

What Love Will Do

To love and be loved is the greatest _____ of life. God loves us, but He wants us to love _____ and to love _____. Love matters. The Scriptures reveal the best and the right way to _____ other people. The golden rule found in Matthew 7:12 says, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do _____ to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Treat _____ the way that you want to be treated. Whether it's in marriage, in parenting, or in friend to friend, this is the kind and good _____. Everything in the Bible is written for our best interests!

First John 4:7-11 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is _____ God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who doesn't love does not _____ God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might _____ through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our _____. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

The great love that God shows us provides an _____ to follow. God didn't withhold His Son Jesus from becoming a _____ for our sins. Every blessing that we _____ comes from His hand. That ought to lead us to love! First John 4:19 simply says, "We love because he (that is, God) _____ loved us." Our faith and our love for Christ arises from the _____ where Jesus showed His great love for us. We love Christ because He loved us. We love others, because we love Christ and Christ loves us. That's the Lord's way!

Our reading today comes from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians 13:1-3.

Without love we are an _____ shell. After Paul spoke of several miraculous gifts, he spoke of a more _____ way. He then described the superior way of _____, which gives us the greatest meaning to our lives. Each of us were made to love and be loved. Love is more valuable than any spiritual _____, more than speaking in tongues, more than prophecy, more than miraculous knowledge, more than faith to work miracles, and more than giving all your possessions to feed the poor, and even more than giving your body to be burned. Without love, I'm just a noisy gong that gives nothing more than making a _____. Without love I am _____. Without love, what I do profits nothing. Love makes the _____ between existing and living. Many people long to be loved, but the love we are describing is not the love that you _____ but the love you _____. God treasures the person who knows how and generously gives love. God treasures the one who sacrifices himself for Him and for the blessing of others. Love shows the difference between _____ and Christianity. The pagan religions of ancient times _____ their gods and were afraid to offend their gods, so that they could avoid a disaster. They kept their gods at a _____. They never considered their god as a god who could _____ them, only a god whom they must appease. Thankfully, we know that our God loves us and watches over us, even in the harshest _____. Micah 7:18 asks, "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his _____ forever, because he delights in steadfast love." God's love is loyal love that never stops.

Because God loves us, He wants us to love Him. God's love for us is a greater thing than we can _____. First John 4:16 says, "So we have come to know and to _____ the love that God has

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for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” The Lord Jesus described the Father’s love, “For God so loved the world, that He _____ His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be _____ through Him” (John 3:16-17).

We can say with David, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his _____, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with _____ so that your youth is renewed like the eagles” (Psalm 103:1-5). David observed in verse 11, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so _____ is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.” Again, David says, “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who _____ his covenant and remember to do his commandments” (verses 17 and 18).

The love of God, however, is never a one-way _____. God wants us to love Him too. Mark 12:28-31 says: “And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he (that is, Jesus) answered them well, asked him, ‘Which commandment is the _____ important of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall _____ the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your _____ as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

God grieves when those whom He loves wonder _____ from Him and turn to idols and sin. James 4:4,5 says, “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the _____ is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a _____ of the world makes himself an _____ of God. Or do you suppose it’s of no purpose that the Scripture says that ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us’”? God wants our love and our _____. He wants a close loving relation with each of us.

Part of loving God comes in the form of loving _____ people. The Lord Jesus said, “A _____ commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. And by this all men will _____ that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). One of the marks of _____ Christianity is love for others. When we possess love for God and for others, we find the _____ that love brings. Loving others yields the greatest of blessings! Here’s what love will do for you!

First, love will warm a cold _____. It’s discouraging to hear about people whose hearts have grown cold toward God and cold toward their fellow man. The opposite of love is not _____ but apathy, unfeeling. When people grow self-centered and don’t _____ how they treat others, that’s not love. Love isn’t part of their life. When people come into close contact with Christ and the cross their heart can _____.

