

WHAT WILL LOVE DO?

While there are many different kinds of love mentioned in Scripture, our lesson will focus on the kind of love that causes a genuine feeling and outreach for all of mankind. The perfect example of this kind of love can be seen in how Jesus willingly came to the earth knowing what horrible things would be done to Him that would end in a cruel death so that all mankind could have the opportunity to have eternal life in heaven.

The example Jesus gave us shows how this kind of love is without limits, and it is the same kind of love that all Christians are to have for the lost souls of our dying world. Let us examine a few examples of how this kind of love should be manifested:

1. Love for the Lord

If there is one area that we should all have a deep selfless love for, it is God almighty. He is the one that taught us to love (1 Thess. 4:9). Without Him, we would have never known what true love is all about (Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:9-10). Everything that God has done for us from the beginning of time has all been done out of love for us, so it is only natural for us to love our Creator back. While many view the Old Testament and its laws as being harsh, even its foundation was based on God's love for us. Notice how Jesus summarized the 10 commandments in Mark 12:30-31.

2. Love for the stranger

Sometime we might find it difficult to have love for a stranger because we constantly taught to avoid them. However, the Scriptures have a different message for us about strangers. Let's examine the following Scriptures and discuss them: Deut. 10:18-19; Lev. 19:33-34; Lk. 10:30-37; Gal. 6:10.

3. Love for fellow Christians

Every Christian is a brother or sister in Christ. Just as we care and love for our blood relatives, we should strive to have the same love and care for our adopted brothers and sisters in Christ. The Scriptures have much to say about our love for our brethren, so let's examine and discuss the following Scriptures: Jn. 15:12-13; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 12:26-27; Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:1-5; 1 Thes. 4:9; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:20-5:3.

4. Love for your enemy

Loving your enemy is one of the hardest things to do because it is much easier to hate them and hope that bad things will happen to them. This is another area where God has set the bar high, and He teaches us to love our enemy. Let's examine and discuss the following Scriptures: Mt. 5:43-47; Prov. 25:21-22; Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60; Rom. 12:14, 19-21; 1 Cor. 4:12-13; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; 1 Pet. 2:23; 3:9.

This is an extended version of loving your enemy because of the discussion that came up in class.

One of the most difficult things we are asked to do is to love our enemy. This is never easy to do, but we have been called to this high standard by Christ Himself.

Matthew 5:43 " You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ "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, ⁴⁵ "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. ⁴⁶ "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

The last verse states our goal, which is to become perfect or complete in our love like God is who is pure and who extends His love to all people. This love does not mean that God is in fellowship with all people, but that He provides the blessing of this earth, and the opportunity for all to come to Him and have eternal life.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

1 Timothy 2:3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

If God's perfect love meant that all were in fellowship with Him no matter what they do, then there would have been no need for Jesus to die on the cross because every person would be saved. As we follow the example of God, we must extend our love to all people, but it does not mean that we are in fellowship with them. The love that we extend to them and the prayers we offer for them is so that they might turn from their evil ways and turn to God and be saved.

The command to love your neighbor is found in the Law of Moses:

Leviticus 19:17 ' You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. ¹⁸ 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: *I am* the LORD.

However, when Jesus said, you have heard that you are to hate your enemy, apparently this was the saying of the day because the Law of Moses never states that you are to hate your enemy. Perhaps they came to that conclusion because God taught them not to join with their enemies and there are many times the God commanded the children of Israel to destroy their enemy with the sword. You also have statements like David wrote in:

Psalms 139:19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. ²⁰ For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take *Your name* in vain. ²¹ Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? ²² I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

While men like David hated the evil deeds of wicked men, again they were never commanded to hate their enemy. In fact, the Law of Moses provides some additional instructions about the treatment of their enemy:

Exodus 23:4 " If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. ⁵ "If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

Even in the O.T. times when their enemies were being wiped being from the face of the earth, there were exceptions to this:

2 Kings 6:18 So when *the Syrians* came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. ¹⁹ Now Elisha said to them, "This *is* not the way, nor *is* this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria. ²⁰ So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see." And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there *they were*, inside Samaria! ²¹ Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill *them*? Shall I kill *them*?" ²² But he answered, "You shall not kill *them*. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." ²³ Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian *raiders* came no more into the land of Israel.

Also consider:

Deuteronomy 20:10 " When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. ¹¹ "And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people *who are* found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. ¹² "Now if *the city* will not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. ¹³ "And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword.

The book of Proverbs offer more words of advice about the treatment of an enemy:

Proverbs 24:17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; ¹⁸ Lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him. ¹⁹ Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the wicked; ²⁰ For there will be no prospect for the evil *man*; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

This is a hard saying as well because many of us have a tendency to rejoice when something bad happens to our enemy, but even the O.T. tells us not to rejoice at their fall. Now I do not believe this is saying that we cannot rejoice that righteousness has prevailed, but that we should have the wrong attitude about the person. Yes, their deeds are evil, but their soul is precious to the Lord.

Proverbs 25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; ²² For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you.

Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Both of these thoughts are given in the N.T. Paul quotes Prov. 25:21-22 in Rom. 12:20-21.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Let us consider some more things about what Jesus said:

⁴⁴ "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, ⁴⁵ "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven

You may find this difficult to believe, but the same Greek word behind love in this verse is the same Greek word used in the following verse:

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Though the same word is being used here the emphasis is still on our love for their soul and not for their fellowship because we cannot be in fellowship with those that are enemies of God. However, we are still to bless them and pray for them though they have nothing but hatred for us.

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

1 Corinthians 4:12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; ¹³ being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous, And His ears *are open* to their prayers; But the face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil."

