



Let's Talk About God's Love...

...and a person's need for holy fear, deep conviction of sin, the gifts of repentance, genuine conversion and assurance in Jesus, so that they can experience His care forever.

By Kurt von Schleicher

I enjoy talking about the boundless love of God! How about you?

How can we wisely explain such fathomless passion? What have you heard regarding His love? Where are you at with love, truth and righteousness? Do you feel like you even matter to God? Do you ever feel like the Lord has failed you? Do you think He feels indifferent towards you, or is too busy to even think about you? I've been there before.

Personally, I have no real clue as to why God prizes me so highly (a sinner who used to be full throttle into sinning), but for some strange reason I'm now convinced He does. In Ephesians 1:18 Paul speaks of this, **"...that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."** In other words the Lord is talking about the richness of His great love. Paul goes on to say, **"May God open up your eyes to realize how much He treasures you!"** I often pray that God would open up my eyes more by His Spirit so that I can find out all about how He treasures me. That's so glorious... you know what I mean; that God would treasure me at all.

Love makes everything lovely; hate concentrates itself on the one thing, or person hated.

~George MacDonald

For His own reasons and purposes the Lord does treasure us, and He has placed His seal upon Christians. The Holy Spirit within us is God's seal of love. We're told this in 2 Corinthians 1:22: **"Who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."** Because of this, Christians must walk wisely for in Ephesians 4:30 Paul commands us, **"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."**

Love Isn't License

Now some Christians unfortunately and at times unintentionally, grieve the Spirit by the way they deal with unbelievers in a non-caring manner. Do you want to see what God says regarding His great care for sinners?

To be kind of candid, I feel a bit concerned about how to express this. No, I'm serious... it's because it seems like this country is filling-up with people claiming to be Christians who are living immorally and who enjoy the most perverse and violent entertainment etc. I sure enjoy movies myself, but there's really no reason for any Christian to go see R-rated movies when you think about it, and yet this has become so common (I am not saying seeing such movies will bar a person from heaven necessarily). I am saying that so many think they are Christians but have never repented. They still willfully live in sin, call themselves saints, and sadly feel confident that God loves them so much that He would never allow them to go to that place called, Hell. Yes, it's nominal "born agains" who are doing this, rather than real ones.

Whoa Kurt; now you've lost me! Dude, I'm placing you on relational-probation now for saying that H-word! How could you be so intolerant?

Hold on there, buckaroo, our loving God doesn't send people there...no, no.. people in effect, send themselves there and really don't have to. No haughtiness on my part here, I was just like that for many years, attending a dead traditional church and that's why I'm writing you now. Just hang with me for a moment. I really want to say it straight and explain how it is with God's kind of love.

Because of love, Jesus got killed for us. And His death will totally wash-out our wrong-doin's as we respond on His terms. Yup Him dying disabled death itself. That's the top formula and that's what Christianity is all about!

My point is that many alleged Christians who talk of God's love today, falsely seem to think that there'll never be any consequences or repercussions for the bad choices they daily keep making. That's just wrong!

Some of them are into religious universalism and some claim to be powerful born again prophets and apostles who not only believe they can get themselves in, but say they can also get you past those pearly gates for a price (dig deep, for a large "love offering"—just like indulgences of Luther's day).

The love of wealth makes bitter men; the love of God, better men. ~W.L. Hudson

They say, "Speak it," "Vow a thousand", "Give the hundredfold ..quickly, before you lose your blessing!"

Yup, they speak feigned words ([2 Pet. 2:3](#)), fleece the flock and are themselves duped into thinking they have a license to sin with impunity. Honest, I've personally gotten to know some of these deluded self-centered individuals and have even warned them.

We all know gullibility is a liability. Cynicism is too, but let's keep our eyes open anyways! Some people sadly are pulled downward by their attitude of scornful and jaded negativity, distrusting the integrity of every minister's inner unseen motives. We don't want to be like that either, just because there really are some excellent leaders out there—godly ones.

Let's remember the words of Jehoshaphat in the Old Testament, who told Judah and Jerusalem to, "**Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in His prophets, and you will succeed**" ([2 Chron. 20:20](#)). He wanted the best for them. He want all of them to be very discerning and didn't tell them to trust the false

prophets of their day. I assert that there is a way for us in this century, to also [know who and what we should listen to](#) regarding ministers and their spiritual trajectory.

Sure, countless [counterfeit preachers and Christians](#) are out there who sincerely claim to have prayed a "*prayer of acceptance*" to God at one time, or to have had a "*spiritual experience*"—with crocodile tears rollin', with goose bumps poppin', or with some exciting liver quiver ..quiverin' and quakin'. You know the type of activity and religiosity that I'm talking about.. and the whole nine yards of what they propagate.

