

The Transforming Power of **Love**

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Today, we will talk about the transforming
power of love from the pages of the Holy
Scripture.



Millions, and even billions of people around the world have not yet experienced the glorious and wonderful life that God promised His people.



Maybe the reason is that they missed the right kind of love in their lives.



Just look around. People are unhappy.
Marriages fail. Families break. Siblings
squabble. Lives are ruined.



Many people look for love and can't find it.
What seems to be the problem?



Maybe because many do not understand the true meaning and essence of love.



The world looks for love in the wrong places.
They are looking for physical and
materialistic love.



People go online to search the meaning of love. They go to dating sites to find someone to love.



Many have the wrong notion of love. People think love is an emotion, a feeling.



People expect love and expect to be loved.
That is why we often hear couples saying
'you do not love me anymore'.



But if they only knew that true love is divine;
that true love comes from God and He is
the originator of LOVE.



Yes, God is love and He is the embodiment of love. Without the proper understanding of the concept of divine love, no one can ever find true love and true happiness.



Love is the greatest transforming power in our lives. God's love transforms the world. He transforms sinners into saints, and enemies into children of God.



Divine love is transformational, it changes lives. Understanding the essence of love – godly love - will transform relationships within our families and everyone around us.



This is the result of our inner transformation
– growing into the likeness of Christ.



Jesus said: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34)



Define Love



Let us try to define love. What is love? Can anyone define it?



Mr. Webster defines love as:

1. A deep and tender feeling of affection for or attachment or devotion to a person or persons.
2. A strong, usually passionate, affection of one person for another, based in part on sexual attraction.
3. A feeling of brotherhood and good will toward other people.



In spite of the three definitions of love in the English language, it is still very broad.



Love Notion



People get their notion of love from love songs. One of the all-time greatest love song popularized by Whitney Houston is entitled: “Greatest Love of All.”



I decided long ago, never to walk in anyone's shadows
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I'll live as I believe
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity
Because the greatest love of all
Is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all
Inside of me
The greatest love of all
Is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
It is the greatest love of all



People learn that loving oneself is the greatest love of all. Therefore, people tend to see love and define love as egocentric and self-interest. Therefore, love becomes self-absorbed, selfish and narcissistic.



Kinds of Love



The Greeks have three (3) different words for love. Love is categorized into 3 types.



1. Eros

Eros love is self-centered. Eros is the root word of “erotic.” Eros is physical love, referring to a husband and wife relationship.



In an Eros relationship, each partner expects a certain kind of love from the other.



Eros is characterized by a measure of physical gratification and desire. When this expectation is not met, the marriage tends to fail.



Sadly, today's marital love is mostly Eros.
God never intended marital love to be just
an erotic expression.



Physical attraction and prowess are not love. God wants a marital relationship that is embodied with sincerity and selflessness that will continue for a lifetime.



2. Philia

Philia is often described as brotherly love. It is one based on friendship, camaraderie, companionship, closeness, familiarity and affinity.



This is the kind of love bonded by amity, trust, respect and goodwill. This two-way mutual rapport makes the loving relationship worthwhile.



3. Agape

Agape is altruistic love. It is selfless, noble, philanthropic, self-sacrificing love. Agape is complete and unselfish love - a love that esteems others better than oneself.



Agape is the most commonly used Greek word for “love” in the New Testament. The best example of Agape love is Jesus Christ.



That is the kind of love we should imitate. In fact, it is the embodiment of Christian Love.



The word “love” appears 176 times in 25 of the 27 books of the New Testament. Out of these 176 occurrences, the word ‘Eros’ was never used.



It wasn't used even when the discussion was about marital relationship. It shows that marital relationship extends beyond erotic love.



The word used by Paul in Ephesians 5 to describe marital love is 'Agape,' absolute, complete and unselfish love.



Of the 176 times “love” was mentioned, the word “Philia” was used 19 times and the remaining 156 was “Agape.”



The overwhelming number of times 'Agape' was used signifies the kind of love the God wants us to possess.



The Bible says God is love. The word used here is Agape.



Love is the very nature of God and those who live in God must live in love. This means we must also exhibit agape love as God does.



Man has the tendency to be selfish, to draw attention to himself and to self-gratify. This is not true love.



