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Love One Another

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Love One Another

No concept has catalyzed the production of more music, poetry, art, writing, or film than love. From highbrow artistic creations to playground rhymes to marketing campaigns to pharmaceuticals to our most cherished dreams and aspirations, love, and our human experience of it, is undeniably center stage.

Love, it turns out, is also central to God, Jesus, faith, and being a Christian. It was from an abundance of love that God created everything, especially humanity. It was because God loved us that Jesus came to die in our stead and so restore the possibility of an abundant love relationship with God. Jesus commanded His followers to live lives characterized by loving God and loving others. And it is to a future of the fullest expression of love joined with our most authentic expression of worship that we look forward to after death.

In the passages below, it is striking to notice how loving one another is described. Love is spoken of as devoted, as in the way in which families are committed to each other. Reflecting the reality that even if family relationships are broken, you can't physically un-relate yourself. Being a Christian is similar—even if you don't get along with someone, by nature of the new family created in Jesus, the Church, you are still related to them. This means that just like the kind of love that makes families work, love in the Church has to be other-centered, humble, obedient, and completely committed.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:10

“Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.” 1 Thessalonians 4:9

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.” 2 Thessalonians 1:3

“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.” Hebrews 13:1

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.” 1 Peter 1:22

“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.” 1 Peter 3:8

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2

“For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.” 1 John 3:11

“And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.” 1 John 3:23

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God” 1 John 4:7

“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” 1 John 4:11, 12

“And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” 2 John 1:5, 6

In 1 John 4:11-12 above, loving other believers even transcends the love within families. Love in the Church becomes one of the ways we actually know and experience God. God becomes tangible, in a sense, when His Church loves one another. Living out God’s love is our purpose.

Some Challenges

1. Take a minute to think back over this past week. What kinds of words would describe your love towards other believers? Were you other-centered, humble, obedient, and completely committed?
2. The truly radical thing about Christian love is that by it God is experienced tangibly. Who is pointed to by the way you love? Do you love ultimately to be

loved in return or do you love with abandon such that the only explanation for your love is that it has its source in God?

3. Think of a difficult person to love in your life. Commit to praying daily that the Lord would give you a “nothing needed in return” love for them. Find a way to remind yourself to pray—set an alarm on your phone, pick a landmark you drive by that will signal that it’s time to pray, or obviously your own idea!