



THE CONCEPT OF LOVE

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” Jn 13:34

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INTERPRETATION OF LOVE

One of the most misinterpreted yet important concepts in human history is love, the same love which made God to send His Son to die for our sins is what some people claim lead them into sin. For instance many people that claim to fall in love often end up committing fornication and adultery. If love is capable of causing evil, why did God command us to love one another? Could the same force that makes a man righteous also render him a sinner? Could there flow out good and evil from the same force called love? To answer these questions requires a deep knowledge of the word of God and the help of the Holy Spirit.

The greatest of all the commandments of Jesus is that we should love one another; Jesus said that all other commandments hangs on love indicating that anyone who is in love will be able to obey all the commandments of God. A world that is full of love cannot experience any evil, and if everyone fall in love with one another, they will do no evil against one another. However, we all know that the world we live

in is full of evil in spite of the high rate at which people are said to fall in love, hence it is clear that there lies an unraveled mystery behind the reason for the continuous spread of evil in a society where love has become so popular among the young and the old. This same mystery is what makes Christian parents to teach their children to avoid love at a young age. It sounds incredible and bizarre to see a Christian parent teach his/her child that he/she should avoid the greatest commandment of God until he/she is old enough to love. Love has no limitations and it is bidden on every child of God irrespective of age. It is so sad to note that as much as some parents strive to ensure that their children walk in the way of God, these children grow up to become wayward and disobedient to God, as it has become a common phenomenon all over our world. These parents spend much of their time making their children to understand the word of God but in the end, all their efforts may end up in vain, in such cases, what we do is to blame the child for not abiding by what he/she is taught at home or we blame the devil instead. However, it is not always the blame of the child, neither should we always blame the devil for everything we do. The major cause of the inability of children to stick to what they are taught at home is confusion. This arises as a result of the fact that in a bid to make children very holy, we make them understand that love is bad and should not be practiced at a tender age. These same children later come across many bible verses which command them to show love to everyone, as such, they become confused, they begin to realize that some of what their parents teach them run contrary to the word of God, at that moment, they begin casting doubts over the reality of what they are being taught, they feel like they are being deceived and the moment they are no longer under the control of their parents, they

forget everything they have been taught and live their lives totally different from the way they were taught. This is a simple fact which most parents do not realize and until they realize it, they can hardly train their children to become true children of God. We should not forget that all the commandments of God, which parents teach their children are based on love, as such, parents cannot make their children to obey the commandments of God as long as they continue to make them understand that love is bad at a tender age. A house that is divided against itself cannot stand, therefore, teaching people to obey all the commandments of God and negate the very foundation of these commandments will be tantamount to destroying our own works with our own hands. No matter what we teach anyone about Jesus, they cannot follow it if they do not know how to love. No child or adult can do the will of God if he/she is not taught how to love. Once again, it should be recalled that the foundation of all the commandments of God is love and we must build every other commandment on this foundation. If this foundation is weak or absent, all other commandments of God cannot stand. Children should be trained in the way of God by first being taught about love and made to understand how to love.

This is not limited to parents alone. Many Christian leaders are guilty of the same misconception. Love doeth no ill and it is not capable of causing evil. The cause of the spread of fornication and adultery in the world is not the spread of love; if love spreads, it cannot cause evil. The mystery that lies in this is the fact that, as love becomes more popular, sin spreads faster. This is a great mystery and until we unravel it, evil will persist in our world. Shall we simply accept the fact that evil is continuous in our world and there is nothing we can do about it? Shall

we continue to live our lives in such a way that our coming generations will have no good to inherit from us? Are we to be comfortable with the continuation of extreme state of wickedness and unrighteousness which have characterized our world in spite of the spread of the word "LOVE?". We say no and we cannot continue sailing towards the rock. It's time to change the course of our journey and that change begins with the unraveling of the very mystery that makes evil spread faster when the word "love", is becoming more popular .

