GREATER LOVE

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

**THESIS:** To reveal that true love for another person means we are willing to even give up our life for that person.

**INTRO.:**

 **A.** Those who swear allegiance to our nation and put on a military uniform say that they are willing to die for someone else they may never even meet or know. Those who exchange marriage vows are pledging their lives for one another (of course with the present divorce rate we know that they are often empty vows). Our Savior didn’t just give up His life for His friends, but did so even for His hateful enemies!

 **B.** We see so much “pretend” death in movies, plays and TV and keep so busy enjoying life we fail to grasp the reality of this biblical statement. Many vow “I’d die for…this or that…” – but would denounce Christ who died for them and would run so fast and so far from dying for the One Who died for them, in spite of the fact that they didn’t live for Him or really love Him. So, no one can honestly declare what or who they would actually be willing to die for, and regarding dying for Christ one thing is certain, and that is that if you will not live for Him while you have the opportunity to do so, it is certain that you would NOT be willing to die for Him.

**TRANS.:** So, the question really comes down to who or what would you really be willing to lay down your life for?

**I. “GREATER LOVE” IS NOT JUST A FEELING:**

 **A.** **It Is an Act of the Will:**

 **1.** Your statement or desire alone is totally insufficient…actions speak much louder than words.

**ILLUS.:** The soldier who jumps on a live grenade to save his friends life or lives, is an example of true love and extreme bravery. Husbands and wives who declare their undying love to their partner cannot really prove their love if they don’t serve and if possible, shield, their partner from hardship, danger and the extremes of life when that is possible and their statements about true love, until that love is tested in real life situations. What kind of caregiver would you be willing to be if your partner suffers from disability, disease or becomes unable to help themselves? Will you truly ”lay down your life” for that person you claim to love? To what extent?!

 **2.** Can that person you claim is a true friend trust your love to extend to them in time of hardship or danger?

 **3.** When that person is physically dying will you be there at his or her side?

 **4.** Will you be willing to sacrifice your time (that is what physical life is in reality), money, job, your goals, etc. for him or her?

  **B. True Love Often Demands Sacrifice:**

 **1.** The issue is what price are you prepared to pay to demonstrate your “Greater Love”?

**ILLUS.:** My friend who is now in Heaven, brother Frank Harper, was willing to stand between me and a murderer who threatened my life. He was literally willing to lay down his life for mine.

 **2.** “GREATER LOVE” is demonstrated by a person’s willingness to lay down their life for the one they claim to love.

 **3.** No one hopes or desires to lay down their life for another, but it is their willingness to do so that demonstrates “GREATER LOVE”.

 **4.** The issue then is just how far does your love for another extend, in reality?

**II. “GREATER LOVE” IS ULTIMATE LOVE:**

 **A.**  **Time is The Ultimate Gift to Express Love:**

**ILLUS.:** Time spent in thinking of others is “love time.” You can love someone over miles or years (even beyond the grave) by taking time to think about them and their needs. I think of my wife in Heaven every day and night. Of course, she has no needs now. (We were nearly always present with each other on earth. Wherever I went Shirley went…soul winning, vacations, at home, in church, etc. When she became an invalid, I was her caregiver and had to think of her needs and adjust my needs to hers, to literally give my time [representing my life] to her.)

**III. “GREATER LOVE” EXPRESSES ITSELF:**

 **A.** **Tenderness & Affection Should Be Shared:**

 **1.** Those we love should know it.

 **2.** Notes, letters, calls, and personal expressions show our love.

 **B.** **Love for Others Reflects Love for Christ:**

**ILLUS.:** Couples wear rings as symbols of their relationship. Jesus gave us an insignia of our relationship to Him…our love for each other.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

**IV. “GREATER LOVE” IS OFTEN UNRECOGNIZED & UNRETURNED:**

 **A.** **Those Who Love Least Are Often Perceived as Loving Most:**

 **1.** The flesh cannot perceive spiritual characteristics.

  **2.** Those known as “preachers of love” may be false prophets or at least loveless!

 **a.** They refuse to preach “negatively” against sin.

 **b.** They refuse to rebuke wrong, point out error, reprove the wayward, etc. (Osteen, etc.)

 **B.** **Those Who Love Most Are Often Perceived as Loving Least:**

  **1.** True love is of God, thus the world cannot recognize it; the worldly concept of syrupy “love” or the sensual, sexy,vlustful, concept of love is ungodly, sinful and counterfeit.

