



Is Christian Love Different?

1 Peter 1:22: (NKJV) *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."*

What does it mean to be a Christian? Obviously, (to us anyway) the "trademarks" of Christianity include being a follower of Christ, a believer in God and a believer in the Bible. As we see it, one other "trademark" of Christianity is the implementation and manifestation of "Christian Love" into your life. So, what is Christian Love anyway? How does it work? Where does it come from? How do you get it? This week we look into Christian Love and how it can be a life altering experience should we adopt its principles.

Questions for consideration:

1. What kind of love are we talking about when we say "Christian Love"?
2. Is "Christian Love" different than other expressions of selfless love?
3. How do we develop this kind of Love in our lives?

1. What kind of love are we talking about when we say "Christian Love"?

There are two entirely different words used to describe love in this scripture:

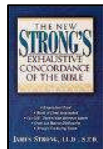
1 Peter 1:22: (NKJV) *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love of the brethren** <5360>, **love** <25> one another fervently with a pure heart."*

In the Greek language a number of different words are used to describe "love" in the New Testament, each with different shades of meaning. Our English language is not as specific as the Greek in describing love.

These first two will be our primary focus, the rest are building blocks for our discussion:

Love: Strong's #25 agapao (ag-ap-ah'-o); to love (in a social or moral sense): KJV-(be-)love(-ed).

Love: Strong's #26 agape (ag-ah'-pay); love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast: KJV- (feast of) charity ([ably]), dear, love.



Love: Strong's #5360 philadelphia (fil-ad-el-fee'-ah); fraternal affection: KJV-- brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren.

Love: Strong's #5361 philadelphos (fil-ad'-el-fos); fond of brethren, i.e. fraternal: KJV- love as brethren.

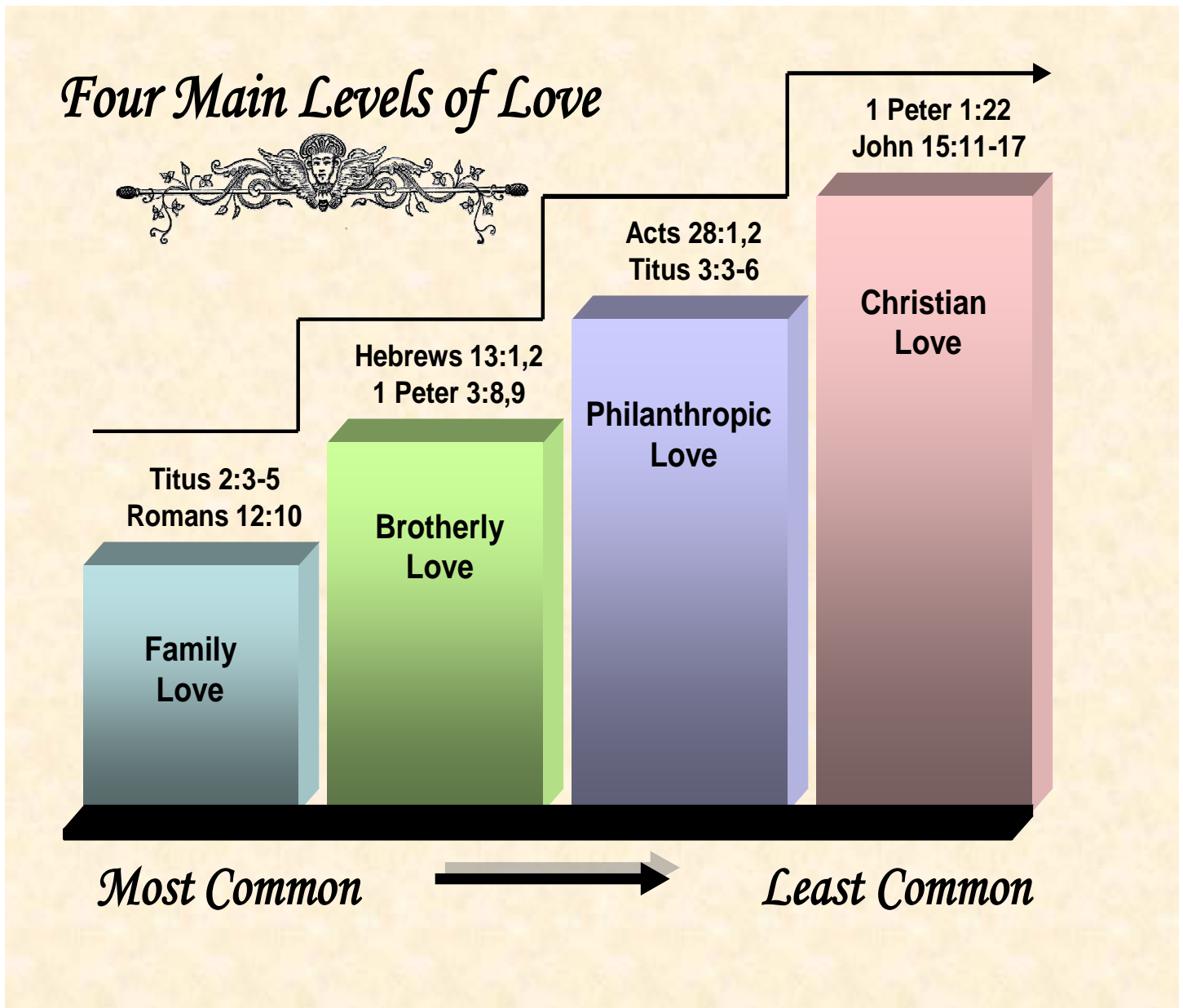
Love: Strong's #5362 philandros (fil'-an-dros); from 5384 and 435; fond of man, i.e. affectionate as a wife: KJV- love their husbands.