They say they "*enjoy eternal security*" right along with their contemporary lawless living. Yes, they have a message of love that's free, though they don't walk in love—they haven't yet turned from their loose licentious lifestyles and thus they prostitute the grace the God.

Hey, I'm no prude, but people with false assurance need to hear about holy fear and certain judgment ahead more than about God's love and acceptance. Sure, it's been all about *free love* for them a long time. *Come on now, Kurt, give me a break! Quit being such an intolerant downer! Why can't you tell me about my best life now? I want seven steps to living at my full potential to help myself improve.*

Criticizing dangerous teachings with a motive to protect innocent people is one thing, but if you are busy being harsh or criticizing people, you won't have the time to serve, to love, or to win them!

Well, you want me to be a realist don't you? Listen, years pass by and still no fruit appears. They've unfortunately been given a false hope in gaining eternal life that way ..and it came to them from some clergy-dude who has been fooled himself.



Yowza!—that's unfortunately the America we now live in! Some of these half-informed would-be-converts have responded to an altar call with good intentions too when they heard, "*Come as you are*" ...and they did.. but without a willingness to change. Many were partially taught. But there was no cooperation with the Word and the Spirit and hey..no real repentance means no real salvation for them! They earnestly shook the preacher's hand and signed a card in the altar, but the Bible doesn't promise eternal security to pleasure-seekers after a feel-good-buzz or experience ..to those clinging to their pet-sins. They can read and reread the *Prayer of Jabez* all they want and earnestly say "*Bless me Lord*" kind of prayers ...to no avail.

Hey, don't get me wrong; God is there for everyone and wants to save them all. And I really want people to experientially know first-hand God's boundless love for them! I also want them to know that He expects holy faithfulness and fruit in their lives (see [Matt. 7:20](#)). If He aint Lord of all, He ain't Lord at all!

But perhaps you ..like, already know this. I hope so.

Love Points To The Cross

When we study the New Testament, we can see that God's love is almost always discussed in relation to the cross of Christ: "...*herein is love*", "...*for God so loved*", "*God commended His love*", etc.¹

Why? Because Christ's cross is literally the focal point of God's love for all people in the whole world. God did His part there at Calvary, and is really not wanting any more to push ahead towards a Christless grave and perdition ([2 Pet. 3:9](#), [Jn. 3:17](#)). Salvation is absolutely free for anyone willing to receive it, but it did cost Him a whole lot! Therefore it only makes sense to us that true-love-speak should also address sin and contain words that point to the cross. We never want to add to the cross or to the Word; we don't take away from those, but we die to self, embracing the simple Gospel and then carry our cross following Christ moment by moment!

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.
~Martin Luther King Jr.

God hates wickedness because it hurts people he hung on the cross for. That tree is awesome to me, because that is where LOVE dealt death a final blow! It disabled our iniquitous patterns, our willful transgressions and our stubborn propensities. It gives each one of us every reason to get in Jesus today!

And maybe you've wondered before how anyone can refer to sin or to God's love without bringing up the Law ([Rom. 7:7](#)). **The biblical way to express God's love to a sinner is to show him or her how great their sin is, right** (not in some smug condescending way, hyper-pious way, but by humbly using the Law—see [Rom. 7:13](#); [Gal. 3:24](#)). **After that, we want to give them the incredible grace of God.**

Yes, we've all heard how *God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life*, but a person really needs to hear the bad news too in order to appreciate such Good News! Listen to how John MacArthur bluntly speaks of sharing God's love with sinners. He said, "*We need to adjust our presentation of the Gospel. We cannot dismiss the fact that God hates sin and punishes sinners with eternal torment. How can we begin a Gospel presentation by telling people on their way to hell that God has a wonderful plan for their lives?*"



But, Kurt, what bad news is he talking about? Let me break it down for you. We've all sinned—broken God's good law ([Rom. 3:23](#)) and a holy God must judge sin ..for the wages of sin is death ([Rom. 6:23](#))! What's more is that none; no not one of us can ever achieve on our own the level of perfection needed to gain God's approval or a right relationship with Him. Strive to be as religious as you want, but all man's righteousness is as filthy rags before God ([Isa. 64:6](#)). You seriously need Christ to be your Lord!

Yes, listen up, **you're sins will be properly judged in one of two places – you choose – 1) On the cross of Christ at Calvary** (that of course happened in the past, some 2000 years ago), or **2) In the Great Tribulation and or in Hell's eternal fire** (in the near future). It's nice to have the option early huh. In light of God's ultimate goodness and left to our own devices, we deserve nothing but God's judgment. But will you choose to respond to God's love on your own terms ..or do this properly, on His? The former won't cut it.

