

A Greater Love

✘ One of the most beautiful things the Bible says is that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (see Rom. 5:8). He did not wait for us to deserve His love. He loves us unconditionally. To be honest, that's hard for many of us to comprehend because we are so accustomed to having to earn everything in life.

Because of His great, wonderful and intense love for us, God poured His life out for us freely (see Eph. 2:4). *That* is revolutionary love! Real, revolutionary love must give itself because it can never be satisfied doing anything less.

Just as it is God's unconditional love that draws us to Him, so it is our unconditional love toward others in His name that draws others to Him. He wants us to love people the same way He would if He were here in bodily form.

It's impossible for human love to be unconditional, like God's love. But as believers in Jesus Christ we have the love of God in us. We can let that love flow freely, without conditions. Our love fails, but God's does not. Our love comes to an end, but God's does not.

Sometimes I find that although I can't love a person in my own strength I am able to with God's love. I was hurt repeatedly for years by someone. Recently, this person asked me how I felt—if I loved them. I was honestly able to say that although I didn't have

the fond

feelings for them I could have had if things had been different, I did

love them as a child of God and would help them in their need.

The true love of God doesn't depend on feelings—it's

based on decision. I will help those who need help, unless helping them

would ultimately hurt them. They don't have to deserve help.

In fact,

sometimes the less they deserve it the more beautiful the act of

extending love is. It is absolutely freeing to be able to love people

without stopping to ask if they deserve it.

Human love depends on feelings. We love people because

they have been good to us or they loved us first. They make us feel

good about ourselves, or they make our life easier, so we say we love

them. Or we love them because we want them to love us.

But that type of love is based on what they do, and if

they stop doing it, we will probably stop loving them. That kind of

love comes and goes. Many marriages and other personal relationships

are based on that kind of love. We love ice cream because it tastes

good, and we love people because they give us nice Christmas gifts.

God's love is totally different. It isn't based on

anything except God Himself. And when we receive Christ as our Savior

the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (see Rom.

5:5).

When we become partners with God, He expects us to be His representatives and equips us with the love we need to do the job He asks us to do. When human love ends, which is often, God's love is still available to finish what needs to be done.

I heard about a teenager who was drinking and caused an accident that killed a man's wife and child. The man knew God wanted him to forgive the young man who caused the accident, and through much prayer he was able to let the love of God flow through him. That man was a love revolutionary!

We should learn also to look at what people have done to themselves instead of looking just at what they have done to us.

Usually, when a person hurts someone else, he probably has hurt himself at least as much and is suffering some fallout as a result. That's why Jesus said, "'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'" (Luke 23:34, NKJV).

The love of God can't be grasped with the mind—it is a matter of the heart. There is no reason for Him to love us while we are sinning, but He does. God's love is unconditional.

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