

WALKING IN GOD'S LOVE

LOF5

God expects us to **LOVE EACH OTHER**.....the way CHRIST LOVES US...
So that **THE WORLD WOULD KNOW WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES.**

John 13:34-35

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES BY OUR LOVE.....

- Not by the way we dress,
- Not by the way we speak & quote the Bible,
- Not by our ability to share the Word of God, cast the demons out.....
- But by the way WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

The word Jesus used for love is the verb form of *AGAPĒ*.

Agapē is the word that describes **God's love in John 3:16:**

16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

We are commanded to love God and love one another, the way He did for us.
In other words, we are to be known by our **SELF-GIVING, FREELY, SACRIFICIAL, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE for one another.**

***Agapē* is the God kind of love**..... that was also used to define the word "LOVE" in **1 Corinthians 13.**

GOD'S LOVE DEFINED

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8 (AMP)

4 Love endures with patience *and* serenity, love is kind *and* thoughtful, and is not jealous *or* envious; love does not brag and is not proud *or* arrogant.

5 It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong *endured*.

6 It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail].

⁷ Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening].

⁸ Love never fails [it never fades nor ends].

GOD'S LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, IT DOESN'T PUT ITSELF OR ITS OWN INTERESTS FIRST.

- ARE WE SERVING OTHERS?
- DO WE HAVE PATIENCE WHEN DEALING WITH PEOPLE?
- DO WE TREAT PEOPLE EQUALLY WITH THE SAME HONOUR / RESPECT?
- ARE WE EASILY OFFENDED, ARE YOU STILL OFFENDED RIGHT NOW?
- **THAT'S AN EASY INDICATOR FOR US TO SEE IF WE'RE WALKING IN GOD'S LOVE.**

WHEN WE WALK IN GOD'S LOVE IT WOULD SOLVE MOST (OR ALL) OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP ISSUES.

- WE WOULD BE MORE PATIENT WITH SOME PEOPLE.
- WE WOULD BE MORE KIND AND THOUGHTFUL IN LOVING AND SERVING OTHERS.
- WE WOULD NOT BE SELFISH, WE WOULD THINK OF OTHER PEOPLE.
- WE WOULD NOT BE ARROGANT, BUT INSTEAD BE HUMBLE AND CONSIDER OTHERS MORE IMPORTANT THAN US.
- WE WOULD ENDURE THROUGH HARD TIMES (Setbacks, Conflicts, Disagreement, Storm of life.....) --- we choose to FIGHT together, and NOT Flight.
- WHEN CONFLICT COMES, WE WOULD ASSUME THE BEST IN OTHERS, NOT THE WORST.

BUT WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT THAT GOD COMMANDS US TO LOVE??

OUR FAITH WON'T WORK WITHOUT LOVE.

1 John 4:8

But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

We can't say we know God...if we cannot love people.
Because God Himself is love.

The way we know **WE ARE SAVED**....

Is when we have the love of God in our heart, given by the Holy Spirit.

- Remember this is NOT the fleshly love that we already have, but this is another higher level of LOVE that God has put into our heart / spirit.

Galatians 5:6 (NLT)

⁶ For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

FAITH IS LOVE IN ACTION.

WE ARE CALLED TO IMITATE GOD BY WALKING IN HIS LOVE.

Ephesians 5:1-2

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

And **walk in love**, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

The call to imitate God sounds impossible. How can we ever be like GOD?

A child loves to imitate their parents.

My daughter loves to imitate me ---- wear my heels, put on my makeup, sunnies, carry a handbag and walk around.....

Yet, just as a small child imperfectly mimics a parent’s actions, disciples of Jesus copy Him. In these verses in Ephesians, the key way to imitate God: **WALK IN LOVE.... as Christ loved us.**

- LOVE...by definition, gives **TIME, ATTENTION, COMPASSION**
- LOVE spends **ENERGY, RESOURCES AND MONEY.**
- LOVE requires **SACRIFICE.**
- LOVE sacrifices personal interests, our own wants and needs for the interests, and need of OTHERS.

GOD’S LOVE IS FOR EVERYONE

And God did NOT demonstrate His love to only few people or particular groups of people..... but to **EVERYONE**.....

