

LOVING OTHERS



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'Loving Others'
by
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LOVING OTHERS

Love Motivates Everything God Does

1 John 4:8 tells us that – ‘*God is love.*’ Love is His very being – it’s not only what He is, but who He is. Therefore love motivates everything He does. The Greek word for God’s kind of love is ‘agape’. It means sacrificial, unconditional love. John 3:16 says – ‘*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*’ It was His love for us that brought Jesus to this earth to die in our place so we could be forgiven and enter into eternal life. That’s being born-again. (To read about being born-again, go to the end of this booklet)

Love Should Motivate Everything We Do

1 John 4:11 says – ‘*Beloved, if God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another.*’ When we’ve really accepted God’s love for us and allowed it to take root in our hearts, then we will just naturally love Him back and want to share the same sort of love with others. I’m not saying we will always do it perfectly or that it’s always easy, but it will be our desire.

Look at this rather sobering passage in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – ‘*If I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but don’t have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but don’t have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burnt, but don’t have love, it profits me nothing.*’ We can do the right things, even amazing

things, but if we do them without agape love, they count for nothing in God's eyes! Love is of supreme importance to God.

Love is More than Emotions

Today we think of love as an emotion. We either love someone or we don't – it's not under our control. But when Jesus tells us to love others, He isn't talking about emotions, He's talking about sacrificial, unconditional love that leads to actions. The Bible says it's even possible to teach people to love! Titus 2:4 tells the older women to – '*train the young wives to love their husbands, to love their children.*' God's love is so much more than emotions. Don't get me wrong – God made us to have emotions and He wants us to enjoy good, healthy ones. But if we base our love for others only on emotions, we're in for a rocky ride.

Jesus says to His disciples in John 13:34 – "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another.*" He commands us to love others in the same way He loves us and emotions may or may not be involved. But the good thing about a command from Jesus, is that He always helps us as we seek to obey and He gives us everything we need to be able to do it. Thank You Lord.

Unconditional Loving

God's love for us is totally unconditional. Romans 5:8 says – '*God commends his own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*' And we are called to love others the same way. 1 Peter 4:8 says – '*above all things be earnest in your love amongst yourselves, for love covers a multitude of sins.*' This means that we are to love a person even when they sin. If they hurt us or come against us, we are still to love them.

Loving others doesn't mean that we're to condone the things people do which are wrong. It means loving them in spite of what they do and choosing not to let it affect our love for them. None of us gets everything right all the time. Nor does it mean that we don't use godly wisdom. Sometimes it's unwise to continue in a relationship where trust is broken or there is a risk. And sometimes we need to set boundaries in order to continue. God doesn't ask us to be a doormat – just to keep on loving.

We are called to love the way Jesus loves us – unconditionally. Here's a list in Colossians 3:12-14 of what this kind of love for others looks like – *'Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, humility, and perseverance;¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if any man has a complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so you also do.¹⁴ Above all these things, walk in love, which is the bond of perfection.'*

Does this sound too difficult? It can certainly seem so sometimes but it isn't impossible or God wouldn't ask us to do it. Remember 1 John 4:11 says – *'Beloved, if God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another.'* As we focus on God's love for us, we are better able to love others. In Matthew 10:8 Jesus says – *"Freely you received, so freely give."*

Love in Action

1 John 3:18 says – *'let's not love in word only, or with the tongue only, but in deed and truth.'* If our love doesn't show itself in actions, then it isn't agape love. The Bible describes God's kind of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 – *'Love is patient and is kind. Love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud,⁵ doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked,*

takes no account of evil; ⁶doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. ⁸Love never fails.'

You may be thinking this is all very challenging. If you feel inadequate to love like this, you're not alone. None of us can love others perfectly like this by our own effort. 1 John 4:19 says – '*We love him, because he first loved us.*' Turn your focus on God's love for you. Speak His words of love from the Bible out loud over yourself. Build yourself up in His love for you and love for Him will rise in you and love for others will start to flow.

We Have Love to Give

You may feel you don't have any love to give because no-one has ever shown you love. However difficult that is, remember God's not asking you to love with human love. When you were born-again, God sent His Holy Spirit to live in you. Romans 5:5 says – '*God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*' He has poured His love in us, so we have an infinite amount of agape love to give to others. Choose to believe it. Turn your focus onto God's sacrificial, unconditional love for you and in you. Don't give up when it's hard – thank Him for His wonderful love and allow it to flow out to others.

