

The Simple Truth About True Love

The Bible teaches us that it's God's will for us to help hurting people. In John 13:34-35, Jesus says, "I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another. By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves]" (AMP). Matthew 22:37-38 says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect). This is the ... first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself" (AMP).

The love message is the power of the gospel. It's so simple: Love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself. We often think we need someone to love us, but what we really need is someone to love. And the world is desperate for real love, so it isn't hard to find someone who needs to be loved.

We live in a society that drives people to selfishness. So much of the advertising we see and hear influences us to want more and more and to never be satisfied with what we have. But the more selfish and self-centered we are, the less power we have to do good and help others.

The good news is we have what we need in Christ to overcome a selfish, "What about me?!" mindset and lifestyle. We have the power of God's love! It's the answer to every dilemma and problem in our society today. And as Christians, our goal is to represent Christ in the world and show His love.

What Is True Love?

Love is not just a feeling, or a theory, or a nice word. It's action—it's the way you treat people, what you do for others.

Love will always cost you something: time, energy, effort, money, giving up your pride, doing what's right when you don't feel like it, keeping a good attitude when you don't get your way.

Loving the way God loves means you love when there's nothing in it for you; it's all about giving out and not expecting anything in return. We're called to *outreach*, not *in-reach*. Real love is about dying to self and living to love others.

Before you can love others, you have to experience God's love in your own life, because you can't give away something you don't have. Then you have to be willing to ask God to teach you to love the way He loves. When you do this, God will enable you to reach out and help someone else. I know this works because I've lived it.

Live to Love!

I used to be selfish, self-centered, always thinking about how I could get my way. And I was miserable. See, I loved God and wanted to love people, but no matter how hard I tried to be sweet and nice to everybody, all of my trying was getting me nowhere. I was cranky, hard to get along with and impatient. God showed me the problem was that I didn't like myself because of the shame of my past. I grew up in an abusive home, and I felt guilty, condemned and ashamed because of it. I had to accept God's love for me before I could love anyone else.

So I decided to study God's love in the Word, pray for God to change my heart, and confess what His Word says about His love for me. Every day I would say out loud, "God loves me," and I would say it over and over to purposely keep this truth in my heart throughout the day. After a year of doing this, I finally got a revelation about God's love for me.

Now I am able to receive God's love and love others the way Jesus taught us to love. I don't do it perfectly all the time, but I've come a long way and am making progress every day. My

prayer is, "God, show me how I can help others. Make me a blessing everywhere I go. I want to live to love You and others."

In my personal life, I try to make it my business to add value to everybody I come in contact with. I can honestly say that learning how to love others with God's love has made me the happiest I've ever been. The truth is you can't be selfish and be happy or have peace.

Make it your goal each day to pursue God's love and then give it away. First Corinthians 14:1 (AMP) says to "eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest]." So go after it with all your might, and ask God to make you a blessing everywhere you go. You can do something to help someone. You can live to love, just like Jesus.