The Good News is that God's love and grace have provided a free Way of escape through which we can avoid the non-stop burning pain of that future flame and shame ...and instead we can approach the loving One who really cares for His solution. We no longer have to worry about the severe judgment that we deserve or that spiritual-disease called sin that does worse stuff than simply kill. God has literally provided a Means by which He allows us to be pulled back—rescued from the brink of judgment where we all live our lives. Are you up for it?

God's boundless love reaches down to us through the dense darkness of this corrupt world, even when we're lower than low and hopelessly undeserving. Hey, some evangelists have been accused of exaggerating out of excitement, but what's cool about God's love is that no one can exaggerate how wonderful or how big it really is. We don't have words to properly describe it.

The Bible tells us that before God created the earth, He had decided to display the strength and profundity of His love for us through the weakness and foolishness of Christ's deadly cross that would be erected later (See [1 Pet. 1:20](#); [Rev. 13:8](#)). That wood colored red said, *Don't you mess with Rome or you'll be up here too!* IWe've heard or seen movies about Jesus carrying that minus sign (the cross beam for Him arms to be nailed on), but that minus for Him became a giant plus sign for you and me.. when He died upon it.

Who would've thunk it, that this new bond of love would be given its fullest and clearest expression on such a lonely hill outside Jerusalem of all places? It's so beautiful to me! I

*Faith goes up the stairs that love
has made and looks out of the
windows which hope has opened.*

~Charles Spurgeon

know it was like a cruel hangman's noose or French guillotine, but what happened there was so intentional, so harsh, but so selfless! It was for my sake and yours! I love to think about it! At Calvary, Jesus suffered and died to pay the full penalty in your place. God the Father killed Him in our place if you will. Yes, you and I deserved to be judged in that way, but in pure love—God

Himself (Jesus) took the thrashing of stripes and Calvary's heat that was leveled in our direction. That's why you've gotta be—you must **be born again!** In John 3:16 we read, ***"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."***

Jesus is the only Way for you ([Jn. 14:6](#))! Want to [hear more](#) about love?

Today it's difficult for people to comprehend the massively deep, vastly wide, selfless love of God.. yes, for some people; it's more difficult to understand because of what they've gone through. Some have been burned by a so called Christian leader who was

mean-spirited or hypocritical, or by some other religious representative who allegedly acting for God ..but wrongly. I'm not suggesting we waste time accusing and blaming.

Perhaps some have grown up with a stern, negligent and non-affectionate father or some relative like that. It's serious when authority figures misrepresent the top Authority!

One wag described his perception of God's non-relevance in indifferent inaccessibility in this way saying, *"God and my pastor are a lot alike to me. I never see them day, or night, or all through the midweek and when I'm done workin' my tail off and briefly encounter my pastor on Sunday, I simply don't understand Him or what He's even saying."* Is that how the Lord and God-talk seem to you?

You can approach and understanding God and He speaks your language. Man, it is so important for each of us to think right regarding the Lord and His love! It's important for us to know that we're loved and then deliberately fall in love with Jesus His sinless Son, as we walk in His love. It's imperative for us to also grasp the fact that God loves all sinners just as much and become a part of His solution in compassionately reaching them.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love. I can not love on my own; I cannot have joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance by myself. There is no one who has the ability to really love. . . until he really comes to Christ. Until the Holy Spirit has control of one's life, he doesn't have the power to love." ~ Billy Graham

I heard Chuck Swindoll (a Dallas pastor who is motivated by love) say the following just yesterday ..live:

"What we think about God is the most important thing about us. What we think about His love is so very important. His love for us is consistent and always seeks out our highest good. Do you have a high or a low view of God and His love? It may surprise you to know that love is the best known but least understood of all God's attributes. Almost everyone who believes in God these days believes that He is a God of love. However, many incorrectly suppose that God's love, as demonstrated in His patience, loving-kindness, goodness, and forgiveness, nullifies His righteousness, justice, holiness, and divine wrath. The popular mind-set of God is that He is like a benign, aging grandfather, sitting passively in heaven-super-tolerant, affable, lenient, permissive, and devoid of any real displeasure over sin. Because He loves us, virtually anything goes. Rather than upholding the value of God's love, that kind of thinking cheapens it. As we shall see today, embracing an accurate understanding of God's love in no way diminishes or from His-other attributes. When we-consider God's-wisdom, we discover-something-of His mind. When we think of His power, we see His hands and arms at work. When we learn of His Word, we gain an understanding of His voice. But when we contemplate His love, we look deep within His heart. Let's do that today." ~ Chuck Swindoll

How profound! Until Jesus Christ burst onto the earthly scene as a little infant via virgin birth, that word "love" was understood mostly in terms of seeking one's own advantage. You know.. *Man, I love her or I love toasted bagels and cheese...* it was kind of like that.