Love Your Fellow Christians

The command Jesus gave in John 13:34 was to His disciples – "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another.*" Under the New Covenant, we are no longer commanded to love God. He doesn't want us to love Him because we have to. He wants us to love Him genuinely in response to His love for us through Jesus. That

leads to a real love relationship which gives joy to Him and to us. Now His only command is that we love others.

1 John 4:7-8 says – *‘Beloved, let’s love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸He who doesn’t love doesn’t know God, for God is love.’* We can only love others with agape love if we really know we are loved by God. Loving others God’s way doesn't make us born-again – it demonstrates that we are. If someone doesn't have any desire to love their fellow believers with God’s kind of love, we are right to question whether they are truly born-again.

Jesus follows His command with John 13:35 – *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”* He is talking about loving fellow Christians. We know even this isn’t automatically easy. We can still choose to act according to our human nature despite God having given us a new perfect spirit. But Jesus says that when we do love other believers with agape love, it will be a real witness to the world. We can look at all the divisions between churches and within churches and feel it’s impossible. We can encourage others to love and even teach them to, but we can’t force them. Ultimately, we are only responsible for how we love. So let’s do our part in loving other believers, and that in itself will speak of God’s love to both others in the church and to those outside it.

Love Your Neighbour

In Mark 12:31 Jesus says – *“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* A lawyer then asked Him who his neighbour was. Jesus replied by telling him the parable of the Good Samaritan. It’s the story of a man who was robbed, stripped, beaten and left half dead while he was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. A priest

passed by but ignored him and so did a Levite. But a Samaritan saw him and went to great lengths to help him and get him somewhere safe and then paid for his care. Jesus asked the lawyer in Luke 10:36-37 – *“Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbour to him who fell amongst the robbers?”* ³⁷He said, *“He who showed mercy on him.”* Then Jesus said to him, *“Go and do likewise.”*

The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other, yet it was the Samaritan who helped the man. He was willing to lay aside any negative emotions he held about Jews in order to show agape love to a man who needed help. Our neighbour is anyone who needs help.

Even Love Your Enemies!

In Matthew 5:43-44 Jesus said something which must have been startling to the crowd who were listening – *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’* ⁴⁴*I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you.”* The people may have been able to understand loving those who were close to them and people in need, but loving their enemies?!

Remember God’s kind of love is sacrificial and unconditional. He’s not saying that what our enemies do doesn't matter. Romans 12:19-21 says – *“Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord.”* ²⁰Therefore *“If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head.”* ²¹*Don’t be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.’* He's saying we need to love the same way He loves us – unconditionally.

Tough Love

'Tough love' is a phrase which isn't heard much these days. In the past people seemed to know that it was loving to try to turn someone away from things that would be destructive to them. Now political correctness often says it's hate. We have reached the time in history which Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 5:20 – *'Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil!'*

So let's look at what the Bible says about tough love. Leviticus 19:17-18 says – *'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear sin because of him. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'* These verses say it is love to tell someone of their sin – in fact it says it is hate if we don't! To see someone causing significant problems for themselves and possibly others and not help them to see that what they're doing is wrong, is hate; while to help them turn away from it is love. The important thing is the way we do it. We need to do it out of love for people, not anger or condemnation or superiority. Ephesians 4:15 tells us we should always be – *'speaking truth in love.'* Speaking the truth in love is such an important principle. We can point out someone's sin by condemning them or we can do it motivated by love because we don't want to see them messing their lives up. Tough love, when done rightly, is part of God's kind of love.

The Circle of Love

Read this passage in 1 John 4:9-12 about the circle of agape love – *'By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has sent his only born Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent*

his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love has been perfected in us.' Loving others with His kind of love doesn't cause God to love us or live in us, but it proves that He does. We wouldn't have true agape love within us if He wasn't living in us.

God loves us with sacrificial, unconditional love which He demonstrated through Jesus' death for us. And this leads us to love Him back in response. Our love for others will then flow with that same agape love, which in turn makes us more aware of God's love for us. And so the circle continues – an upward spiral of love. There's no better way to live.

Being Born-Again

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you become born-again. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *'If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'* Say this prayer out loud and believe it in your heart – “Jesus, I declare that You are Lord and that God raised You from the dead to live forevermore. Thank You for dying for me personally. I receive my forgiveness and my salvation now. Thank You Jesus, my Lord and Saviour.”

You are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. All your sins are forgiven, past, present and future, and you have a new perfect spirit. And after this life is over, you'll live in love, peace and joy with your Father God for ever.

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God is all about love –
it motivates everything He does.
Jesus has told us to love others
the way He has loved us,
but we know that it isn't always easy.

Discover God's kind of sacrificial, unconditional love
and how we can choose to love people God's way
even when it's difficult.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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