  **2.** Those known as “prophets of doom” or “negative preachers” or “hellfire & damnation” preachers” may be castigated as unloving, when in reality they are expressing their love for the lost.

 **a.** Thus true love must be given without the expectation of reciprocation.

 **b.** Thus love must be given when not returned or when the lover is heartbroken over love unrequiited:

 **1)** It is better to love than to be loved.

 **2)** If your happiness is controlled by being loved you will be disappointed if that love is withdrawn.

 **3)** It is better to find your joy in loving and thus avoid disappointment or heartbreak.

1 John 4:16-21 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

**ILLUS.:** A picture in the newspaper showed a woman bending over the body of her husband whom she had just killed. She had his head cradled in her lap as she wept. The caption reported her saying: “Oh, how I love you!”

 **B. There are several things wrong with this kind of “love”:**

 **1)** It is obviously phony…love doesn’t harm.

 **2)** It is surely selfish…love gives, it doesn’t take.

 **3)** It is certainly unbiblical…love doesn’t destroy its object.

**TRANS.:** The Christian too often has a defective love or a worldly, rather than a biblical concept of love. I would like to set forth some principles to help us define what biblical or “TRUE” or “GREATER LOVE” demands.

**V. “GREATER LOVE” DEMANDS AN INVESTMENT:**

 **A. An Investment of Time:**

 **1.** We need to take the time for those we truly love.

**ILLUS.:** Even a small child picks up the signal of rejection and lack of love when we fail to take time to talk to him, notice his accomplishments, or pay attention to him. It is the quality more than the quantity of time which is important. (Some moms & dads spend quantities of time with their kids at home while the TV blares but there is no real time spent with the children!) Dad and mom often must work, but they must give whatever time they can to their children. Not just be home but take time to be with them.

Every one of our children and grandchildren could count on my wife and I to drop whatever we were doing whenever they called, if at all possible, to give of our time and assistance for any emergency or need.

 **2.** Time is the equivalent of life measured by the clock and calendar.

 **a.** Thus time shared is an expression of love since it involves our most precious commodity…our life.

 **b.** We need to borrow Hallmark’s motto: “When you care enough to give the very best” – and apply it to time &vthus love.

 **B. An Investment of Substance:**

 **1.** The giving of gifts may be an expression of our love (but never a substitute for love).

 **2.** Money represents our time and so a gift purchased with money may only be a substitute for the more meaningful investment of our time.

 **a.** Perhaps the best gifts are those we alone can give: a personal note, a handmade gift; something only we canngive.

 **b.** The greatest gift is the gift of ourselves; our friendship, fellowship, attention, provisions, and our time.

 **c.** But as in our text verse, the ultimate gift to demonstrate our love is to lay down our life for the one loved.

**CONCL.:** 👉How do YOU measure the degree of your love for the person or persons you claim to love? Are you willing to give your life, your time, (which includes, and is a measure of, your life) for them? Is the measure of your love based on what someone can do for you, what they can give you, or perhaps only the degree of love they express to you?

 👉What can you give to a person you claim to love that expresses your love? Does that person(s) you claim to love know it by what you do or give, to express it? How much of your life (time) do you invest in your friendship relationship?

 👉Do you only do what is expected of you, or do you go beyond to GREATER LOVE? Is your love merely sensual or would you truly be willing to lay down your life for them, even when they may not or cannot reciprocate?