Loving the unlovely was incomprehensible back then. Yes, a Deity in Heaven reaching down to sinful people just like us—that was absolutely unheard of and unthinkable.

The New Testament writers chose a little-used Greek word for love they called, “agape,” to express what God wanted to reveal to us all about Himself in Christ and how He also wanted Christians to relate to each other: ***"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"*** ([1 Jn. 3:16](#)).

Agape would post-cross be the ***"more excellent way"*** of living ([1 Cor. 12:31](#)). And that new kind of love rapidly became the identifying characteristic of the early church. Jesus had said: ***"A new commandment I give to you... as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"*** ([Jn. 13:34-35](#)).

As the years passed though, much of the true force of God's agape faded some. You and I and the entire body of Christ (the real Church) today is in the position of having to rediscover its meaning. Yup, agape is not some mere sentiment, fuzzy feeling, or intention; some love that lays dormant and powerless. Agape love is so intense, it's so dynamic when we put Christ first...when we daily decide to actively respond in love to God, even as He loved us. Sayin' words is the easy part; I'm talking about deeds and attitudes too. It's completely dynamic when it is surging through us unconstrained—as we mortify what's fleshly and love our brothers, sisters, neighbors, and those of the world for which Christ died ([1 Jn. 4:10-12](#); [2 Cor. 5:14](#)).

On the human plane for instance, here is some of what I (or any loving Christian), would say: ***"I won't compromise by putting you first; allowing you to get in the way of my relationship with Jesus Christ, but I do respect you. I won't ever worship you or place your will ahead of His will, but I do care for you.***

I won't enable you in the least to sin ever, but I will consider myself responsible for your welfare. I choose to see you as you are and what you can be in Him.

*Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
~Frances Jane Crosby*

I appreciate the differences and inborn talents you have, the giftings and strengths that God has placed in you and I totally accept you as my valued friend! You are a unique individual—as we all are unique (I know, so unfamiliar to many, but don't laugh). ***I recognize the huge value in you for you were made in God's image and I of course, will permit you to develop as God Himself purposes for you to do. I even want to aid you in this where I can.***

God being my Helper; I will protect you and not exploit you for my own benefit. I will try to know you as well as I can, because I know that increased honest communication and knowledge will enhance my respect for you even more.

I care about what happens to you—what happens to you REALLY MATTERS TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH (His real Church), ***so I won't just stand there doing nothing when you are in need! I am concerned for your life, thoughts and growth in every department—I want to see your God given dreams and personal directives from Him, fulfilled for His glory and for the good of His body. I desire to***

promote your good interests as our Lord leads me, even if it means sacrificing my own.

I have my own specific marching orders from the Lord, but I am accountable for my influence to you and will try to be candid in responding to you.. not out of some sense of duty wanting to dodge bad feelings, but voluntarily. Your spiritual needs will motivate me to get on my knees for you ..and with you in believing prayer. I will seek to shield you from all that hurts or defiles, but will guard against all possessiveness, manipulation, control and overprotection, as well. I'm depending on Him to help me. I want God alone to control and lead you daily. You are not mine or yours, but God's property just like I am His. I will correct you in love when needed, and will humbly accept that from you if I tend to get off base with wrong priorities. But I will also do my best to give God the room He desires and not get in His way by overcorrecting you.

I never want to speak into your life without love... or try to give you my own personal convictions especially in grey areas, when it's God's place alone to do that. You're of course allowed to choose differently from me in those areas minus me judging you.

Christian Love, either towards God or towards man, is an affair of the will. ~C.S. Lewis

Your conscience I will not try to be, but with grace I will speak dogmatically where the Scriptures are clear on a certain issue and will remain silent where the Scriptures remain silent. Christ is your Sanctifier and Lord, not me. I will look for the best in you, challenge you to the hilt ..with your

interests and those of the Church, placed before mine ..and will find no pleasure in your weaknesses or failures. I opt not to keep a record of wrongs. Yes, by God's enabling power, I will be pure, red-hot on-fire for Jesus, and patient—a good example and friend that will never purposely fail you (living according to [1 Corinthians 13](#))."

We understand God's love only as we respond to it in Christ. The most important point in the life of any individual is that [moment of decision](#) to receive this unmerited, unearned love through which we learn to love God and to pass His love on to others. Another important moment is when we're each [empowered](#) for this work of love horizontally!

The Bible states, "**God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us**" ([1 Jn. 4:8-10](#), niv).



