**Tough Love**

*1 John 4:7-11*

**Introduction**

1. Love is something we are commanded to possess. It is a goal of growth, and is that which pertains to the nature of God, and therefore is expected of us as His children (**cf. 2 Peter 1:5-7**).
2. The world romanticizes the love of the Bible.
   1. This is a result of the hardness of hearts.
   2. This is a result of ignorance.
3. Love is not just a feeling; it is manifested in action, and can never fail (**cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**). It never fails because it is always a choice, and it is the choice God wants us to make.
4. The love which God wants us to engage in is more aptly described as Tough Love, or love that hurts, and is sometimes difficult to practice. (**cf. Ephesians 5:1-2** – *It is that which drew Jesus to the cross. Sacrificial, it wasn’t easy, nor was it pretty.*)
   1. This love, although the most powerful and enduring, the world is not interested in.
   2. However, as Christians we must be motivated toward this love.
5. Love is tough when…
6. Deciding to follow Jesus.
   1. **Philippians 3:4-11** – The apostle Paul had much to lose to follow Christ, as did any Jew, but Paul more so.
      1. His mind was not set on the easiest way. (**cf. Matthew 7:13-14**)
      2. His mind was set on the only way. (**cf. John 14:6**)
   2. **Matthew 10:34-39** – Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but this is not through compromise.
      1. Jesus offers peace between God and man.
      2. To attain that peace we have to be willing to leave all and follow Him.
7. Parents discipline children.
   1. **Proverbs 13:24** – This is a prime example of Tough Love.
      1. To withhold discipline is to neglect.
      2. **Parents who say they love their children and do not discipline show an inconsistency.**
   2. **Hebrews 12:7-8, 11** – God treats us like His children, because we ARE His children.
      1. **The discipline He gives us is a sign of love**.
      2. Without it we would not prosper.
8. A local congregation corrects sin.
   1. **1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 11-13** – This is a direct command, but it is not one that is enjoyable to follow.
      1. **We have fraternal affection for our brethren, but when they aren’t following God, we cannot express that as we usually would.**
      2. **This is a hard truth we must face, knowing it is for our good, and their good.** 🡪
   2. **2 Corinthians 2:6-7** – The man withdrawn from (shown tough love) repented.
9. One restores the fallen.
   1. **Galatians 6:1-2** – This is a responsibility for those who are spiritual (walking in the Spirit – **5:16, 22**).
      1. Sometimes this goes smoothly, sometimes not so much.
      2. **However, the initial approach is always uncomfortable and difficult.**
   2. **Galatians 2:11-13** – Imagine the difficulty in one apostle confronting another apostle. (**But the end result is worth it**!)
10. One resolves conflict.
    1. **Philippians 4:2-3** – Conflict must not be overlooked and ignored.
       1. The two individuals in conflict were to take action.
       2. Those surrounding were to help.
       3. **Sometimes we don’t want to get into uncomfortable situations, but this is necessary!**
    2. **Genesis 13:5-9** – When conflict arose between Abram and Lot, Abram looked to resolve it.
       1. **Although Abram was older, and the leader of the company, he so wished for the conflict to be resolved that he deferred to Lot.**
       2. This took great strength of character, and love.
11. Temptation to avoid tough love.
12. Seeking to please men (**Galatians 1:6-10**).
    1. There were Judaizers fomenting strife, and drawing brethren away from the truth.
    2. **Paul didn’t want to please any man, thus he did not use the same tactics, but preached the gospel in its pure form.**
13. Seeking to please ourselves (**John 14:15; Mark 10:17-22**)
    1. Keeping Jesus’ commandments is not always easy. However, it is necessary to get to heaven.
    2. **If we are seeking to please ourselves we will not be willing to participate in the love which Jesus calls us to.**

**Conclusion**

1. The love God calls us to is transcendent. It is greater than that which the world promotes.
2. The scriptures are clear about the difficulty which lies in the life of one who loves as God loves, and loves God.
3. **We must be willing to endure the difficulties, love each other, and love God, for the end result is worth it!**