

**Love is Not.....**  
**07-31-16 AM**

*But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another - 1 Thessalonians 4:9*

Learning to exercise the love that we are commanded to do is not as easy as we might think. It requires an effort to learn and to practice. For many, the very understanding of love is not correct; thus it is necessary to look at how the Bible defines the love that we are to have for one another. Sometimes it is useful when studying something to understand what it is not. Here are four things that love is not.

1. Love is not a feeling

In marriage, most people choose their mate based on an emotional feeling they have. However, for many, that feeling subsides within a year or two, and they must then learn to love one another. Ephesians 5:25-33 speaks about the love a man should have for his wife. It is not emotional, but based in action. Love seeks the best for others, and Paul in Ephesians uses the example of Jesus and the church as the model of the love of a husband and wife. Jesus said that "if you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15); love is action, not emotion.

2. Love is not easy

Some think that love is something that just comes naturally. However, it is not. In 2 Peter 1:5-7 Peter describes the path that it takes to learn about love (faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and then love). Love takes work. It is like a farmer's field; he must first plant, then water, then weed, and later his crop arrives. Love comes after we invest the efforts we need to learn what is best. If we love Jesus, we keep his commandments; but we must first learn His commandments and how to keep them (John 14:21).

3. Love is not tolerance

Imagine going to a doctor with a serious health problem. The doctor, because he is your friend, does not want to give you bad news. Therefore, rather than identify the problem and the necessary treatment, he lies to you. Is this a good thing? We live in a world that teaches us that love is expressed in tolerance. That could not be much farther than the truth. In 1 John 4:9-11 God tells us that His love was expressed by INTOLERANCE; He could not tolerate our lost condition, and acted to change it. TOLERANCE is deadly, and is certainly not love. Love seeks the best of things, and as such, it often seeks to change us.

4. Love is misunderstood

When parents rebuke a child, that child may feel that the rebuke was hateful. Telling a teenager that they cannot go to a social event could result in their feeling "hated", and yet such a commandment might be because we love them. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their error, and they resented him for it. He said "I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved" (2 Cor. 12:15). Many people resent the expression of real love.

If we are taught by God to love, it ought to be His definition of love, not the world's definition of love. God's love teaches us to deny ourselves, which is not easy. It teaches us that we have sinned, which is not something we want to hear. Finally, it teaches us that we can change, which is hard, but when done, gives us our great reward.