For the Non-Christian wanting to turn and trust, we must emphasize what John 3:16 says about God's care for us. For the Christian who is expressing a desire to love Jesus more, we offer commendation and strong encouragement, for this is also God's highest will for us: "**Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind'**" ([Matt. 22:37](#)):

God remains the Initiator and we are to be the responder, which is completely opposite from much of the teaching going out over the airwaves these days. We love God because He first loved us (see [1 Jn. 4:10](#)). We don't give to get, no, we give to obey. We're grateful for all that He has already give to us. We are to love God and people, **"because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"** ([Rom. 5:5](#)). **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love"** ([Gal. 5:22](#)).

We are to love Him by allowing Jesus to be our chief Boss in the big and little things we face each day—yes, through obedience to Him: **"Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching'"** ([Jn. 14:23-24](#), niv).

We demonstrate our love through pure devotion to Him: **"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart"** ([Ps. 40:8](#)): We seek Him diligently through pouring over the Scriptures as often as we can: **"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night"** ([Ps. 1:2](#)). We seek Him through regular prayer: **"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord"** ([Jer. 29:12-14](#), niv).

We seek to serve Him right: **"Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain"** ([1 Cor. 15:58](#), niv). **"He will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them"** ([Heb. 6:10](#), niv).

When I have learnt to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now. ~C.S. Lewis

Agape love is the greatest inner motivation for ministry upwards and outwards. It's to be the top motivating factor! That's what should always control us in fishing for souls worldwide (that's personal evangelism starting with those at home and then reaching out to those in other lands – we call it missions), as we boldly, clearly and tactfully seek to share God's love with a hopeless world that's wandered far off course.

If the first mark of a true and living church is love, the second is suffering. The one is naturally consequent on the other. A willingness to suffer proves the genuineness of love.
~John Stott

If you run into a person who claims to be a Christian and they have problems in loving a fellow Christian, ya gotta point out that we only begin to understand the Lord's love as we reach out in love to each other!

It is a command of God to love our fellow Christians: **"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves"** ([Rom. 12:10](#), niv).

Because God has loved us, we should be able to love regardless of the worthiness of the object (person) of our love: **"...because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"** ([Rom. 5:5](#)).

It doesn't come naturally; it comes supernaturally as we yield. Love doesn't demonstrate itself automatically from birth on; it is a learned thing—it's a practiced behavior of life. The more we love, the more deeply we can express love, as God perfects His pure selfless love inside of us. Yes, He is the one who will perfect it inside of us, as we cooperate with His Spirit. Initially, prayer for others stimulates a deeper love for them. Let's keep at it!

You've heard that the fruit of the Spirit is love (and there's no comma following that word "love" in the Greek, so the words that come after love are basically describe the type of love that is. It's not a passive sort of love. Yes, our acts of loving kindness must proceed beyond mere lip-service and into practical service—into proper sacrifice which impacts lives. Those are the acts that add a dynamic dimension to love. It's unusual to see these days.

Paul said, ***"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality "* (Rom. 12:10-13). He also defines and carefully breaks down what love is, saying, ***"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails"* (1 Cor. 13:4-8, niv).****

Agape love remains loving even if there's no love returned to you. It is a sacrificial giving type of love that will back off when the other desires more space. It looks out for their welfare before your own desires. It consistently wants to bless others and it asks for nothing in return. It's so deep and wide and tall and awesome that it just keeps on giving without any hidden strings or price tag attached. That's the apex of concern regarding agape: giving. Agape is really a broad term. It's hard to fully define this word in English and impossible for humans to grasp it apart from God's Spirit working in them to illuminate what it's about in our hearts. It is simply far from natural love and never forget how the Bible declares, ***"God is agape."***

The supremacy of agape love must be accepted by all Christians—it's way more important that you have and walk in this kind of love than that you have the most coveted of spiritual gifts (that are also needed in the church today). We want engaging charisma rather than whacked out ugly charismania. Paul said, ***"Though I am able to speak with the tongues of man and angels but have not this (agape) love, I am become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."***

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
~1 Corinthians 13:13*

Let me ask you: Do you have the ability of speaking or singing publicly? Are you gifted in the area of powerful oratory skills? Having a grasp on hermeneutics, homiletics, diction etc—having a smooth silver tongue and a polished delivery is really meaningless unless you also have agape love inside. Why be like a mere clanging cymbal or some worthless noise when upward charity and outward passion is called for?

Agape outranks things like tongues, gifts of prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, the gift of faith and working of miracles for ***"though I could prophecy and***

understand all things, and though I had all knowledge and faith so that I could remove mountains, if I have not agape, I am nothing."

Paul continued on with, ***"and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor"*** agape love matters more. It outranks all service and sacrifice. Why sell it all to nourish the street vagrants in Miami or give your body up to be burned in the supreme sacrifice for them, if love is lacking on your end ..and God is leading you to minister elsewhere? Lacking God's love will profit you zip!

