

DON'T LOVE ME THAT MUCH!

or

"TRUE LOVE"

TEXT: *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.*

THESIS: To delineate the demands of "true love" in the context of Scripture.

INTRO.: A. 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!"* Please **"DON'T LOVE ME THAT MUCH!"**

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. Today I would like to set forth some principles to help us define what biblical or **"TRUE LOVE"** demands.

I. TRUE LOVE DEMANDS AN INVESTMENT:

A. An Investment of Time:

1. We need to take the time for those we 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 must work, but he must give whatever time he can to his children. Not just be home, but take time to be with them.

Every one of our children and grandchildren can count on my wife and I to drop whatever we are doing whenever they call, if at all possible, to give of our time 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 & thus love.

B. An Investment of Substance:

1. The giving of gifts may be an expression of our love (but never a substitute).
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 can give.
- b. The greatest gift is the gift of ourselves; our friendship, fellowship, attention, provisions, etc.

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.

II. TRUE 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.*

III. TRUE 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, lustful 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.
 - 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:
 - 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 heart- break.

IV. TRUE LOVE GIVES ITS OBJECTS ITS NEEDS, NOT ITS WANTS:

A. Discipline Is A Part Of True Love:

1. The parent who disciplines may be considered harsh or unloving.
2. The pastor who dares to reprove & rebuke may be considered unloving.

ILLUS.: The parent who gives in to his child is not expressing biblical or true love. The pastor who refuses to take a stand is not expressing biblical or true love.

The parent who refuses the immunization shots because they "hurt" is not a loving parent. The pastor who refuses to preach the truth because it will make him unpopular & folks may leave the church is not a loving pastor.

We all want what is bad for us (& even demand it), & avoid what we need & is good for us.

B. Defining Relationships Is an Aid to True Love:

1. Making a list of human relationships will aid in setting their boundaries.
2. Such a list will also determine priorities and enable one to develop each relationship to its fullest potential

ILLUS.: I am a father, husband, son, brother, pastor and friend to others. Each should be a love relationship and must be carefully developed without conflict.

3. Love based on human characteristics may lead to disaster, and loving those who hate the Lord, His Word, His Son, etc. - we are to love their souls not their characteristics.

V. TRUE LOVE LOVES THE UNVLOVELY:

A. If You Love Because Of The Object, Your Love Will Be Lost When the Object Changes:

1. We are not to love because he/she is pretty, handsome, nice, honest, etc.

ILLUS.: If you love her because she is "sweet" you will stop loving her when she is not sweet! If you love him because he is "kind" you will stop loving him when he is unkind.

2. Our love should not be based on the condition of the one loved, but because of the condition of the lover.

B. If You Love Because Of The Object, Your Love Will Be Directed Away from Those Who Need Your Love the Most:

ILLUS.: Jesus loved the unlovely; the poor, lame, blind, deaf, soiled and sinful. To be like Him we must do likewise.

1. If you love because of the object, your love cannot increase unless the object becomes more loveable; your power to increase your love will be limited.
2. If you love because Christ has placed love in your heart, then your love can increase as you respond to Christ's prompting and an "enlarged heart."

CONCL.: Please don't love me as much as the lady who killed her husband. But I do want & need your love. I want & need to love you, if I am to be Christ's disciple. And so do you.

Do you have **"TRUE LOVE?"**