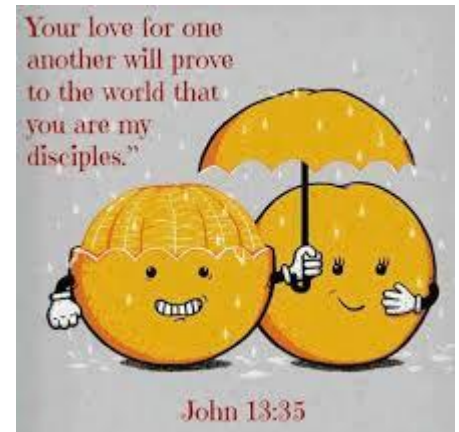


**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

**“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)**

**TODAY I WANT TO SHARE SEVEN THINGS FROM THE WORD OF GOD IN RELATION TO HAVING A GENUINE LOVE FOR OTHERS**

# 1) It is our love for one another which is our greatest witness as Christians to the unbelievers in this world



**Jesus Himself said,**

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**

## 2) Our love for others must always be sincere (We need to have a genuine interest in the lives of others)



All people respond to genuine love and kindness

The Apostle Paul wrote,

*“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another;” (Romans 12:9-10)*

### 3) True love is always willing to make sacrifices (Sacrificially giving of ourselves demonstrates that we have a genuine love for others)



**The Apostle John wrote,**

*“By this we know love, because he laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:16-18)*

# Jesus was our example of sacrificially giving of Himself and living for others



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For when we were still without strength, *in due time Christ died for the ungodly*. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, *in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

**(Romans 5:6-9)**

## Jesus Himself said,

“Yet is shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28)



## Jesus also said

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

**True agape love is always prepared to make sacrifices for others even when at times people do not appreciate what we do for them**

**Jesus emphasised the importance of doing good to all people,**



**“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” **(Matthew 5:44-45)****



## 4) Genuine love will always demonstrate forgiveness (We must refuse to allow offences to enter into our heart)

- True love does not hold records of wrongs

- True agape love is always willing to quickly forgive those who hurt us

- The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us...” (Ephesians 4:31-32, 5:1-2)

*Forgiveness*  
is not an occasional act,  
it is a permanent  
*attitude*  
- Martin Luther King Jr. -

# Jesus Himself emphasised the absolute importance of continually forgiving others

In the gospel of Matthew we read,

“Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” **(Matthew 18:21-22)**



Lord, How Many Times Should I Forgive My Brother?

**70 X 7**

Matthew 18:21-22

## 5) If we are constantly critical and judgmental of others we have no time to love them

- We must refuse to entertain critical and judgmental thoughts towards others *that have the potential to negatively affect our heart attitudes towards them*

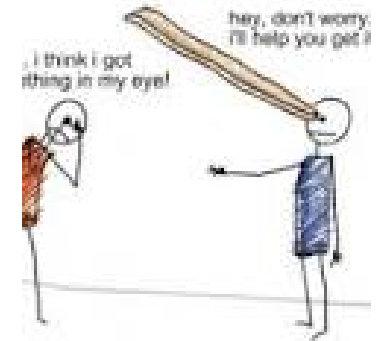
- We must keep our heart with all diligence

**In Proverbs 4:23 we read,**

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” **(Proverbs 4:23)**



# We need to simply refuse to become critical and judgmental towards others



**Jesus Himself said,**

*“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” **(Matthew 7:1-5)**

**6) Our ability to CONTINUALLY love others flows out of us maintaining an intimate relationship with the LORD.**



**King David wrote,**

**“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)**

**THE MORE TIME THAT WE SPEND WITH THE LORD,  
THE MORE WE GET HIS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND  
COMPASSION FOR OTHERS**

**Growth in Christlike character and in the fruit of the Spirit, comes from living in an abiding and intimate relationship with the Lord – The more time that we spend with the Lord, the more we become like Him**



**Jesus Himself said,**

**“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)**

- **We must never get too busy so that we do not spend enough time with the Lord**



- **If we do not learn to walk in the Spirit and if we do not spend quality time with the Lord on a regular basis, it will affect our ability to love others unconditionally**
- **Having a *lifestyle of worship* helps us to stay close to the Lord and at peace with others**

**In the gospel of Luke we read about the account of Jesus visiting Mary and Martha. We like Mary need to spend time with the Lord.**



“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.

But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But *one thing is needed*, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”  
**(Luke 10:38-42)**



# 7) Loving others is the key to having healthy relationships in life.



- "A man who has friends must himself be friendly..."  
**(Proverbs 18:24)**
- **Having healthy and loving relationships is a big part of enjoying the life and life more abundantly that Jesus spoke of. Jesus said,**  
"... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." **(John 10:10)**

# Loving those closest to us is so crucial to seeing our homes and work places being happy places

- If we sow love into our relationships we will reap rich and rewarding relationships
- We must not be governed by our feelings but just choose to love people at all times
- As we do the feelings will follow
- The enemy will always exaggerate the faults in others
- We must simply just learn to look for the best in others and to love people unconditionally



**As we continually sow love and TIME into our relationships with others, we will enjoy good relationships in our family and with our friends and work colleagues**

**How To Exercise Our Faith In God Through Loving Others.**



**If we CONTINUALLY sow love into all of our relationships, we will reap the benefits of enjoying loving and healthy relationships.**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

**“...for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)**

# RESPECTING OTHERS IS A GREAT KEY TO MAKING PEOPLE FEEL LOVED



**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” **(Philippians 2:3)**

All people thrive on being loved and accepted. When others feel respected and appreciated by us, they will also feel loved. Respecting and affirming the good in others, is a great key to building healthy and loving relationships in life



**I will now finish by looking at the words of the Apostle Paul in relation to love;**

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” **(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)**