Love is patient; it suffers long and is kind. That's attractive! Are you spiritually? One with agape love can take a good deal of abuse patiently and still remain kind when trying to witness. Does that mean that we are to foolishly be some kind of silent doormat when it's time to say something? No way! But agape doesn't want to get even. Revenge and the wrath of man is always so ugly. We opt to pray and know that cruel sinners will start to change for good when they receive a new nature inside.

Paul said, ***"Love envies not. It vaunts not itself and is not puffed up. It does not behave itself unseemly, does not seek its own, is not provoked."*** Love won't demand or insist on its own way. It's not out on the take or egotistical and ***"Love thinks no evil; it rejoices not in iniquity but in the truth; love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*** Lots of things fail. I had a clothes dryer fail recently, but love ***"never fails."***

And love has two signs. Jesus said, ***"By this sign shall men know that ye are my disciples, because ye love [agape] one another."*** Yes, that's the great sign! That's way greater evidence to unbelievers that we are Christians than anything else. This agape love really needs to get working within us. It can make us one with each other in the Body of Christ, as we yield, show honor and give preference to one another. We're not to be all about parading ourselves around craving attention or about exalting ourselves. We aren't about forming exclusive junior high kinds of cliques. We are to be about our Father's business sharing that beautiful oneness of love that makes us all one together—sharing with each another the pure grace of God.. freely giving as we have already received of His love, forgiveness and goodness. With maturation; with growth, agape love will become dominant inside of us. It will then work its way out of us practically as we serve each other. It will more and more become a sign to lost people in the world that we are true Christians rather than poser-saints.

*The wheel of providence
revolves, but its axle is eternal
love. ~Charles Spurgeon*

Agape is a divine love that prevails. God is its only source and we can go to Him when we run out of love for certain people. We can't strive or connive to manufacture this love. Who can generate it? Who can fake it or duplicate it? We certainly can't and don't want to. Agape beats hate every time and it's more than some high quality characteristic.

Look at 1 John 3:14-15 where the writer says, ***"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him"*** (kjv). Agape is used here. It is a sign to the unregenerate in the world that we are real disciples, and it is also a sign to believers that

we've passed from death to life. We are no longer walking dead people—we'll never really die! Man, I have this new love for other Christians. The brethren are now my buds and I want to help them become spiritual!

Feigned or sideways (perverse) love at church is so repulsive—it's bad anywhere! False love with so called Christians or ministers just repels people away from the brethren and then many start thinking that God is weird like those phonies. But we are to depend on the Spirit as we positively influence hungry sinners and earnest saints with agape. There are so many who are suffering and hungry around us who are ill-fed and searching for something real. Trials come wave after wave and many Christians also long for a deeper experience of God's power and victory in their lives. Some get discouraged and start to wonder.

Fall Back On What You Do Understand

When you run into what you don't understand, fall back on what you do understand. Have you ever felt baffled or even doubted God's love when the storms came your way? Ever read about Job? He had a really rough time for a while and was clueless as to how it would all turn out. You remember how one day he was caught totally off guard and smacked so hard. Man, his life hurt all over as things quickly went from bad to worse and from worse to uber-dreadful.

His lovely home? Gone! His pristine health? Gone! His beloved children? Gone! Satan did it and God tested him. God actually allowed it for a purpose. Job was such a broken man and he couldn't see even a glimpse of the future. Unlike us, he couldn't sit down and read the last chapter of his own war story (the book of Job). He didn't yet know that God would eventually bless him on down the road.

The best testimony that Stephen bore was his last: not when preaching and working miracles, but when he pleaded for his persecutors; for then he most resembled the Lord Jesus in patience, forgiveness and love. ~Robert C. Chapman

He didn't get to see his kids on this side. But what a relief when his health returned to him; when God gave Him new possessions.

When it looks bad for you, please trust God like Job did. Be filled with faith and love in the Holy Spirit. Import what you need from the Lord and then employ it with love in fishing for souls! Christian, if you are trying to build up the Church without love.. STOP THAT!

Christian, when you don't get it, recall how the Bible says, **"The secret things belong to the Lord"** (Deut. 29:29, nkjv). Having God is better than having all the answers, for He is the ultimate Answer. His love is the solution. God is enough and He knows what is ahead for you. As you walk in righteous fellowship with Jesus—God's plan will unfold for the good ([Rom. 8:28](#)) to give you a future and a hope.

Our caring Father says, **"My ways are above your ways, and my thoughts above yours..."** So when we just can't seem to understand something that's going down hard... when we don't like something... why should we trade in what we don't know for what we absolutely do know?