Love: Strong's #5387 philostorgos (fil-os'-tor-gos); fond of natural relatives, i.e. fraternal towards fellow Christian: KJV- kindly affectioned.

Love: Strong's #5388 philoteknos (fil-ot'-ek-nos); fond of one's children, i.e. maternal: KJV- love their children.

Love: Strongs #5363 philanthropia (fil-an-thro-pee'-ah); fondness of mankind, i.e. benevolence ("philanthropy"): KJV-- kindness, love towards man.

The Bible defines different levels of "love," and based on our observations, we have grouped these into four "levels." The **First Level** is the most basic and common in practice and the **Fourth Level** is the rarest.





First Level: 5362 philandros, 5387 philostorgos, 5388 philoteknos: The affection between spouses, parents to children and children to parents. Though these expressions are more intimate than the second, they are based on that same fraternal approach. This level is the most basic and instinctive.



Titus 2:3-5: (NKJV) *"³the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—⁴that they admonish the young women to **love <5362>** their husbands, to **love <5388>** their children, ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."*

Romans 12:10: (NKJV) *"Be **kindly affectionate <5387>** to one another with **brotherly love <5360>**, in honor giving preference to one another;"*

You should be loving fellow Christians as you love your own natural relatives. There is a natural basis for connection already in existence.

Second level: 5360 philadelphia, 5361 philadelphos: Brotherly love - fraternal affection, fondness. After familial love, this is the most common expression of love among mankind. Families have it, teams have it, those who serve in the military have it, even gangs have it. It is common to all, for it is a form of give and take, protect and be protected. It is expressed in the "I've got your back" sense of loyalty. There is a connection from a common goal or activity.

Hebrews 13:1-2: (NKJV) *"¹Let **brotherly love <5360>** continue. ²Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."*

1 Peter 3:8-9: (NKJV) *"⁸Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; **love as brothers <5361>**, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."*





Third Level: 5363 philanthropia: This level moves out of the relationships which are natural or forged by common ground and into relationships of no previous commonality, love being generously expressed without previous ties or obligation from the one who expresses it. This third level is where we find the basis of Philanthropy - this word is only used twice in the Bible.