True love is outgoing—outward, not selfish.
Love is selfless; always looking after the
welfare of others.



Agape Love is a state of being. This is the kind of love we want to develop in our lives.



What then is love? Love is agape. Love is selfless, noble and self-sacrificing.



There is a song that encapsulates the essence of love. The song is entitled: Love Isn't Love Until It Is Given Away. The lyrics go like this:



Smile's not a smile until it wrinkles your face
Bell's not a bell without ringing
A home's not a home when there's nobody
there

A song's not a song without singing

Love isn't love till you give it away

Love isn't love till it's free

The love in your heart

Wasn't put there to stay

Oh love isn't love till you give it away



You might think love is a treasure to keep
Feeling to cherish and hold
But love is a treasure for people **to share**
You keep it by letting it go
Love isn't love till you give it away
Love isn't love till it's free
The love in your heart
Wasn't put there to stay
Oh love isn't love till you give it away



Cause love can't survive
When it's hidden inside
And love was meant to be shared
Love isn't love till you give it away
Love isn't love till it's free
The love in your heart
Wasn't put there to stay
Oh love isn't love till you give it away



This song captures perfectly the true essence of love. Love is never about ourselves. Love is about the other person.



Love that is hoarded is self-love – it is narcissism – and is the exact opposite of the essence of true love.



Love is a state of being wherein we care for others as much as we care for ourselves.
Love isn't love when it is not given away.



The apostle Paul eloquently wrote about the true essence of love. He devoted one whole chapter to describe true love.



Read 1 Corinthians 13 and you will realize that love is indeed love when you care for the other person as much as you care for yourself. Agape – the word used for love – meant outgoing love for others.



1 Corinthians 13:1-3 say that without love everything loses its meaning. Without love every deed is only for self-gratification and vanity. Paul went further to describe what true and selfless love is:



1. Patient

Selfless love is indulgent and forgiving. It is not easily provoked.



Love waits, wishes and longs to see a resolution to a problem and the reformation of a person. All because love is out going and is conscious of the concern towards to the other person.



You are able to suffer long because you love the other person more than yourself. You wait for him and give him space, time to recover, to heal and to reform.



2. Kind

True and sincere love is never harsh. It is gracious, meek, humble understanding, and courteous. It is a love that is willing to tend favors and offer opportunities for the good of others.



3. Does not envy

Envy is spite and jealousy. Real love is not.



A bountiful love is not grieved when others are better off than us. Instead, we share in their joy and rejoice in their welfare and success.



4. Does not boast, it is not proud

Love subdues pride and vainglory. Is not puffed up with pride, arrogance or self-righteousness.



An accommodating love does not look down on others, or belittle others, or treat others with contempt and scorn.



True love esteems others better than our selves. Instead, we look up to those whom we love with dignity, honor and respect.



5. Does not dishonor others

Caring love is attentive and protective. It is careful not to be rude or become improper.



True love is sensitive to the feelings others.
It will always act and behave justly with
fairness, courtesy and good will towards
the betterment others.



6. Not self-seeking

True love is an enemy to selfishness.

Genuine love for other is never self-seeking. It has no desire to seek its own praise, profit, or pleasure.



Love never seeks its own to the hurt of others, or with the neglect of others. The hallmark of selfless love is the neglect of its own for the sake of others.



7. Not easily angered

True love will never be angry without a cause, neither impute ill-will upon others, nor leave room for anger and rage.



Hatred is self-motivated. Love is not. It is hard to be angry with those you truly love.



True love considers the perspective of the other and is easy to drop a resentment and be reconciled to the one we love.



8. Keeps no record of wrong

Charity thinks no evil. It cherishes no malice, or gives way to revenge: it is never mischievous, or inclined to revenge; it does not suspect evil of others, or impute malice.



True love is not apt to be jealous and suspicious; it will never indulge suspicion without proofs, never be forward to suspect ill. It will always think of the best and positive in all things and circumstances of all people.



9. Does not delight in evil

It takes no pleasure in doing injury. It thinks not evil of anyone. It does not delight and rejoice in doing harm and mischief to others. Nor will it rejoice at the faults and failings of others.