When unexpected calamity hits us between the eyes, when disaster, harm or tragedy happens and the devil is right there to whisper in our ear saying that God is ticked and

doesn't love us any more...that's when we often feel like doubting or asking those age old questions, "Why God?" or "Why would a loving God allow _____?"

Think about the faithfulness of God in Job's life in that book titled after his own name. He asked the question "Why?" ..several times. Was something wrong with that? No, not necessarily! Of course we can ask a loving God, "Why?" when things head south despite all our best efforts to keep them from crashing. It's not wrong as long as we don't get presumptuous and think that our loving Father somehow owes us an answer.

To be blunt, God does not need anyone or anything, nor does he owe any of us an explanation. He knows when we really need to know something and explains things at that time, but some things aren't for us to know. When we feel ignorant, we should pray. When explanations, miracles and sermons aren't enough, there is God right by your side. He will meet all your needs.

Of course we will want to know, "Why? What can I learn here?" How can I gain from this?

Even if Jesus always responded in the affirmative to you, explaining the why of everything—why those things happened as they did, why she died like that.. would that knowledge really be a solace deep in your soul? Would it address and ease your deep pain and disappointment, or even heal your crushed broken heart? I don't think it would, but I do think that it would raise even more questions in your mind.

My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

~Proverbs 3:11-12

We Christians are to live on the promises of a loving God found in the Bible, not explanations, so why waste too much time looking over your shoulder backwards asking God why, when we can start forgetting our failures and trials, and go forwards hand in hand with Him doing His bidding.

Why did Job's kids die young? Why did Peter and Paul get arrested? Why did Stephen and James get snuffed out in their prime? Why in the Bible do we see suffering for the righteous? I personally asked why God took my younger sister Kathy at the age of 29, and not take me? She was a mother with two small children. She had so many friends and her whole life lay ahead of her. Man, I don't know why. It was very hard doing that funeral and then dumping her ashes into the Pacific ocean. And it was even harder on my parents.

But I heard Chuck Smith say this a long time ago: *You should never trade what you don't know for what you do know.*" Allow me to ask: What do you and I really know for sure?

- *We know for sure that God does loves us and won't ever ditch or forsake us, because His Word declares that.*
- *We know that God will make all thing work together for good in our lives—the apparent bad and good things. Often times after time passes by, we can see that what we thought was so bad really turned out to be good for us in the end. God can make good things come out of the worst of circumstances as we look away to Him.*

- *We know that God loves our family members, friends and coworkers—the lost as well as the saved.*
- *We know that God wants us to represent Him well and share with unbelievers everywhere, because of His great love.*

Will you join with me and not doubt God's love? Will you prayerfully join me and stand on *what you know*, instead of on *what you don't know*? We all will have to draw upon His strong grace for this.

God hasn't said that He would inform us about all things ahead of time before they happen. He's simply promised to love us and meet all our needs in Christ. His timing is so precise—He's never late! He is God you and I are not—He knows it all; we do not. That's why we need Him so.

Whoever you are, don't ever allow the unscriptural excesses of religious people who claim to be Christians.. discourage you from seeking all that God wants you to experience of His love, joy, peace and power. Satan wouldn't counterfeit the genuine from God if he wasn't nervous about it—if it was worthless and couldn't impact lives he holds hostage.

Many of us have not yet experienced the full, rich spectrum of the genuine work of love in our lives, but we will remain open to God for whatever He may desire to bestow upon us ..not going beyond what's written of course.

Our emphasis must never be *primarily on* visions, impressions, dreams, signs, wonders or feelings, but on passionately worshiping the Lord and properly teaching all the counsels of God for more than mere decisions. Yes, there is gobs in the Bible that we haven't yet experienced so why would we want to go beyond the Scriptures?

The Loving One Gets It!

Be encouraged in God's love letter to the saints (the Bible)! Did you know that during a time of prayer for believers and those who would believe through their witness—maybe that's you—Jesus said that God the Father loves us as much as the Father loves Him. Christ voiced to the Father, ***“You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me”*** (Jn. 17:23 nkjv). God indeed cherishes His kids! He indeed has a plan, a future and an eternal purpose for all believers. Sure it seems very mysterious, mystical and even frustrating at times, especially when so many things seem so permanently unknowable for us in this life, but when we don't fully *get it*, we can still trust our loving Father who always *gets it*.

Scripture Verses To Meditate Upon...

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13, niv).

“Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine hatred for evil and a real devotion to good. Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit” (Romans 12:9-10, Phillips).

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5, niv).

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him" (1 John 3:1, niv).

"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12, niv).

"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38).

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34,35).

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous" (Psalm 146:8)

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John 17:23).

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thessalonians 4:9)

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:17, 18).

