

What Real Love Looks Like

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 learned how to receive God's love, I could love others.

This is so important, because 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 5:2a (NKJV) says, "Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a 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. And once we experience the gift of salvation, our gift to God is following Jesus' example in the way we live our lives.

Jesus says in John 13:34b (NIV), "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. When we live a life filled with God's love, then we can become everything we're created to be.

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In Luke 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 to Jericho when "he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away,

leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30b).

A priest and a Levite both passed by him and neither stopped to help. Verse 33 (NKJV) says, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion." Notice that he "had compassion" for this man and he 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, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you" (Luke 10:35b).

There are a few things I want you to notice here. First, the Samaritan was traveling the road and was probably going to a place where 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, "Whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you." So he was planning to come back and make sure everything the man needed was covered.

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Jesus is showing us in this story what real love looks like. First Corinthians 13 lists the characteristics of God's love: It is patient and kind, never jealous, boastful or rude; it does not demand its own way, is not irritable, and keeps no record of being wronged. Love rejoices when truth wins out. It never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance. 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 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 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 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 He will not give up on you. With God's love in your life, you can learn how to live a life of love.

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