

Three Kinds Of Love: If Love, Anyway Love, And Because Love

Love is a many splendid thing according to an old song. Unfortunately love that is spoken of in songs and poems, and even God's love can be greatly misunderstood. God's love is much different than man's idea of love.

God's love is an "anyway" love. Sinful, rebellious man did not love God but He sent His Son anyway" (Jn. 1:10-11; 3:16). God sends the sun and rain upon them "anyway" (Matt. 5:44-45;48). God sent His Son to die on the cross for them "anyway" (1 Jn. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). While we were yet sinners He (God) sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins (Rom. 5:8;1 Jn. 4:10).

The Bible says "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). While we, sinful man, had no love for God He sent His Son. If we have a heart for the light, the truth, and the love of God we in turn love Him "because" He first loved us. **"Because" love** is good stuff but we don't truly understand God's love "if" we only love those who meet our approval, are never wrong or sinful toward us, or never make a poor or bad decision that affects us. "He who does not love his brother abides in death" (1 Jn.4:14).

According to scripture the measure of whether a Christian is living God's love is especially seen towards one's enemies and those they are closest to; fellow Christians, friends, family, spouse, and children. During my early years of counseling it was a shock to find out that among failing Christian marriages the husband or wife treated people outside their homes, and even strangers with more consideration, understanding, and kindness than their own family. In this way they were no different in marriage from people who were not Christians. God's love (agape) is greatly lacking when that occurs for that is the way of the world or the carnal man!

The way of God is expressed in such scriptures as, "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it ... let each of you in particular so love his own wife as himself" (Eph. 5:25, 33). "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them (the wives) with understanding, giving honor to the wife ... that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7). The way of God expressed to wives is, "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). And, "... let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Eph. 5:33).

Christ has "anyway" love for the church His bride, cherishing and nourishing her in spite of the fact she is made up of Christians who make mistakes, make poor decisions, and who sin. Christian husbands and wives are to live and extend "anyway" love to each other. When a Christian husband makes a mistake, is unwise, or sins, they don't treat themselves hatefully or spitefully. **Christians are usually real considerate towards themselves and are to extend the same to their spouses.** The Christian who is hateful and inconsiderate towards themselves is a person with serious problems and does not understand God's love. A Christian wife typically respects herself in spite of making mistakes, poor decisions, or sinning. She is called to extend that kind of respect to others, even to her husband.

**We don't truly understand God's love
if we only love those who meet
our approval, are never wrong
or sinful toward us,
or never disappoint or hurt us.**

The Christian must be willing to exercise their will in repentance of fleshly desires (self centered and carnal desires). 2 Corinthians 7:10 speaks of two kinds of sorrow. "For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death Godly sorrow results in a Christian embracing God's **anyway**" love and sharing it with everyone, beginning with their home. Godly sorrow results in a Christian rejecting the world's "if" love behavior that acts and reacts towards other people in a way that in effect says, "When you do what I want, then I will treat you kindly. If you meet my expectations, then I will love you. If you meet my demands, then I will treat you considerately. If you do what I approve of, then I will be nice to you." How different God's love is from man's idea of love which is often formed during early childhood.

God is speaking of having "anyway" love and putting off "if" love when He says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21) Man's "**if**" love is not love at all, but is a tool of manipulation, or a vehicle of vengeance and retribution. It is the "kind of love" that the worldly or carnal man knows. Oh, how this world needs Christians who will truly live and spread God's "**anyway**" love.

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