Did you know that during a time of prayer for believers and those who would come to trust Him through their witness, Jesus said that God the Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus. Christ boldly prayed saying, "You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (Jn. 17:23, nkjv).

"You loved them just as much as you loved me" (ncv).

"You love them as much as you love me" (nlt).

Jesus said, *"The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (Jn. 16:27).*

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love" (John 15:9).

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John 4:11).

Jesus tells us *"I have loved you the same way the Father has loved me" (John 15:9a).*

"Dear brothers, I am not writing out a new rule for you to obey, for it is an old one you have always had, right from the start. You have heard it all before. Yet it is always new, and works for you just as it did for Christ; and as we obey this commandment, to love one another, the darkness in our lives disappears and the new light of life in Christ shines in." (1 John 2:7-8, tlb).

"There is a saying, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.' But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!" (Matthew 5:43-44, tlb).

"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40, niv).

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only

begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:7-11).

More Love Quotes...

We don't need to love ourselves as a precursor to loving God or loving those in our family—we already do love ourselves. ~Greg Laurie

The strength of love is shown in great things; the tenderness of love in little things. ~Robert C. Chapman

Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds. ~William Shakespeare

God's chief emotional attribute is L-O-V-E. God is love and He gives us the ability to love each other. He ultimately hopes we'll come to love His Son. Yes, He created us with the ability to have meaningful and loving relationship with Him and those in His eternal family. ~Chuck Smith

Real loving-kindness consists in us showing agape love to all types of people when we feel like it or not. Yes, even more than they deserve, but not in us loving them more than the Lord. What the world really needs today is more pure love in and from Him—love of Jesus relationally, of truth uncompromisingly, of righteousness faithfully, of His Church devotedly, of those outside of it tactfully.. and more intense hatred for sin, lies and evil. ~Kurt v.S.

"God is Light." "God is Love." That which professes to be light yet lacks love, is not of God; while that which calls itself love, but is not according to light is equally not of God. ~J. Charleton Steen

Genuine love is so contrary to human nature that its presence bears witness to an extraordinary power. ~John Piper

It's not sheer suffering alone that teaches us best or helps us in living right. If suffering alone taught us, the entire world would be real wise, since everyone around the globe suffers. To suffering must be added Christ, scriptural instruction, mourning, humility, understanding, patience, openness, vulnerability and love. ~Kurt v.S.

A little love has made me willingly study, preach, write, and even suffer... ~Richard Baxter

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. ~Augustine

You can witness without loving, but you can't love without witnessing. The two go together. ~Anon

Wherever the fear of God rules in the heart, it will appear both in works of charity and piety, and neither will excuse us from the other. ~Matthew Henry

...man is distinguished from both animals and machines on the basis of his moral motions, his need for love, his fear of non-being and his longings for beauty and for meaning. ~Francis Schaeffer

Children are not casual guests in our home. They have been loaned to us temporarily for the purpose of loving them and instilling a foundation of values on which their future lives will be built. ~Dr. James C. Dobson

To love as Christ loves is to let our love be a practical thing and not a sentimental thing. ~Sir Charles Villiers Stanford

What we love usually manages to get into our conversation. What is down in the well of the heart will come up in the bucket of the speech. ~Vance Havner

Love is the livery of Christ. ~Charles Spurgeon

Eternal and abundant life, starting at the point of conversion, is made possible by God's eternal love! ~Kurt von Schleicher

Love, and do what you like. ~Augustine

He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee, which he loves not for Thy sake. ~*Augustine*

It is terrible to find how little progress one's philosophy and charity have made when they are brought to the test of domestic life. ~*C.S. Lewis*

It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend his faults. So to love a man that you cannot bear to see a stain upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving words, that is friendship. ~*Henry Ward Beecher*

God's grace is like the oil that fills the lamp of love. ~*Anon*

Just as love makes law enjoyable, law makes love practical. ~*Walter Chantry*

Faith, like light, should always be simple and unbending; while love, like warmth, should beam forth on every side, and bend to every necessity of our brethren. ~*Martin Luther*

Because we love Someone else more than this world ..we love even this world better than those who know no other. ~*C.S. Lewis*

Love must be learned and learned again and again; there is no end to it. Hate needs no instruction, but waits only to be provoked. ~*Katherine Anne Porter*

In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity. ~*Augustine*

Oh! men and brethren, what would this heart feel if I could but believe that there were some among you who would go home and pray for a revival men whose faith is large enough, and their love fiery enough to lead them from this moment to exercise unceasing intercessions that God would appear among us and do wondrous things here, as in the times of former generations. ~*Charles Spurgeon*

¹ Please see John 3:16; Romans 5:5,6,8; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:4,5; 5:2,25; 1 John 3:16; 4:10; and Revelation 1:5, among other Bible passages.