**Actions Driven By Love**

**Introduction**

1. Love is an important facet of Christianity. ***(“God is love” – 1 John 4:8)***.
2. We must not take the bait the Devil hangs in front of us – that love is merely romantic, and is comprised of feelings.
   1. This love can waiver, and is not strong enough to accomplish that which God has done for us.
   2. The love that IS GOD is far greater, and we are expected to participate in it (***cf. 2 Peter 1:7 – “to brotherly kindness love”*** – at the top of the list.).
3. Since love is such an important topic, God has made sure to describe it for us. He has given us the knowledge necessary to attain to this love.
   1. **One thing we learn about this love is that it motivates actions on the part of the one who possesses it.**
   2. This lesson seeks to describe a few.
4. What is Love?
5. Which Love?

*Four Greek words translated into “love.”*

* *Eros* – refers to passion. (Not in NT)
  + English word “erotic” is derived from *eros*.
  + Sexual love.
  + **Denotes a passion that is selfishly seeking satisfaction.**
* *Stergos* – natural affection.
  + Love that a parent naturally has for a child, or anyone who has a close relationship with each other.
* *Philos* – friendly love.
  + Love that friends with much in common have for each other.
* *Agape* – motivated by a sense of value in another.
  + **John 3:16** – God sees a sense of value in a soul created in His image. This led to Him sending His son to die for man.
  + **Matthew 5:43-48** – We love our enemies because they have an eternal soul which is precious. *(God loved us even though we were unlovable. We are to do the same.*)
  + **This love is transcendent because it is an act of will rather than emotion. It is choice love.**

1. Characteristics of *agape* Love (**1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**).

*The Corinthian church was not utilizing their spiritual gifts in proper ways. This caused division. The main problem was their lack of love in using these gifts.*

***(cf. 1 Corinthians 12:7 – Gifts given “for the profit of all.”*** *– Were not using them in this way.)*

**These characteristics were not possessed by the Corinthians**. 🡪

* ***“suffers long and is kind”***
  + Long-tempered instead of short-tempered. (Tempers raged in Corinth due to the conflict of spiritual gifts.)
  + Kind = mellow; not sharp. (Harsh words were spoken – **“*I have no need of you*”**)
* ***“does not envy”***
  + Jealous thoughts toward another’s good fortune. (People were jealous of other peoples gifts and resented them for the attention they received.)
* ***“does not parade itself, is not puffed up”***
  + Bragging and boasting. (about spiritual gifts)
  + Arrogance. Inflated concept of self-importance. (because of spiritual gifts)
* ***“does not behave rudely”***
  + Indecency. (plain rudeness toward others.)
  + Love is respectful of others.
* ***“does not seek its own”***
  + Selfishness. (Using gifts for own benefit. Or to be seen. Not for others benefit.)
* ***“is not provoked”***
  + Angered; provoked to wrath. (tension was high in Corinth)
* ***“thinks no evil”***
  + Dwelling on offences others have committed, or offences committed toward you.
* ***“does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth”***
  + Finding pleasure in sin. Or perhaps in another’s downfall.
  + Love finds pleasure in truth. If truth is present, love is there.
* ***“bears all things”***
  + Stability under hard times. Trials/tribulations. Love remains standing.
* ***“believes all things”***
  + Gives the benefit of the doubt. Thinks good of people.
* ***“hopes all things”***
  + Is not pessimistic. Hopes for the better, not the worse.
* ***“endures all things”***
  + It is able to get through anything.
* ***“never fails” (v. 8)***
  + Never fails because it is a choice. It can bear and endure anything, and so failure is a choice, not accidental.
* **An overwhelming theme stressed by Paul is the fact that love DOES. The descriptions he gave were verbs.**

1. Love is important!

* **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**
  + It doesn’t matter what we do, if we don’t do it out of love it is profitless.
* **Matthew 22:37-40**
  + Love is so important that the Law and Prophets depend on it.
  + **Love takes care of the vertical (Relationship with God), and the horizontal (relationship with fellow man).**
    - **We cannot love God without loving man, and we cannot love man properly without loving God.**
  + **Colossians 3:12-14** – Love includes all the characteristics of the new man.
    - If all of the characteristics are present, but love is not, it is meaningless.
    - **Without love the new man cannot be perfect (complete).**
* **1 John 4:7-8**
  + If we do not love we do not know God.
  + **Our knowledge of God is dependent on more than just knowing, but also participating. We come to know God better, and draw nearer to Him, when we seek to imitate Him.**
* **Love is VITAL!**

1. Actions Driven By Love

*It is important to know actions that are present if we have love. The following actions are driven by love.*

1. Preaching/Teaching/Edifying.

* God loved us and took action.
  + **Romans 5:6-8** – He did not love us because we were loveable, but because He valued our souls.
  + **2 Peter 3:9** – God wants all to be saved.
  + **Titus 2:11-14** – He has made His grace available to all men.
    - This grace, like love, is different than what the world generally thinks.
    - **It is a grace that teaches, and therefore needs to be taught.**
* The church is the means by which God makes disciples.
  + **1 Timothy 3:15** – the church is the pillar and ground of truth.
  + **Acts 8:4** – (After death of Stephen) we, like the 1st century Christians, are to scatter and teach!
  + **Romans 10:14** – God has chosen us to be the preachers to the lost and dying world.

1. Exhortation. (We teach, then exhort to live faithfully.)

* **Hebrews 10:24-25** – Exhortation is expected from each of us. In order to do this God has designed the assembling together.
  + **3:12-14** – We are to look out for one another by warning each other of sin and encouraging each other to remain faithful.
  + **Exhortation does not shy away from exposing sin. It is necessary if we wish to encourage others to follow the truth. (This is love.)**
* **Acts 11:19-24** – after men were taught, and they obeyed, Barnabas encouraged them to ***“continue with the Lord.”***
  + **We each need this encouragement daily. If we love each other we will treat each other this way.**

1. Turning a Sinner Back. (Despite the exhortation to live faithfully, some may fall into sin. We must be willing to turn them back.)

* **James 5:19-20** – We must recognize the end of the sinners’ path. If we love our brother we will redirect him.
* **Galatians 6:1** – It is our Christian duty to restore those who have been overtaken.
  + The spiritual man is the man who is walking in the fruit of the Spirit (**cf. 5:22-25)**.

1. General Obedience to God

* **John 14:15, 23-24** – The bottom line is, if we love God we’ll obey Him. (This includes ALL that He has given for us to obey.)
* **1 John 5:3 –** He has so loved us that He has given us commandments that aren’t burdens. **(Yet, the world seems to view them as such. We should not.)**
  + **Matthew 11:28-30 – Loving Christ by allowing Him to direct your life, by obeying Him, is the only way to find true rest and peace.**

**Conclusion**

1. The fact of love in the Bible is that it drives us to do whatever God wants us to do.
2. There are many commands given us by God. We need to ensure that we are loving Him by doing those things.
3. **However, it is impossible to love God the way He wants us to without following Him. Have you begun to follow Jesus?**