The very force that we describe as a mystery is no other thing but the misinterpretation of love. We have made our young ones to believe that love is all about fornication and adultery and we discourage them from celebrating the day we set aside for love, for the simple reason that we believe love can only be celebrated through unholy activities. What is fast spreading in our world is lust while love has almost gone into extinction. Many people who claim to fall in love have never known love and that is why they end up in sin. Often times, when I ask people of the definition of love, what they say is that love is a feeling of attraction towards the opposite gender. If this is the true definition of love and if love is simply about feelings, then how could it form the foundation of all the commandments of Jesus? Love is not limited to the opposite gender alone. It was designed by God to be expressed to everyone irrespective of gender, age or race. Jesus said that we should not only show love to ourselves but we should also show love to our enemies as well. When we limit our love to the opposite gender alone, we shall find it difficult to do well to the others and we shall also find it impossible to love God by obeying his commandments. Love has no restriction, it makes a man free from unrighteousness, love doeth no ill to his neighbor. When you love anyone, you show care to the person

and you never hurt him/her. Love should be taught and practiced in every part of the world and to everyone. It is more than a feeling, it is the expression of care. Once we are able to correctly interpret love, we are just a few steps away from correcting all the ills in our society.

In an ideal society, a boy should not find it odd to tell another boy that he loves him. However, we are living in an abnormal society where love is equated to intimacy, limiting love to the opposite gender only. As such, people find it difficult to love each other and the consequences of this misinterpretation are disaster, high rate of crime and all forms of wickedness against humanity. Love is powerful, it is the solution to all problems facing mankind, hence, everyone has to learn the true meaning of love and how to express love to one another. God expressed his love to us by first creating us in His image and then sending His Son to die for our sins. The disciples of Jesus expressed their love to mankind by preaching the word of God to the whole world in spite of the persecutions they suffered. True love endures suffering, it is patient, it does no evil, and it shows great care. If we want our young ones to live a right life full of righteousness, we must begin to teach them about love even right from their tender age. We must desist from telling them that they ought not to express love until they are ripe for marriage, no one is ever too young to obey the greatest commandment of God, therefore, no one is ever too young to show love. When the good people fail to teach the young ones about love, the opportunistic evil ones will teach them love as lust, and it is that wrong opinion that rules their lives forever.

Let's take a look at this illustration. There was a young girl named Rachael. She grew up in a family with very high discipline, whose parents were highly religious. They trained her up as a good girl and she

was very obedient to her parents and did all she was instructed without any hesitation. After a few years, she got admission to high school, her parents had often heard that many high school students engaged in many immoral activities, which is due to lust. However, as general maxims would have it, they believed it was because the students engaged in love at high school, therefore Rachael's parents warned her to stay clear of love issues at school and wait for the right time before engaging in love, they never mentioned to her the most important factor destroying the lives of the students, she was never told to avoid lust, rather she was told to avoid the greatest commandment of God, which is love. While her parents thought they were doing their very best to ensure that the devil does not take over the life of their child, they were actually helping the devil to destroy her life. At high school, Rachael never knew what it meant to love, she lacked the foundation for the commandments of God, all her obedience were based on the foundation of confusion, her obedience to God could not stand the test of time as love was lacking in her life. After a few years in high school, she had many friends who had many boyfriends, she tried to distinguish herself from them but they kept on advising her to join them in their lustful acts, with time she was told that there was no crime in love and it did not imply that she would have to engage in fornication, soon she began to have doubts in her mind and she decided that as a Child of God, she would search the bible to see what God says about love, she became surprised when all she found was that she should show love to everyone, at that moment, she was highly convinced that her parents must have deceived her when they warned her not to engage in love, soon she returned to her school and joined her friends in their lust which they had branded for her as love, her parents never taught her

how to show love, they failed to make her understand the difference between love and lust, rather they taught her to desist from showing love. As a result, she could not distinguish between love and lust and since she had found out that there was no sin in love, she accepted all what her friends taught her to do. Blindly and in her state of oblivion, she plunged herself into extreme lust and soon her character began to diminish. She forgot all she was taught at home and plunged deeper into sin. She became distant from God and at the end of her high school, she had become a part of the rotten generation of youths who engaged in evil activities to destroy their own soul in hell. She was well trained but she was never taught how to love. This is what happens to most young boys and girls, who are misled by their own parents into thinking that love is bad. Our society can never change for better until we realize the true meaning of love and youths learn how to show true love. No amount of scolding can make a child holy if he/she is not taught how to show love. All commandments of God are based on the foundation of love and parents must first lay that foundation before teaching their children the other commandments of God.