Acts 28:1-2: (NKJV) *"¹Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. ²And the natives showed us unusual **kindness <5363>**; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold."*

Titus 3:3-6: (ASV) *"³For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his **love <5363>** toward man, appeared, ⁵not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour;"*

For these first three levels, there is some clear give and take involved. The higher the level, the more giving and the less taking - this brings us to the **Fourth Level** of love.

1 Peter 1:22: (NKJV) *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love of the brethren <5360>**, **love <25>** one another fervently with a pure heart."*

Fourth Level: 25 agapao, 26 agape: This is a level of selflessness and benevolence that surpasses philanthropy as it encompasses a level of giving that has no thought or need of reciprocation. Philanthropy is generally accompanied by some manner of public recognition, but this fourth level has no concern for such things - it is only concerned with the well-being of those to which it is giving.

John 15:11-17: (NKJV) *"¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹²This is My commandment, that you **love <25>** one another as I have **loved <25>** you. ¹³Greater **love <26>** has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you **love <25>** one another."*

Jesus is speaking to his disciples the night before his crucifixion. He knew his time was very short, so he spoke those things that were of absolute importance. This is the core of his message to his followers. He **commands** a selfless love where it doesn't matter what comes back, just as he himself loved them. This is the deepest form of love.



Philanthropic Love



Christian Love

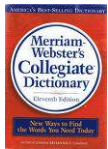


So, what kind of love is Christian love? It is a rare form of love, of the highest order that has been built upon the more commonplace levels of love. It is a love that is meant to transcend all barriers.

Back to the theme text: 1 Peter 1:22: (NKJV) *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love of the brethren** <5360>, **love** <25> one another fervently with a pure heart."*

2. Is "Christian Love" different than other expressions of selfless love?

The concept of selfless love is not the sole property of Christianity. The history of our world is filled with those who lived lives in selfless giving, yet were not Christian. Their examples of giving regardless of the cost are to be honored and learned from. Other words that describe this unique way of life:



al·tru·ism

- 1: unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others
- 2: behavior by an animal that is not beneficial to or may be harmful to itself but that benefits others of its species

be·nev·olence

- 1: disposition to do good
- 2a: an act of kindness b: a generous gift
- 3: a compulsory levy by certain English kings with no other authority than the claim of prerogative

"We are formed and molded by our thoughts. Those whose minds are shaped by selfless thoughts give joy when they speak or act. Joy follows them like a shadow that never leaves them."
- Buddha

What kinds of people do we think of when we hear these words? Obviously Jesus and the Apostles to begin with, but what about Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Hippocrates...?

Selflessness is essentially the same, wherever it is found, so is there a difference with Christians?

"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily."
- Sally Koch

- **Reasons:** Matthew 5:44-45: (KJV)
*"⁴⁴But I say to you, **love** <25> your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*

God is a good and just God as shown in the seasons. Even when you are being persecuted, God is still a good and just God.

- **Example:** Luke 9:22-24: (NKJV) *"²²saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." ²³Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."*

Jesus showed us the way to be selfless by his own actions. He was clear that our path would require clearly selfless choices. If we do not choose this path, we cannot be his followers.



- **Implementation:** Galatians 6:9-10: (NKJV) *"⁹And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

To live such a life, we must be always looking for opportunities. Though it may be draining and at times discouraging, these are not reasons to quit. Just because you are a Christian doesn't mean everything will fall into place - everything instead must "grow into place." The graces of the spirit must be cultivated and developed.

- **Method:** The first two levels must be in place to properly execute practice of the fourth.

