

Love Is Giving

I. Biblical concepts of love as giving.

- A. Love in the Bible is the giving of your self for another. God provides the perfect example of giving—John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who so ever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- B. Christians must give themselves to help others as servants of Christ—Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
- C. Biblical love is the giving of your self for another; it is the giving of your time, your interest, your thoughts, your consideration, your money, your abilities, or even your life. When you give your self to help others, you deposit the treasure of yourself in them, and there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

II. Sinners are selfish! We are all sinners, and sinners have problems learning to give unselfishly. Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

- A. Christians must commit their lives to giving not getting. The fundamental question is, How can I please God? not How can I please myself?
- B. Selfishness (consuming self-love, self-centeredness) is described in the Bible as a sinful pattern of life that will prevail in rebellious times:
 1. II Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
 2. We are selfish in our sinful human nature, and our society justifies selfishness by emphasizing that we should look out for number one by becoming assertive.
- C. Jesus condemns selfishness and tells the believer that who so ever will save his life shall lose it: and who so ever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 16:25).
 1. The Christian must deny self, putting self to death on the cross. The good self-image comes only by becoming a good self. The more you obey the commandments of Christ, the better your self-image will become. Obedience to Christ must be from the heart, and not the hypocritical of mere words or idle actions.

2. Christians must stop the pursuit of self-interests and simply serve Christ in his kingdom. Jesus said that you must put to death your own desires, and follow Him.

- a. Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.
 - b. Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
- D. Christ-centered living is unselfish living! When you put God's will above your own will, you change from self-centered to Christ-centered living and you put others needs above your own.

1. Love for God and one's neighbor means that love for self must be put aside. Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.
2. Some think that it is hypocritical to love without feelings. This is false! It is never hypocritical to obey God. This is a trap of the devil who would like to destroy every Christian testimony that honors God. All ways do what is right no matter how you feel. Every morning, contrary to my feelings, I get up; and this does not make me a hypocrite! Likewise give your self to your spouse and this will never make you a hypocrite. Biblical love requires work! It is not hypocritical to work at love (giving) because such work is obeying God!

III. How to change.

- A. Biblical change requires you to put off bad habits and to put on good behavior as a new person in Christ. Colossians 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; an anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.....23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.
- B. God demands that we change from being feeling motivated to being commandment-motivated in all of our living. Ephesians 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- C. God changes us by renewing the image of God in man that was ruined by the sin and fall of Adam. Ephesians 4:20-24 If

so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

- D. Biblical change breaks bad habits and replaces them with good habits. Bad habits are difficult to overcome. A bad habit can be removed only by replacing it with a biblical alternative. No change commanded by God is unrealistic for those who know Christ as their Savior and are willing to do things His way.

1. Dramatic change is possible in Christ. There is hope (confident expectation) in every command; God commands nothing of His people that, using His Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, they can not fulfill if they only will.
 - a. Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
 - b. Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

IV. Marriage is a commitment between two sinners to love only each other in marital relationship. Sinners have so much trouble keeping the vows of marriage without God's guidance and power! God's Word guides the Christian husband and wife so that they may live as one flesh without the destructive influences of selfishness.

- A. Even if two persons have married for all the wrong reasons, even if their marriage has been a failure for years, there is still hope for them to change their marriage into something beautiful if they will repent and are now willing to be loving to each other God's way with God's help! Repentance consists of confession of sins to God and to one another.
- B. When the marriage vows were stated, the minister did not ask, "Do you love him/her?" but, "Will you love...?" Marriage is not based on an existing emotion, but on the promise that one will give love to his or her spouse throughout their lives together. This biblical marriage concept even worked for the arranged marriages of biblical times when the groom never saw his bride until the wedding ceremony. True romantic love (romantic feelings toward one another) will always follow true biblical love (the giving of one's self to another).
- C. The biblical concept of marriage brings about definite and substantial change in both spouses.
 1. A husband must put his wife first and consider her proper interests of greater importance than his own. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh (Mark 10:7-8).
 2. The wife must be husband oriented in all that she does, including any work she does outside the home; and she must

submit unto her husband when he leads her as the Lord Jesus Himself would lead her. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:22-23).

3. The one flesh commitment of marriage is a commitment to become a new person where the two are as one (Genesis 2:24)! Both husband and wife are to be committed to the Lord. The commitment to God is to be honored before any other commitment. The husband should never request that his wife violate her commitment to God; and the wife must never request that her husband violate his commitment to God.
- D. Establishing love in relationships.
1. Love is not a feeling! When they learn to Biblically love one another, the feelings will follow. For example, God commands the husband to love his wife; true Biblical love must be given with the husband and must reflect the love of Christ:
 - a. Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.
 - b. I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.
 2. God commands love! Love is not getting but rather it is giving. When you learn to give of yourself—your time, your money, your interest—you will eventually FEEL loving. But the feeling, to be enduring, must be the fruit, not the root of love. When you invest enough of yourself in others, you will feel loving toward others: Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
- V. Giving is a greater blessing than receiving. Believe God and GIVE! Acts 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- A. Giving involves sacrifice; but Christ rewards with peace. If we try to save ourselves from selfishness and judgment, we will lose and be condemned. If we give ourselves to Christ, He will save us and give us eternal life. Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For who so ever will save his life shall lose it: and who so ever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
1. John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
 2. Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.
- B. Jesus promises that He will reward those who faithfully love others and GIVE rather than take! Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and

shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

- VI. As God loved sinners, sinners should love God. John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. I John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

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Biblical Guidelines

by Dr. Gail E. Terrell

I John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

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a road map of holiness