Having established that the popular definition of love is wrong and is the major cause of the ills in our society, it is impertinent that we find the right definition for love. Love can be defined in two major ways, both having the same meaning. Love can be defined in its simplest form as the state of caring about yourself or others. Though very simple, yet this definition is capable of making anyone irrespective of age to fully understand how to properly interpret love and how to show love. Love can also be defined in a more comprehensive manner as the state of being deeply concerned about yourself and other people's physical, emotional/psychological and spiritual welfare. This definition is

applicable to all forms of true love and it conforms to the word of God. This definition will be carefully explained below. By being concerned about a person's physical welfare, it means you are concerned about the way such a fellow relate with his fellow human beings, whether it is appropriate or not. This entails ensuring that you do not do any evil to any man. You can also be concerned about your own physical wellbeing by ensuring that the way you behave to your fellows is in accordance with the commandments of God. Anyone that has love must be holy in all his ways, such a fellow should not speak evil of his neighbors or cause any havoc to come upon anyone for any reason. If everyone can become truly concerned about their physical wellbeing and that of the world in general, no one will engage in criminal activities and everyone will live in peace with one another. The absence of love is the cause of the sins, crimes and wars that has engulfed our planet. People do not care about the physical wellbeing of themselves or that of humanity. Anyone that hurts his/her physical body does not love himself, a number of people derive joy from hurting themselves. Such is a drug addict who destroys his own body and derives his happiness from doing so. If many people are concerned about their physical wellbeing, they will not commit adultery or fornication because anyone that does so has exposed him/herself to a number of negative consequences, such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Caring about your physical wellbeing or that of others is the very first step in love. Jesus Christ exhibited this form of love by his miracles on the sick, the bond, and the dead. Even though the main reason why Jesus Christ came to the world was to die for our sins, which is the spiritual welfare/care, however love includes physical and psychological welfare as well, this is the reason why Jesus Christ healed many people that were in great need of help. He

performed so many miracles on both the righteous and the sinners. Jesus Christ exhibited the highest state of physical care when he cried at the tomb of Lazarus before raising him back to life.

Emotional/psychological wellbeing is also of paramount importance in love. This entails the way you think, your philosophies and how they affect you and your world. Before Jesus Christ came to the world, we all had many erroneous beliefs. Many people were caught up in various philosophies that could not save them from the power of the devil. This was due to the state of their mind. However, Jesus Christ was concerned about our psychological wellbeing, hence before laying down His life for us on the cross, he preached unto all men, showing them the right way and changing their way of thinking. Their beliefs and philosophies were all modified to conform to the way of God. Our beliefs controls what we do, it dictates our morals and our way of life. If our believes are wrong, we shall definitely live a wrong life, and when our believes are right, we shall be able to live the right life. This is the second aspect of love. if you love anyone and you perceive that the person's psychology is wrong, you should do your best to make the person change his way of thinking by convincing him/her to modify his believes to conform with the commandments of God. If you are not concerned about a person's psychological welfare, there is no way you can ever change his beliefs. In order to win souls for Christ and show love to everyone, you must be genuinely interested in the way they think, try to ask them questions and know what their beliefs are, only then can you know if they need to change their beliefs or not. You should also care much about your personal beliefs as well, you need to ask yourself if your beliefs are in accordance with the word of God or they are contrary to it. If your opinions are contrary to the word of God,

there is no way you can show love, because anything outside the gospel of Christ is pure hatred and lust. No matter how occupied you are, you should find time to read the bible, by so doing, you will be able to think in the right way and you will find it easy to do the will of God. Don't get hooked up with popular philosophy books only, and avoid those which contradict the word of God, they would only mislead you and make you think in contrast to the way of your creator. Make the bible your daily guide and base all your beliefs and philosophies on its contents.

The last step in love is spiritual welfare. This is purely about the way you live before God and how you do His will. Anyone that loves must be obedient to all the commandments of God. If you cannot do God's will, you cannot show any form of love. Your spiritual life must be built on a strong foundation.