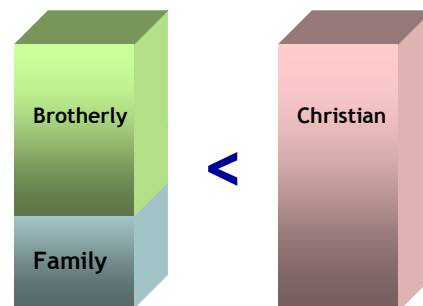
First Level Titus 2:4: (NKJV) *"that they admonish the young women to **love** <5362> their husbands, to **love** <5388> their children"*

Romans 12:10: (NKJV) *"**Be kindly affectionate** <5387> to one another **with brotherly love** <5360>, in honor giving preference to one another;"*

Second Level Hebrews 13:1: (NKJV) *"Let **brotherly love** <5360> continue."*

1 Peter 3:8: (NKJV) *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; **love as brothers** <5361>, be tenderhearted, be courteous;"*

Why is the **Third Level** (Philanthropy) not used in these Scriptures? Perhaps it is because the third level is in many ways a public showing of benevolence. The Christian, rather than being in such a perceived position of power, ought to graduate right to the fourth level of a completely selfless approach. The point for us is to love - not to draw attention to ourselves. Philanthropy is excellent, but this in itself does not require the basic levels of love to have been mastered.



"Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment."
- Anthony Robbins



3. How do we develop this kind of Love in our lives?

Back to the theme text: We must be willing to "walk the walk" in order to grow, for a lack of growth is not acceptable:

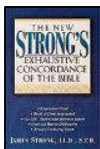
1 Peter 1:17-23: (NKJV) *"¹⁷And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ²²Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."*

Observations upon what is this "walk" is based:



- **God is fair** (verse 17) **Our redemption is by the blood of Christ, therefore perfect and permanent;** (verses 18-19)
- **This is a plan that had its beginnings before the world began and is not arbitrary;** (verse 20)
- **The miraculous raising of Jesus from the dead sealed our faith in God who *always* delivers;** (verse 21)
- **Because of all these things, we can now follow through on** verse 22:

1 Peter 1:22: (ASV) *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto **unfeigned** <505> **love of the brethren** <5360>, **love**<25> one another from the heart **fervently**."*

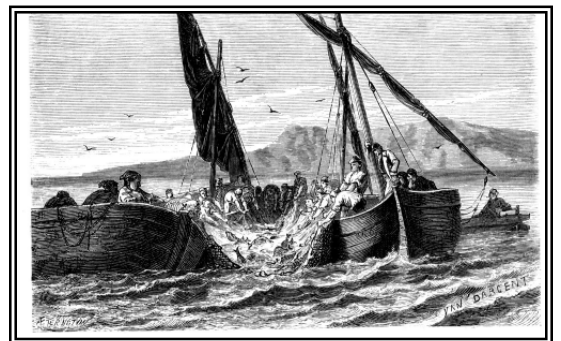


Unfeigned: Strongs #505 anupokritov an-oo-pok'-ree-tos without dissimulation, without hypocrisy, undisguised, blatantly outward

Fervently: Strongs #1619 ektenwv ektenos ek-ten earnestly, fervently, intensely

The Apostle Peter would have known all about the sincerity and passion required to go from one level of love to the next. We drop in on Peter early in his life, after Jesus' resurrection:

John 21:4,6,7: (NRSV) *"⁴Just after day-break, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea."*



Upon realizing that Jesus is there, Simon is unable to contain himself and wait.

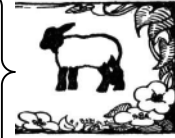
John 21:15: (NRSV) "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you **love** <agape> me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I **love** <phileo> you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."

"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."

- Buddha



The Question: Do you "agape" love me?
The Answer: You know that I "phileo" love you...
The Mission: "Feed my lambs" (the young, beginners in the way needing the "milk of the word")



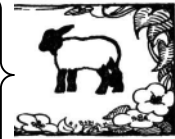
Peter thus states his personal attachment and devotion to the Lord, but refrains from claiming the highest love for which our Lord inquired. This humility was an excellent sign, showing Peter had learned a needed lesson and had ceased to boast and feared his own weakness.

