

# THE GREATEST IS LOVE



**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

**“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”**

**(1 Corinthians 13:13)**

- The bible makes it clear that God is loving and merciful and that truly it is His desire that none would perish but that all would have a loving and intimate relationship with Him

THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT WILL ENDURE  
*Faith, Hope, Love*  
AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS  
**LOVE**  
1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

**The Apostle John wrote,**

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”

**(1 John 4:16)**

**The Apostle John also wrote,**

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” **(1 John 4:7-8)**



- Jesus Christ during His time here on earth *demonstrated* God's love for all people in the way that He lived His life

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We see this in the gospel of Matthew,

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” **(Matthew 9:35-36)**

Jesus also *spoke* of God's great love for us when He said,

“For God *so loved the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)



- **As Christians we are meant to be the hands and feet of Jesus.**



- **To be His representatives here on earth**

**The Apostle Paul wrote, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, (2 Corinthians 5:18)**

**“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)**

- We most reflect God's character when we have a genuine unconditional love for others
- God's agape love is unconditional
- There is a big difference between human love and God's unconditional love





**The Apostle Paul wrote what true agape love is really like,**

“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)**



- Jesus Himself made it clear that it was through genuinely loving our brothers and sisters in the Lord that we would have the greatest impact on the unsaved 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)**

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- The bible makes it clear that the moment we become a Christian God's love is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit



**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

**(Romans 5:5)**

- So as believers we have the ability to love others unconditionally



- Jesus however warned that the love of many would grow cold in the times that we are now living in. What He predicted we are now seeing



**Jesus Himself said, “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (Matthew 24:10-11)**

**“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:12-13)**

- So how can we continually maintain our love for others as we go through life's trials and disappointments and rejection for our faith

**1) We must always be quick to forgive others**

**Jesus Himself said,**

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” **(Mark 11:25-26)**



- None of us are perfect
- We all have hurt others at times ourselves
- We must always *choose* to be quick to forgive those who hurt us
- Continually forgiving others helps us to have loving and healthy relationships with others
- We cannot shut our heart to others and also have our heart open to God at the same time
- **Continually forgiving those who hurt us helps us to love others unconditionally**



- **Jesus Himself clearly emphasised the importance of always forgiving others**



**We see this in the gospel of Matthew;**

“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.”

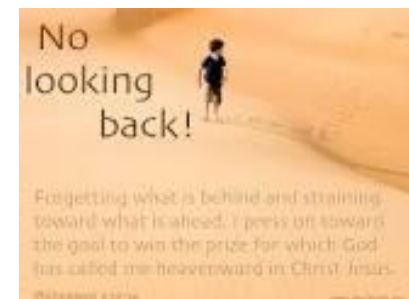
**(Matthew 18:21-22)**



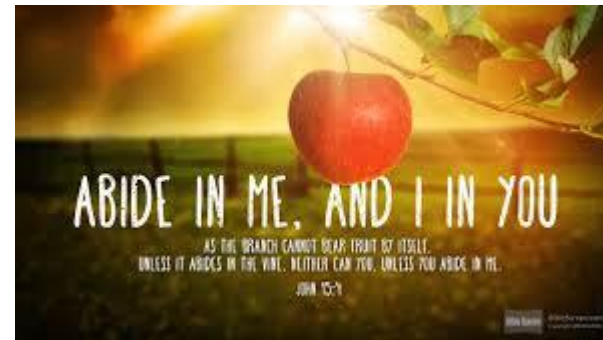
- We must simply choose to move on from our past hurts and betrayals if we are to continually love others unconditionally
- We must always be quick to forgive those who hurt us and *refuse to dwell on these experiences*. We must learn to both forgive and forget

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

**“... But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” (Philippians 3:13)**



## 2) We need to maintain an ONGOING intimate and abiding relationship with the LORD



**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 quality time with the Lord
- The more time that we spend in the presence of the Lord the more we will grow in Christlike character and in our love for others
- Continually spending time in God's presence helps us to get His love and compassion for people
- The more time that we spend with the Lord the more love that we will have for others



### 3) We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” **(Ephesians 3:17-19)**

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,”  
**(Ephesians 5:18)**



- Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit helps us to grow in the fruit of the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” **(Galatians 5:16)**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

## 4) We need to remain in fellowship with other believers



**In the book of Hebrews we read,**

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:23-25) AND**

## 5) WE MUST SIMPLY CHOOSE TO LOVE ALL PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES

“ Kindness is choosing  
love over hate,  
light over darkness,  
compassion over  
judgment. ”

- RAKtivist

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” **(Romans 12:17-21)**

**I will finish with the words of the Apostle Peter,**  
“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)**