That is why the call to “**WALK IN LOVE**” goes far **BEYOND** **LOVING NICE PEOPLE, LIKEABLE PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO ARE SIMILAR TO US.**

- If we love people who are kind, who are generous, who are lovable, people who believes the same thing with us.....
And it doesn’t really need faith!! Anybody can do that.
What difference does it make with the love of the world?
- God calls us to also love needy, unattractive, annoying, broken people too.
- He commands us to love the unbelievers, the greedy, ungrateful people too.
- Our annoying neighbour, our difficult colleague / classmate, our estranged family, our demanding boss.....

- God directs us to love these people because **THAT IS WHO WE ONCE WERE.**

Paul told the believers in Rome: *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).*

- God died for all of us while we were still sinners --- He died for us NOT because we have believed Him, not because we have received and repented, He loved us even when we were still an unbeliever, when we rejected Him..... when we were still liar, a cheater, a selfish person, an addict, even when we were one of those soldiers who brought Him to the cross or the crowd who mocked him.

GOD WANTS US TO EXTEND THE SAME LOVE TO OTHERS..... THE WAY HE LOVED US.

1 John 4:20 (NLT)

If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

THE WAY WE LOVE PEOPLE REFLECTS OUR LOVE TO GOD.

This means coming alongside people in their time of need, showing the same kind of grace and mercy that was extended to you.

Nothing you do will profit unless it’s done from the motive of God’s love.

1 Corinthians 13:2-3

² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing.

³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.

You can be a successful CEO, the richest man or woman in the world, have millions of followers, a preacher,
But if you’re not demonstrating love..... you have gained nothing!

The distinguishing mark of a follower of Jesus, is our **ACTIONABLE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

- If you want to change your life, change your home, your community,...and change the world.
- Let’s start from loving one them in action.

1 John 3:18 (NLT)

Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other, let us show the truth by our actions.

The world's love can be a bunch of talk backed up by no action, but God's love is backed by action.

HOW DO WE SHOW GOD'S LOVE TO OTHERS IN ACTION?

IT DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED.

1. SHOW GOD'S LOVE BY LISTENING

In today's culture, it seems like many voices are speaking (and often shouting).

We are overloaded with voice, information.

Communication is always at our fingertips through email, text, social media, news.

While social media has increased communication, it has also given us false appearance of true connection and real relationships.

- In fact, **GENERATION Z**.....who are the **MOST "CONNECTED"** is also considered the **LONELIEST GENERATION**.

It is rare for people to feel truly heard.

- **COMMIT TO SLOW DOWN, ASK QUESTIONS, AND REALLY LISTEN TO PEOPLE.**
- **LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND, NOT JUST TO PREPARE YOUR RESPONSE.**
- **ALLOW PEOPLE TO SPEAK THEIR MIND WITHOUT INTERRUPTION OF JUDGEMENT.**

PEOPLE WILL FEEL VALUED (AND LOVED!) WHEN THEY ARE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD.

2. SHOW GOD'S LOVE WITH GENEROSITY

Can you think of a time in your life when someone showed you such generosity that you still think.....*"WOW....I can't believe they did that for me."*

- Maybe it was a gift of their time when you needed someone the most.
- Maybe it was a financially generous gift.
- Perhaps they shared kind words, or stood up for you in difficult time.
- How did that moment make you feel?

You probably felt **LOVED**. You felt **SEEN**. You felt **VALUED** to the point that you still remember that ACT OF GENEROSITY.

When we love someone, **WE GIVE TO THEM**.

- That loving character comes from God
- After all, John 3:16 points out that He so loved the world that He gave.
- **He loved, so He gave.**
- We love your spouse, kids, friends, so we give to them.

Of course, people think of money when talking about generosity. That is definitely one aspect of it.

- But, how can you also be generous with **YOUR TIME, TALENTS AND YOUR VOICE?**
- Who can you invest some time into.....either by helping them out with a practical need, or some quality time?
- What special skills or talents can you provide / serve them with?
- Who can you share some blessings that God has gifted you with?

3. SHOW GOD'S LOVE WITH ENCOURAGING

Everyone we meet is carrying some kind of burden.....

- Even the most “successful” people have something weighing them down.
- Just because they look fine and doing great on the outside, doesn't mean they are not struggling or carrying some weight on the inside.
- Just because someone carries it well....doesn't mean its NOT heavy.
-

How can we help to lift someone's burdens?

It can be as simple as **WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.**

The word “**ENCOURAGE**” comes from an Old French word which means “**TO MAKE STRONG**”

- When we encourage one another, **we are making their spirits strong.**
- We are **strengthening their hope, their faith, and their determination to keep going.**

1 Thessalonians 5:11

¹So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Proverbs 16:24 (NLT)

Kind words are like honey—

sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

Don't hesitate to speak life-giving words into someone's circumstances.