This mission would only be given to one who is trusted, one who has been given a new name (from Simon to Peter).

John 21:16: (NRSV) "A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you **love** <agape> me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I **love** <phileo> you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."



The Question: Do you "agape" love me?
The Answer: You know that I "phileo" love you...
The Mission: "Tend my sheep" (the more mature followers who need guidance and direction)

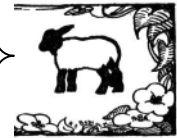


This mission would only be given to one who is trusted, one who has taken on a new vocation and direction.

John 21:17-19: (NRSV) ¹⁷He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you **love** <agape> me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you **love** <agape> me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I **love** <phileo> you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."



The Question: Do you "agape" love me?
The Answer: You know everything, you know that I "phileo" love you... Peter knows he can't go beyond where he is.
The Mission: "Feed my sheep" (the weak sheep, weak in faith who are to be fed and cared for.)



This mission would only be given to one who could understand weakness and give what is necessary to overcome it. Peter would not make a confession he was not yet capable of, but Jesus was willing to work with him. (Note that Jesus asked him three times - just as Peter had denied him three times. Peter was also drawn to the Lord at three different times.)



Practical examples of developing this magnificent love:

- Being a conduit of those who give anonymously
- Foundations which can support anonymous gifts (Matthew 6:3,4)
- Trying to give without getting caught (this is a nice thing to teach your children!)

Do not think that love in order to be genuine has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies. - Mother Theresa

Agape Love: Love God first and above all:

Matthew 22:37-39: (KJV) ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Love what is right:

Hebrews 1:9: (KJV) "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Love those around you after the example of God and Jesus "stepping it up" to the higher level:

1 Thessalonians 4:9: (NKJV) "But concerning **brotherly love <5360>** you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to **love <25>** one another;"

John 15:9: (KJV) "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

John 15:12: (KJV) "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

Ephesians 5:25: (KJV) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"

Realize the grace in which we stand:

Matthew 5:43-46: (KJV) ⁴³Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt **love <25>** thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴But I say unto you, **Love <25>** your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ⁴⁵That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if ye **love <25>** them which **love <25>** you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

"You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you."

- John Wooden

You must rise above those around you in life. Everybody loves the people that love them - that's not hard! Jesus wants you to love your enemies. We must put things in perspective and separate the sin from the sinner.



John 15:13: (NKJV) "*Greater **love** <26> has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*"

The highest form of love requires the highest form of commitment. Do you put your passion into your giving with selfless love?

Agape love makes us honorable:

1 Corinthians 13:1: (KJV) "*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*"

Without the highest form of love, the most eloquent of speaking is just noise.

Gives meaning to our giving:

1 Corinthians 13:3: (KJV) "*And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*"

"I believe life is constantly testing us for our level of commitment, and life's greatest rewards are reserved for those who demonstrate a never-ending commitment to act until they achieve. This level of resolve can move mountains, but it must be constant and consistent. As simplistic as this may sound, it is still the common denominator separating those who live their dreams from those who live in regret." - **Anthony Robbins**

Even if you are extremely generous, the point is still not what you give, it's how you give.

Love is patient, kind, not envious and humble:

1 Corinthians 13:4: (KJV) "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*"

While philanthropy is valuable, it is not the highest form of love.

Love is always appropriate, unselfish, understanding and does not assume:

1 Corinthians 13:5: (KJV) "*Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*"

This is the kind of love Jesus demonstrated.

Love takes no pleasure in sin, rather its pleasure is in truth:

1 Corinthians 13:6: (KJV) "*Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*"

This love is a culmination on focusing only on that which is good.

Love is faithful:

1 Corinthians 13:7: (KJV) "*Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*"

Because it is founded in truth and righteousness from God through the example of Jesus, it is absolutely faithful.

Love never fails:

1 Corinthians 13:8: (KJV) "*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*"

**So is Christian Love different?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**

