

How to Walk in the Authentic Love of Christ

I have made it a priority to study about love in the Word of God. Getting a revelation about how much God loves me and learning to receive His love has been life-changing for me. It's been the key to being able to really enjoy my life because when I received God's love, then I could love others. And I've discovered that the best way—the only way—you can have a happy, powerful life is to get your mind off yourself and do something for someone else. Helping people, being a blessing and adding value to other people's lives is what it means to walk in love and follow the example of Jesus.

Ephesians 5:2 (NIV) says, "Walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Jesus—our perfect and holy Savior—gave His life for us, took all of our sin upon Himself and shed His blood so we could have a personal relationship with Him and become the righteousness of God. That was His gift to us. Once we experience the gift of salvation, our gift to God is how we live our lives.

Jesus says in John 13:34, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." If we will learn how to follow this one commandment, everything else in our lives will fall into place.

Be a Good Samaritan

In Luke Chapter 10, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan to demonstrate what it means to love God and your neighbor as yourself. In verses 30-37, we read that a man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho "when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead" (v. 30b).

A priest and a Levite both passed by him and neither stopped to help. Verse 33 says, "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him." Notice that he "took pity on" this man. He had compassion for him and was moved to do something to help him.

He dressed his wounds and took him to an inn where he could get the care he needed. He paid the innkeeper and told him, "Look after him and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have" (v. 35b).

There are a few things I want you to notice here. First, the Samaritan was traveling the road and was probably going somewhere he needed to be; he had a plan, but he was willing to stop and help this man even if it meant his plan was interrupted. Also, he gave his best effort to make sure the man had good care and then paid for him to get it. He was obviously willing to pay whatever it was going to cost because he told the innkeeper, "When I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have." So he was planning to come back and make sure everything the man needed was covered.

This Is Love!

Jesus is showing us in this story what real love looks like. And 1 Corinthians 13 lists the characteristics of God's love: It is patient and kind, never envious, boastful or inflated with pride; it is not rude, does not insist on its own rights or its own way; it is not self-seeking, touchy or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it and rejoices when right and truth prevail; love bears up under anything that comes and is ever ready to believe the best of every person; its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances ... love never fails!

Now, if you're thinking, *There's no way I can live up to this list!* I want to tell you, "Yes, you can!" You can love others like this because as a born-again Christian, you have

everything you need to be like Jesus. It's not always easy because we have to resist the temptation to be selfish, but 1 John 4:4 says that the Spirit of God, who is in us, is greater than our enemy. So in Christ, we have the power we need to walk by faith and live a life of love.

It's important to understand that God is not expecting you to be perfect in your love walk or to do it alone. He knows you can't do it without His help. What He wants is for you to seek Him through prayer and studying the Word, and as you do, lean on Him for the grace to do what He's asking you to do each day.

God is love, so you can rest in the truth that He is patient with you, He's always with you, He believes in you and will not give up on you. And with God's love in your life, you can learn how to live a life of love! {eoa}