It can't hurt. It's free too!!

And it most certainly can help someone gain strength in their life.

4. SHOW GOD'S LOVE WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS

Showing kindness means thinking about the other person more than you think about yourself.

- What are their needs?
- What would make their lives better?

It doesn't have to be huge, but it should be **THOUGHTFUL**.

Being thoughtful and kind communicates to the other person that you value their needs above your own.

Selfless love comes from God --- 1 Cor 13 v5 says that "love is NOT self-seeking."

Practice being others-focused.

Show God's love with acts of kindness.

- *Buy them a coffee.*
- *Celebrate them with a meal.*
- *Cook them a meal.*
- *Buy them a book that you think they need for present moment.*

5. SHOW GOD'S LOVE BY PRAYING FOR OTHERS

PRAY FOR PEOPLE!

Yes pray for them in your own time with God, because God hears our prayers.

But also pray for people when you're with them.

One of the easiest ways to show love and concern is to pray with someone right then and right there.

- In any conversation, at any time, simply ask...."*HOW CAN I PRAY FOR YOU?*"
- If someone mentions they're sick, stressed, frustrated,....simply ask "*CAN I PRAY FOR YOU?*"
- Show them love and genuinely pray for their needs or thank God for their good news.

IT IS ALSO A GREAT WAY TO OPEN UP A CONVERSATION ABOUT FAITH.

Think about it..... **NOBODY WILL REFUSE AN OFFER OF PRAYER.**

- When they shared they gone through tough times, they are stressed, they need breakthrough.....
- This is the perfect opportunity to offer a PRAYER for them.....
- This is the time when their heart is most "open" for God to move and come through.

WE ARE CALLED TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE TO EVERYONE.

- THE WAY GOD LOVES US.
- WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED.
- HIS LOVE EXPECTS NOTHING IN RETURN.
- IT WAS PURE, SACRIFICIAL, AND UNCONDITIONAL LOVE JESUS DISPLAYED ON THE CROSS FOR US.

YES IT'S NOT NATURAL, ITS NOT GONNA BE EASY FOR US TO LOVE SOME DIFFICULT PEOPLE.....

BUT FOCUS ON THE CALL OF **WE ARE CALLED TO IMMITATE JESUS**.....

- ITS A WALK THAT WE HAVE TO WALK DAILY, IT'S A JOURNEY FOR US TO KEEP GROWING IN.

FOCUS ON THE FACT THAT **WE ARE HIS VESSEL**.

- SO ITS NOT BY OUR OWN STRENGTH, BUT THROUGH GOD'S STRENGTH AND SPIRIT THAT WE CAN LOVE OTHERS WHEN IT SEEMS DIFFICULT.

TODAY.....

AS WE LEARN AND COMMIT TO WALK IN GOD'S LOVE DAILY.....

HIS AGAPE WILL ALSO GROW AND DEVELOP IN OUR LIFE.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT WILL BE DEVELOPED & MANIFESTED WHEN WE COMMIT TO LOVE PEOPLE LIKE GOD HAS LOVED US.

LET'S LOOK WHAT ASPECTS IN OUR LIFE WHERE WE CAN DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE BETTER?

HOW / IN WHAT WAY CAN WE SHOW GOD'S LOVE TODAY TO THE PEOPLE THAT GOD HAS PUT IN OUR HEARTS?

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE

A distinguishing mark of a Disciple of Jesus is our **ACTIONABLE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

- OUR FAITH WON'T WORK WITHOUT LOVE.
- WE ARE CALLED TO IMITATE GOD BY WALKING IN HIS LOVE.
- GOD'S LOVE IS FOR EVERYONE.

HOW TO PRACTICALLY GOD'S LOVE TO OTHERS IN ACTION:

- 1) SHOW GOD'S LOVE BY LISTENING
- 2) SHOW GOD'S LOVE WITH GENEROSITY
- 3) SHOW GOD'S LOVE WITH ENCOURAGING
- 4) SHOW GOD'S LOVE WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS
- 5) SHOW GOD'S LOVE BY PRAYING FOR OTHERS

- EVALUATE WHAT ASPECTS IN OUR LIFE WHERE WE CAN DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE BETTER?
- HOW / IN WHAT WAY CAN WE SHOW GOD'S LOVE TODAY TO THE PEOPLE THAT GOD HAS PUT IN OUR HEARTS?