Jesus is the perfect example of this. Again, Peter says:

1 Peter 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed.

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Does loving our enemies mean that we just take everything they dish out without saying a word. No, it does not because the examples we are given is to rebuke those who practice the false way, but when we rebuke them we do it out of love for their soul and not with hatred in our heart. There are many examples of this in the N.T.

1. Peter and John were ceased by the enemies of the cross and they did not remain silent about the truth: They said:

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰ "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

2. When Stephen was ceased by the enemies of the cross, he was not silent he began to teach them the truth, and he was stoned to death for that truth, but we can see that he did not harbor hatred in his heart even in the end because he said:

Acts 7:60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

3. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison in Acts 16, yet that did not stop Paul to speak out against this unlawful beating:

Acts 16:36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."³⁷ But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."³⁸ And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans.³⁹ Then they came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to depart from the city.

Many other examples could be given where the apostles and others did not stay and take abuse from their enemy, and they avoided their enemy to live another day. These examples show that loving your enemy does not mean that you cannot speak out against them or find ways to avoid them.

One last thought, we must understand that as we stand up for what is right that it can divide families and create enemies. Jesus said:

Matthew 10:34 " Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."³⁵ "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';³⁶ "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his *own* household.'³⁷ "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

John 15:18 " If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.¹⁹ "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Living the Christian life is always going to have its challenges, but we must remember that God is with us and that this life is temporary, and we must learn to focus our minds on God and turn our problems over to realizing that He can give us the strength to deal with the heart breaks, persecution, and hatred we will face because of our enemy. As Paul said:

Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

5. Love for the truth

Every Christian should have a strong love for God's Word because it contains the words of life and as Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). Let's look at several passages that talk about God's Word and what it means to us: Rom. 1:16; Jam. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; Rom. 6:17-18. Without God's Word we would be lost forever because we could not have faith: (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17). The Word of God supplies everything we need to know to be saved and to make it to heaven (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

6. Love of mercy

Sometimes Christians struggle with showing mercy to others because they have forgotten how much mercy has been shown to them. Sometimes we must remind ourselves that other people want our mercy just as much as we want their mercy. Notice what Micah teaches us:

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

When we think about how much mercy God has had on us from the beginning of time and did not give us what we deserved, it should cause us to love mercy and want to give mercy. Let's examine some verses about mercy and discuss them: Mt. 5:7; 18:23-35; 23:23; Lk. 6:35-36; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8; Jam 2:13.

We could cover many more ways in which our love should be manifested as Christians, but now let's take a look at some Scriptures that teach us some things that we should not love: Lk. 11:43; Mt. 23:5-6; 1 Tim. 6:10; 1 Jn. 2:15, 3:18; 2 Pet. 2:15; 3 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:4.

Now let's begin looking at "What Love Will Do."

I want to emphasize that when you follow the example Jesus gave us about love, you will have a love that is active not passive. Love will motivate you to be a diligent worker for the Lord instead of being like Jonah who tried to run and hide from his responsibilities.

Love will cause us to keep God's commands

When we develop the love that God wants us to have, we will love every Word that comes from the Lord. We will cherish God's Word and be doers of it because every commandment of God is righteous (Ps. 119:172). Besides, we are commanded to keep His Word (Jn. 14:15; 21-24; 15:10-14; Mt. 7:24-27; Jas. 1:22; 1 Jn. 2:3-5; 5:2-3). Paul says that love rejoices in truth (1 Cor. 13:6).

Love will cause us to be good neighbors

When we love our neighbors, we will be kind to them and do them no harm. Paul puts it this way:

Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Though we are not under the 10 commandments today it is significant that the last 6 of them deals with man's duty to man. Who is our neighbor? Jesus answered that question with the story of the good Samaritan. Our neighbor can be the person next door or the person thousands of miles away from us. Whoever or wherever he is, love will keep us from doing him harm.

Let's examine the following verses that show what love will forbid us from doing to our neighbors (Deut. 27:17, 24; Ps. 15:3; 101:5; Prov. 6:29; 25:18).

Love will cause us to have a forgiving spirit and cause us to be concerned for those who sin against us.

Gen 50: 15-21 Joseph had to face many years of hardship and be separated from his father because of the sin of his brothers. As he considered the love that God had for him and his and family, he was able to allow love to cause him forgive his brothers for their wrong and to give God the glory for what He was able to do with this situation.

We can also see David's deep love and concern for his son even though Absalom betrayed him (2 Sam. 18:32 – 19:2).

We can see love that others had for the lost and the forgiving spirit they had (Lk. 23:34; Act 7:60). When we develop this kind of love for the sinner, we will always be ready to forgive those who repent and we will continue to hope that something that we say or someone else says will move them to repentance so their soul will not be lost (2 Cor. 5:10-11).

Love will cast out fear.

If we love God and trust Him it will drive fear out of our lives such as:

1. Fear of want. (Ps. 23:1; Mt. 6:33).
2. Fear of being forsaken (Mt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 13:5; Rom. 8:38-39).
3. Fear of death (Ps. 23:4).

1 Jn. 4:18; Ps 118:6. How do we learn to have this kind of love that casts out fear (1 Jn. 4:19- 5:3)?

Love will make us assume the best about a person instead of the worse.

When are motivated by love, we are not going to be the type of people that go around looking for the weakness and faults of others. Instead we will focus on their strengths,

and we will do what we can to encourage instead of discourage. However, this does mean that we sweep people's sins under the rug and ignore them. Instead, we will do what we can to help them overcome their faults so they can be right with God. To say nothing would show a lack of love for them. When love is our motivation, we will be more effective at leading people out of their sins (Jam. 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1-2). Also see (Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8).

As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13:13, love is greater than faith and hope. I hope we will constantly remind ourselves of the importance of love because we do not have it we are nothing. I close this lesson the words of Jesus:

John 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."