

This Worldly Spirit Seeks to Distract You From the True Meaning of Love

February is traditionally the month where love seems to be the topic of discussion. With Valentine's day coming on the 14th, many are thinking about whom they love, whom they used to love and whom they want to love. So, I decided to ask the question, what is love?

Many would point to 1 Corinthians 13, the "love chapter" or John 3:16, the "love verse", but still the question remains, what is love? Is love a noun or a verb? I believe the answer is yes. Love is a noun and love is a verb, but one thing love is not is unconditional. Unconditional, according to , means "not subject to any conditions." So, what is love?

Love is a noun and a verb. 1 John 4:7-9 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

Love is a noun, because God is love. Love is a verb, because God sent His one and only Son into the world. If love was unconditional, if God could just declare He is love and never show that love, is it really love? The answer is no. Love cannot be love unless it has a corresponding action of love.

One reason people like the idea of love being unconditional is that they have bought into the lie that something is free. Nothing is free. Freedom is not free—just ask the veteran or Jesus who died on the cross for your sins, so you could be free. Your freedom cost Him His life. It may seem like it's free or unconditional to you, but someone, somewhere paid a price for everything you believe is free or unconditional. If

love was unconditional, why did Jesus have to be obedient unto to death, even death on a cross? (Phil. 2); if love is unconditional, why were there two trees in the garden?

I have come to realize we like to remain children in our faith and in our lives because we think if we do, we can continue to receive something for nothing. Look at all the things we believe are free: salvation, grace and love, just to name a few. Salvation is a covenant, and ask any married person, covenants are not free, they are very costly; grace is empowerment, not a free for all, just ask the apostle Paul (Romans 6 and 7); and love is not free, as we noted above. If we are going to grow up, we must realize that responsibility and requirements are not striving or living under the law, but rather they come with maturity and a biblical understanding of what love really is.

Whether we realize it or not, we have been immersed in a spirit of lawlessness, which is why we want everything to be free, and when boundaries are set for safety reasons, some will reject them. Love is God, and love has requirements. God required Himself to provide a sacrifice for our sins when He loved us enough to give us a free will. Our government loves us; that is why there are speed limits and traffic lights. Love is not lawlessness, love is having requirements. If love were unconditional, there would be no reason to believe in Jesus Christ as the one and only way to the Father (John 14:6).

When I was a youth pastor, I would tell the parents of my students, l-o-v-e is the boundaries you set so your student feels safe. There is a difference between rules and boundaries, but that is another blog. So, what is love? Love is freedom, love is truth, love is grace, love is power, love is life, love is what will grow us up, but one thing love is not is free. You must choose to love, so if it costs you nothing else in your mind, it costs you your will. For Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

What the world needs is love; what I need is love; what you need is love; and when we understand love, we will never go

back to something masquerading as love. If it has no cost, it has no value. This is love; God is love!

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