Hard hearts can _____! Love can _____ your heart, make you alive and able to feel again. People can change! God told Israel, “Repent and _____ from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no _____ in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live” (Ezekiel 18:30-32). We can awaken and get our hearts right with God.

First John 3:16-18 says, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we _____ to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s _____ and he sees his brother in _____, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us

not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” The love of God awakens our _____ for those in need. It moves us to make a difference, even with our _____.

The Lord Jesus said, “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, _____ those who curse you, _____ for those who abuse you. To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from the one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so for them” (Luke 6:27-31). You’ll find that you are most _____ when you love God and love other people.

Second, love sacrifices its will for another’s _____ interest. First Corinthians 13:5 says love “does not _____ its own.” Love puts itself _____ and others _____. Love seeks to _____ others more than it seeks to “win.” Philippians 2:3-4 says, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in _____ count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Love shows sympathy and empathy. I’ve always appreciated the prayer of Francis of Assisi, who said: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your _____. Where there is hatred, let me _____ love; where there is injury, pardon; and where there is doubt, _____; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, _____. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.”

We must _____ the words of Ephesians 4:31-32: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be _____ to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Again, Paul said, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must _____. And above all these put on love, which _____ everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:12-14).

Third, love always seeks reconciliation. The Lord doesn’t want anyone to be _____ but to be close to every person. The Father in heaven sent Jesus His Son to _____ for sinners, so that they could be reconciled. First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good, and it’s pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the _____.” God wants a close relationship with us, as our _____ in heaven. Jesus wants a close relationship as our _____. Like the father of the prodigal son, God is keeping His eye out for us to _____ to Him. Let’s stop fighting and make _____ with God. Let’s also be at peace with _____. The Word of God says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with _____ men” (Romans 12:18). That’s not always easy, but love reaches out to overcome the _____ of life. That may mean talking to others to _____ conflicts and, if needed, forgiving them. Love finds out the _____ truth before it accuses or complains. It doesn’t _____ with slander. The Lord Jesus said, “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in _____; and if he listens to you, you’ve won your brother” (Matthew 18:15).

You may realize that you are the offender and _____ for forgiveness. The Lord Jesus said, “If therefore you’re presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be _____ to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matthew 5:23-24). Love values talking “to” someone over telling everyone else “about” someone who hurt you. Gossip is gossip no matter who is

doing it. Proverbs 16:28 says, “A perverse man _____ strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends.”

Love says what needs to be said. Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a _____, but deceitful are the kisses of an _____.” Honesty from a true friend, even when it _____, is more loving than deceitful flattery to your face and slander behind your back. God doesn’t treat us that way. The devil will tell you what you want to _____, whether it’s true or not, but the Lord will tell you what you _____ to hear to bless your life, even if it hurts for a lifetime. God wants to bless you with His love and grace, and He wants you to love Him. Will you?

“Tell me whom you _____,” someone wrote, “And I will tell you who you _____.” Whom we love or what we love does _____ us and tells the world what our priorities are. If we love the Lord, people can _____ it in our words and our lives. When we love our families, our families know it; but if we fail to love our families, our families know it too! Love can _____ your life, if you let it. When love is in your heart, you’ll do the right thing toward God and toward others. You’ll bless the lives of everyone around you! And if you want to love, look to Jesus.

Come to Jesus, see His _____ of love on the cross, and follow His teachings! You’ll find out what loving and being loved really is. Love is not so much a _____ as it is a _____! Love is more than a _____; it’s how we _____ ourselves to others in order to bless them. Any response to God must be _____ in love. The most important response we have is love with all of our hearts, our souls, our minds, and our strength (Mark 12:30).

This great love should lead us to faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the gospel, the kind of faith willing to confess it publicly. This great love should lead us to turn from our sinful ways and to follow the teaching of our Lord. But we’ve not fully obeyed the gospel message until we’re baptized into Christ, united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. When we’re baptized in water, God washes away our sins, makes us His children, and gives us newness of life. In baptism we’re born again. Oh, let your love bring you to Christ.