Happy Valentine's Day



Love's GREATEST Good

Every February, we enjoy celebrating Valentine's Day, a holiday dedicated to the joy of expressing affection and love for those closest to us. Cards and gifts of candy, flowers and stuffed animals exchanged between spouses and friends are all ways to express love and care for another person.

There's no doubt that it's easiest and most natural to love those who treat us well, those who love us. We would all agree it can be very difficult to love someone who has hurt or harmed us in some way. This is because human love is usually conditional. That is, our love for others is tied to certain conditions: friendship, respectful treatment, or a family bond, among others.

God's Word, the Bible, teaches us that genuine love always seeks the greater good of another person. True 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"** (1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5).



It is important to note that the biblical description of love makes it clear that love can never be an excuse to sin, **"does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth"** (1 CORINTHIANS 13:6). Too often, human nature takes pleasure in what is unjust (what is illicit, what is wrong), especially if there is a personal benefit. However, since sin is not for the greater good of the other, it is not an expression of true love.

In contrast, 1 John 4:8 teaches us that love is the very character of God: **"God is love."** No human mind or heart can begin to fathom the greatness of His love, which has its ultimate expression in His giving of His Son to die on the cross for our sins. **"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).

It is truly incredible that God loves us unconditionally and immensely! His love is based on His own character and does not depend on whether or not we feel we deserve His love. God knows us completely, and despite the sin that is part of who we are, He loves us and desires our greatest good. **"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"** (ROMANS 5:8).

Dear reader, how will you respond to God's love expressed for you when Christ died on the cross? God's promise is fully reliable: **"…whoever believes in Him [Jesus Christ] should not perish but have eternal life"** (JOHN 3:15). Believe in Him and you will enjoy the forgiveness of your sins, the greatest good that God desires for you.

by John Nesbitt

All Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.

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