After changing our philosophies and beliefs, Jesus Christ laid down His life for us because He was deeply concerned about our spiritual welfare. It was the main reason why he came to the world, because all men had sinned and had no grace to make amends. Jesus Christ offered himself as a living sacrifice for all men, by enduring persecution and laying down His life for us. It was the greatest love that anyone could exhibit. However, there is hardly any man on earth that can die for the sake of a righteous man or a sinner but we can still express our love to people in so many ways by becoming genuinely interested in their spiritual life. The best way you can do this is to bring them closer to their Lord and saviour. If you truly love a person, and you discover that such a fellow is held up in sin, as a true lover, you must show your love to such a fellow by helping them to get over it through preaching, advice and prayer. The reason why the apostles dared the persecution and spread the word of God to all nations is simply because they cared

about the spiritual welfare of other nations of the world. In our relationship with people, we should never get too occupied with many things in such a way that we shall have no time to discuss the word of God together and help one another overcome temptations and sins. One of the greatest reasons why great men of God do fall into the trap of the devil is due to lack of spiritual care from their followers. Many people believe their spiritual leaders are always perfect and need not to worry about their spiritual life. The fact is, no one is perfect and we are all made to perfect each other's ways as it is written Eccl 4:10 "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Our leaders express so much love to us by spending their whole life teaching us the word of God, hence, we ought show them our own love by caring about them in all aspects of life.

From the above, it is clear that love is all we need to live a perfect life, love does not bring any evil, and it is high time we changed our definitions and perceptions about love to include realities rather than the illusions of lust, which is being misinterpreted as Love. It is high time parents, guardians and leaders stopped teaching youths that love is bad and the young ones should not engage in love at a tender age. It is time young children be taught to show love to each other and avoid all forms of lust.

DYNAMICS OF LOVE

Love takes 3 major processes and love is never complete without any of the processes or stages of Love. Love begins from within yourself.

Before you can show love to anyone or love God, you must first show love to yourself. A man cannot do the will of God except he wishes to inherit the kingdom of God and this can only occur if he loves himself. The reason why children of God forsake the lusts of the world is because they love themselves and they want to be a partaker of the glory that God has set aside for his children. One of the main reasons for the woes in the world is the inability of people to show love to themselves, as a result, many of them engage in sinful acts that would destroy their souls on earth and in hell. If a man loves himself, he will always abide by the word of God and avoid the path of destruction. For instance, no man that loves himself would ever go to the house of a prostitute to commit fornication with her because in the end, the bliss of lust would be turned into agony and hatred, as such a fellow is prone to sexually transmitted diseases and crime, and the worst is that God cannot protect anyone that engage in fornication, as such, the fellow is at the mercy of the devil who would strike at him at anytime and destroy his body and soul. This rule is not limited to adults only. It applies to everyone on earth including the young ones. Our world is dominated by a high level of immorality among the young ones. Virginity is fast disappearing among young girls and most boys waste a great amount of their time in the bondage of the intimacy of dating. Love does not do any form of evil, he that loves himself would live a perfect life before God. At this point, it is important to consider how we can show love to ourselves. One of the ways of showing love to yourself is by being holy always, and this can be done by avoiding lust. We cannot avoid temptations in the world but we must always overcome temptations when they come. The world is full of evil things and evil people who will always want to turn our back to God. The devil also

knows that the only weapon he can use against us is to push us into sin so that we shall no longer be under the cover of God. Furthermore, we should make the bible our guide. Reading the word of God everyday will make us to understand all it takes to live a righteous life and to be successful in all our endeavors. The amount of love we are able to express to God and other men is determined by the amount of love we have for ourselves. A man cannot give what he doesn't have, if you do not have love within you, you cannot give out love. One of the funniest things to witness is when a drunkard, a thief or a fornicator approaches a young girl and tells her that he loves her. It is just like a poor man who does not have a cent, offering to give a young girl, \$1000. It is impossible for a drunkard who hates himself so much that he destroys his own soul with excess wine, to show love to anyone. Love is a precious diamond which a man can only give if he possesses it by himself. Love cannot be stolen, it cannot be acquired by force, and it is only acquired by obeying the commandments of God.

