



INTRODUCTION

Galatians 5:22--this love is a gift and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is “the Spirit’s operations” on a yielded soul.

- It is love to God manifested in love to others.
- It is **INTELLIGENT** and **PURPOSEFUL**
 - Intelligent --Bible-based with specific instruction
 - Purposeful --a love of **CHOICE**



I. WHAT DOES “LOVING THE BRETHREN” ACTUALLY MEAN?

A. Does it mean PHILEO or AGAPAO?

*I Peter: 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a **sincere love** of the brethren, **fervently love** one another from the heart.*

- The first word is PHILEO and the second is AGAPAO.
- Sincere means unfeigned—you can’t “put on” or love artificially or it will be worthless, I Cor. 13:1-3.
- Fervently means it is intense affection, an all-out stretch. There is no restraint on our love.

B. It means we have a personal relationship with the Lord, and God is our Father.

I John 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

I John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

C. It means we are ACTIVE in this love and not just talk.

I John 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and in truth.

D. It means we are ONE BODY.

Colossians 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

- It unifies us in spite of all our differences.
- Beyond—set apart or “above”
- More far-reaching, all-encompassing than other graces, and permeates them.

II. WHAT DOES “LOVING THE BRETHREN” LOOK LIKE?

A. Love for the brethren is LIMITLESS.

1. *I Thessalonians 4:9-10 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.*
2. *I Thessalonians 3:12 And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you.*
3. Why does he put such strong emphasis on it?
 - He wants them to GET BETTER at it.
 - We get WEARY.
 - We get involved “in our own little sheepfold.”
 - We will never attain God’s example.
4. I Peter 1:22 NO RESTRAINT.

B. Love for the brethren is SACRIFICIAL

- *I John 3:16-18 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*
- To the death! Whether weary, busy, insecure, fearful, etc.

C. Love for the brethren is a COVERING FOR SIN.

- *I Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. God's love for us has no bounds and takes care of all our sin.*
- We bear with each other because we know what we ourselves are like, and we desire forbearance.
- This verse is not referring to blatant sins that God condemns and must be dealt with but to those imperfections and offenses coming from fellow Christians who still do sin.
- Love forgives again and again and again...

D. Love for the brethren is utterly GRACIOUS.

1. I Cor. 13:1-7 is what love looks like.
 - Verses 1-3 give us the MOTIVATION for service and sacrifice.
 - Verses 4-7 tells what it does and doesn't do, what it is and is not.
2. Love promotes the HAPPINESS of all, in every area.

E. Love for the brethren is CHRISTLIKE.

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another, JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

1. How did Christ “love” His disciples?
 - *John 13:1 Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart of the this world...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*
 - He focused on them, in His hour of greatest need.
 - Chapters 13-17—foot-washing, loving discourses, prayer
 - He had chosen them though they had never sought Him.
 - He loved them fully and sacrificially for 3 years by:
 - spending time with them and fellowshiping with them
 - teaching, correcting, and challenging them patiently and kindly
 - sacrificing His own needs and providing for them
 - commending them and encouraging them
 - bearing with their sins and errors, even unbelief
 - setting them apart for eternal recognition

2. So how should WE love one another?

a. Helpful thoughts

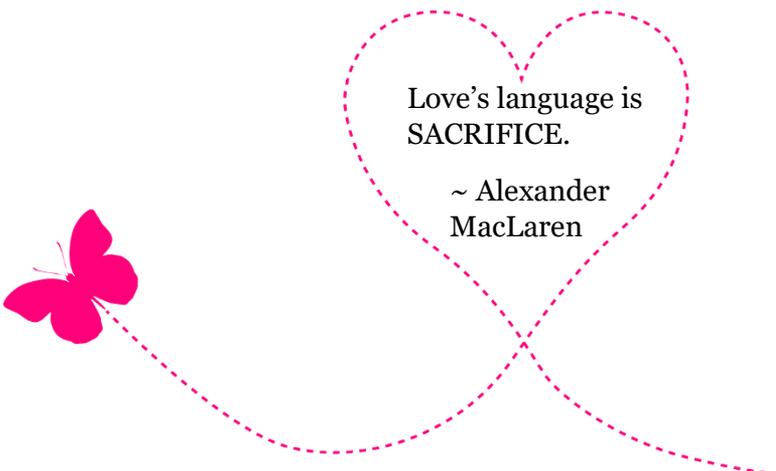
- We love in spite of all of our differences.
- God doesn't work the same lessons in us at the same time. We are all "diamonds in the rough."
- Avoid taking offense: Put the best construction on the words and actions of others.
- Don't compare yourself! It fosters self, pride, and shame.
- Loving one another includes any and all personalities.
- Don't judge motives. Assume good motives and intentions.
- Loving those closest to us sometimes even hurts. It's hard. It means doing what's right for others even if unappreciated.
- You can have strong personal standards and convictions, but you should not disdain others whose ideas are different from yours.
- There are people who may not want to be loved in the right way. Love them compassionately anyway.
- There are people you may feel intimidated by just because of their personality or position (not actual harassment but our tendency to assume someone doesn't "like" us). Love them kindly anyway.
- Self-love shuts our hearts to others.

- b. Love in all the ways Christ did, seeking the best welfare of all of our Christian family, and in every way. Love sacrificially, selflessly, and limitlessly, relying on the grace of God to perform the will of God.

Love through me, Love of God;
There is no love in me.
O Fire of love, light Thou the love
That burns perpetually.

O blessed Love of God,
That all may taste and see
How good Thou art, once more I pray:
Love through me—even me.

~ Amy Carmichael



Love's language is
SACRIFICE.

~ Alexander
MacLaren

Synopsis from John Gill:

Love one another...

~by keeping and agreeing together, praying one for another, bearing one another's burdens, forbearing and forgiving one another, admonishing each other, and building up one another in faith and holiness...

~as Christ has loved his people freely, notwithstanding all their unworthiness and ungratefulness, though there be many things in them...which are disagreeable;

~as Christ loves all his children without any distinction, so should they love one another, whether poor or rich, weaker or stronger, lesser or greater believers;

~as Christ loves them not in word only, but in deed and in truth, so should they love one another with a pure heart fervently, and by love serve one another.



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