10. Rejoices with the truth

In love there is no lie, no deception, no falsehood, no guile and no deceit. True love is pure, honest, loyal faithful and true. It is sincerity towards other.



11. Always protects

True love is a shelter. It is a shield and a blanket of security. It is a safe haven for the protection of others.



Love covers all and true love drives away fear. It provides safety and comfort to everyone he cares about. Always ready to help and to assist and never letting go.



12. Always trusts

Key element of love is trust. By trust we mean trusting others. Love does not doubt. It is not plagued with suspicion and distrust of others.



Love is to believe and to trust fellowmen.
Holding firmly the belief in the goodness of
others.



13. Always hopes

Love is positive, constructive and helpful.

Love hopes for the best well being of others and a source of encouragement and motivation. True love gives hope and support to those whom they care.



14. Always perseveres

True love is consistent day-in and day-out; year-on-year. It is not moody, temperamental or grumpy. Real love does not change or wane because it is not about you but about others.



15. Love never fails

Love is dependable. You are there 24x7.
There is no good time, bad time but all the
time.



True love does not forsake and does not abandon, but always abides and is completely reliable. True love is steadfast and unfailing towards the other person.



Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that love in its truest essence is to esteem others better than ourselves.



As the song goes: Love is not love until it is given away. Yes, love is not about us rather it is about the other person.



Summation



Equipped with this profound understanding
of love we should use it to transform our
lives.



Once there were two brothers. They farmed together in a parcel of land. The brothers lived in separate houses but met each day in the fields and worked together.



One brother was married and had a large family. The other lived alone. However, they divided the harvest from the fields equally.



Each night one brother gave serious thought to the other. The brother without a family asked himself why he was taking half the harvest when his brother was struggling to support a large family.



With SINCERE LOVE in his heart, this brother had a plan to help his married brother. Each night he filled a huge basket with a portion of his own share of the harvest, slipped over to his brother's storage area and unloaded the basket there.



The married brother with the large family often wondered if his single brother's share was enough, reasoned that his brother would not have children to care for him in his old age.



The married brother's heart went out to his brother because he loves him very much. So each night, he also filled a basket with a good measure of his share of the harvest and sneaked quietly to his brother's storage shed and there left it as a silent offering.



One night in their passage, the brothers
met.....each holding as basket full of
the days harvest.



When each told the other what he was doing, they both cried and embraced each other in the dark.



They both realized that their greatest wealth lies in the love that they had for one another.



It is a heart-warming story.

Does the story sound like a fiction story straight from children's book to you? Why does true, pure, and selfless love seem to exist only in fairy tales?



Isn't this the kind of love God expects
all of us to possess with increasing
measure?

Something within our hearts tells us
this is the agape love that we need to
know, understand and practice.



It is a sad sight to see sibling rivalry, and to see jealousy and hatred ruin relationships.

This sight is too common in today's society. The problem may revolve around inheritance, money, envy or any kind of misunderstanding and/or perceived inequality. This problem exists in Christian community.



Our notion and understanding of love is wrong. It is self-centered. But, true and genuine love as shown by Christ is selfless and out-going; less of ourselves and more of others.



If you are in a relationship that seems unfavorable to you, you may be the problem. The fault may lie in us and not the other person.



If our love is self-seeking and not altruistic;
then the issue surely lies with us. And that
is not real love.



If you truly love your parents, children, spouse, siblings, relatives, friends and associates, you are applying the love described by Paul.



You are patient and kind to them. You have no envy, no pride, not boastful, but humble, respectful, not self-seeking, not angered, keep no record of wrongs, do not think evil of others but rejoices with the truth. Your desire is to protect, to trust, to hope for the best, and consistency of pursuing love; then your love will never fail.



As the song goes “love is not love until it is given away.” Remember that true love is selfless and out-going. True and genuine love is to esteem others better than yourself.



In here are the principles of:

1. Turn the other cheek
2. Mourn with those who mourn
3. Bless those who persecute you
4. Love your enemy
5. Not let the sun down upon your anger
6. Love others as yourself



Jesus said in John 14:13 “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.”



The expression of love is to give love. In the process, you will find true and abundant life filled with agape godly love.



Let the love of God, true, selfless and genuine transform our lives. And, experience the glorious and wonderful life that God promised His people.



END

