

## Love Put into Action

“Love” is one of the favorite words of Christians and is at the very heart of what it means to live as a Christian in interaction with other people. The problem is that “love” can be a vague, misunderstood, overused term. People tend to attach their own meanings to it. Therefore, the biblical concept of love must be emphasized.

Biblical love is not an emotion, but an attitude or mindset. We are commanded to love. We can decide and determine to love others.

None of us can love in the way we should without the enabling grace of God. Love is not entirely the product of the human will, but our wills are involved. The key is to put love into effect in all our relationships. In Romans 12:9-21, Paul wanted to show what biblical love looks like in practice.

Some say, “Always do the loving thing,” using “situation ethics” as a guide for their ethical behavior. They fail to define “love” in God’s terms. God has established the standards of right behavior, and they are revealed to us in the Scriptures. In situations where God’s commands and the command to love are in conflict, what should a person do? Some want to “do the loving thing” regardless of what the Bible says; they support this with Scriptures like Matthew 12:1-8. Others say, “Follow God’s commands, and He will make a way out for you,” based on 1 Corinthians 10:13. Ethical dilemmas in which we must choose between being loving and following another command of God are rare. Usually, the conflict is between what God has commanded in Scripture and what we *think* is the “loving thing” to do. We must always follow the commands of God.

One of the most important parts of love is the attitude of non-retaliation. Paul said, “Bless those who persecute you” (12:4). Jesus told His followers, “...pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). Even though the desire to get revenge is often strong, Christians are to trust that God will ultimately take care of the wrongs and injustices in the world.

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