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*We love because he first loved us.  
1 John 4:19*

### What is Love?

Love is an unconditional commitment directed towards imperfect people seeking their highest good which often requires sacrifice.

Here we can see that love is not just a feeling, it is a commitment. A commitment to an imperfect person because all of us have unlovable traits, no one is perfect. We all have our eccentricities, our idiosyncracies and our weaknesses. We aren't always on our "best behavior" rendering us lovable to everyone.

Human love is selfish, but the love that is taught to us in the bible is selfless. The core of which is that we would seek the highest good of the other person. We should be willing to show our love through our actions for example in our willingness that we would the other person first before ourselves. . . This shows us that love requires sacrifice.

### How then do we spell love?

Love is spelled **C. C. F.**

**C Commitment**

But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice of food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself

Daniel 1:8

At this time, the Israelites were under Babylonian rule. Daniel and his friends had been chosen to serve the king. They were served the same food that was on the king's table but Daniel and his friends resolved not partake in it since he had made a commitment to God that he would not defile himself even in the most insignificant aspect such as food. In verse 12 we see that Daniel had asked permission so that he would only have vegetable to eat for 10 days. He asked the official to test them and see if their appearance and performance would change. So after 10 days, verse 18 says " *then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials present them before Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; and so they entered the king's personal service.*"

They made a commitment to God not to defile themselves even in the simple area of food, and they were willing to be subjected to the test because they knew that God was with them. And at the end of the appointed time, they were chosen.

Another example is the apostle Paul's commitment . He was commissioned to bring the gospel to the gentiles. His heart, his commitment was to spread the gospel to these people, to give them the opportunity to come to Christ. His commitment was so great that he said that he was willing to be separated from Christ just so that the others would come to know the gospel.

*And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and began to pray saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." And being in agony He was prying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.*

Luke 22:41-44

And of course the supreme example, is our Lord Jesus Christ. In spite of knowing what was about to come, He still obeyed the Father because He was committed to us, because He loved us. He was in so much agony that his sweat became blood. He knew what before Him and yet He endured all that for you, for me, for mankind.

*Love is a commitment, not just a feeling or an emotion.*

Let us remember this during times of trials. God is committed to us 100%. Even when we fail Him and think He is not there. . . He is always there with us in the midst of our most difficult trial and in the most difficult temptation, faithful to us in our unfaithfulness.

*I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,*

Romans 9:1-3

## C Communication

Love involves communication. Studies show that communication is 55% body language, 38% tone and only 7% actual words. But this is not really discernable. Communication is very important in any love relationship. It is one thing to say that you love the person, but it is equally important to show that you love that person. That is why it is important to be careful of the things that we say because once we have said it, the damage is irreversible. The book of Proverbs and the book of James warns us of the danger of being careless with our words. James tells us that "*from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing*" and we are reminded that as Christians this should not be the case.

God communicates to us differently. In Romans 5:6-8, that God's love is different because even though we are unrighteous. . . even though we are sinners, because of His love for us, Christ died for us. He did not wait for us to change, He did not wait for us to become better. This is how He showed us His love — in spite of who we are, in spite of what we have done.

Communication should translate into and should be accompanied by action. It is completed with action, without action it means nothing. Communication without love is also nothing. You may be the best speaker or writer but if you do not love, you are just a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians reminds us of the importance of love. This is the biblical concept of love. . . and this we have to learn. Otherwise love by human standards is selfish. . . But selfless if we follow biblical standards.

*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good. A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit.*

Proverbs 15:1-4

*But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.*

James 3:8-10

## F ForGiveness

*And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

Hebrews 9:22

*So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*

Colossians 3:12-13

Forgiveness is not just saying "I'm sorry" because often times we do not really forgive. The perfect example of forgiveness is God's forgiveness of our sins. Jesus Christ was sinless and yet he shed His blood for our redemption. This is the biblical concept of forgiveness. That is why it is better for us to ask for forgiveness rather than saying I'm sorry. We should also be specific for the reasons why we are asking for forgiveness eg "Will you forgive me for being harsh?". This brings the focus away from us and to the other person, acknowledging that we have hurt their feelings and are sincerely seeking reconciliation.

When God forgave us of our sins, He removed all our transgression as far as the east is from the west. (Psalm 103:12) what does this really mean? When you are travelling north or south there is always an end point, you will always reach the north or south pole. But when you are travelling from the east to the west, they will never intersect because as long as you are traveling east you will not be travelling west. That is how far He has forgiven us. Hebrews 10:17 further says *their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more*. This is God's model of forgiveness. This is how we were forgiven through the shedding of the blood of Christ. If we do not accept this forgiveness verse 18 says *there is no longer any offering for sin*.

Even on the cross, at the nearing of His death, Jesus Christ still asked the Father for forgiveness of the people (Luke 23:33-34). The same is expected from us, since we have been forgiven we too should forgive thereby becoming channels of God's forgiveness, so that people may know of God's love through us.

### WORKS: Journaling task

*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.*

John 15:12-14

#### 1. Committed

- \* how have we committed to love God? Love our spouses? Our children? Our friends? The people who are unlovable?

#### 2. Communication

- \* how is my communication with God? With my spouse? With my family? With friends?
- \* Does my words build up or destroy?
- \* Is my love communicated through my actions?

#### 3. Forgiveness

- \* is there still unforgiveness in my heart? Is there someone I have not forgiven?
- \* Can people see God's forgiveness and love in my life?