The second and third stages of love are to love your God and love your fellow men and women. These two stages cannot be separated from one another, they occur simultaneously. If you do not love your God, you cannot love your fellows and if you do not love your fellows, you cannot love God. There is only one way under the heaven to express love to God, and that is, "OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS." Jesus Christ said this in John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments." God values his commandments above all things and anyone that wish to be a true child of God must obey his commandments. Disobedience to the commandments of God means that we hate him and there is no love in us, the commandments of God are not grievous and by being faithful

we can obey his commandments. The commandments of God are comprehensively stated by St. Paul in Gal 5:19-21

***“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.***

At this point, it is important to note the difference between self-righteousness and obedience to the will of God. Self-righteousness implies bidding ourselves to a set of rules and not by God's directions, many people do make this mistake and they end up in regret. When God directs us to do anything, we are not to question the reason for such and we must obey him in all things. An example of this is when God directed Moses to marry an Ethiopian woman contrary to the rules He had given them, Moses did not disobey the instruction and he did as he was commanded by God. However, Miriam who did not care about the commandment of God and believed in her self-righteousness, opposed Moses and wanted to raise the children of Israel against Moses, therefore God struck her with leprosy and she was a leper for 7 days. ***Num 12:1-16***

All what God demands from us is obedience to his commandments. He first loved us by creating us in His wonderful image and Jesus Christ expressed his greatest love to us by dying for our sins on the cross of Calvary, therefore, we must reciprocate His love by doing His will at all times. The last stage of love is to show love to our fellows, your love to God is never complete if you do not love your neighbors by doing good to them. Matt 25:45

“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”

God commands us to show love to all men irrespective of who they are to us. Love should be expressed freely and if all men can love one another, none would think evil, speak evil or do evil to his neighbor. True love is all we need to free our world from disasters and evil acts. A man that loves his neighbours cannot steal their possessions, or cause any evil to come upon them. Love is wonderful and it brings perfection. By loving one another, we can make a better world, where love and Joy reigns, where everyone can live in peace and harmony. The problems of immorality that our youths face today is because they do not love one another. If a boy loves a girl, he would not engage in any immoral activity with her. It is very disgusting when a man considers the great irony that occurs every day in the world, it is not new to witness a young boy promise to love a girl and in the end, he impregnates her and destroys her future. If our youths do not learn how to show love to one another, they would continue to engage in lust under the pretext of love. Any man that is able to love himself, love God and love his neighbours is a perfect man and worthy of the kingdom of God. Perfection cannot be achieved if any of these is lacking, if you do not love yourself, you cannot love your God and if you do not love God, you cannot love your neighbours, likewise if you do not love your neighbours you cannot love your God.

At this point, it is important to consider how we can express love to people. The most important way you can show love to anyone is to teach them the word of God, if you truly love someone, you would not want them to end up in hell, therefore, the moment you discover anything about them that can take them away from the path of

righteousness, you have to tell them the truth and use the word of God to change their lives for better. By this, you can help them avoid backsliding. In the case of a non-believer, since God wants us to express love to all men both sinners and the righteous, as Jesus expressed love to the sinners, if we have friends that are non-Christians, and we love them, we must preach the gospel to them, and do our best to bring them into the light of salvation. If you do not preach the gospel unto your friends that are non-Christians, it means you do not love them and you do not care if they end up in heaven or hell. The greatest love you can express to anyone is to show them the way to the kingdom of God. Any form of love we express on earth will end the very day we die, for example, if you express your love to a friend by feeding him anytime he is hungry, the moment he dies, the effect of your love on him has ended, but, when you bring your friend into the light of salvation, the love you have shown to them, will continue with them while they are alive, when they are dead and in the world to come. A Christian who claims to have love, who claims to be righteous and do not spare some times to preach the gospel is just like a fruitless tree. The salvation we have received is a great talent which we must use to win more souls for Christ. Jesus taught us about this in Matt 25. Any righteous man that do not gain more souls for Jesus Christ will perish in hell with his righteousness, just like the man who hid his talent. If we are the light of the world as Jesus said, then anywhere we are must be lightened up with salvation. Even as a young high school student, anywhere I was, I always showed my light by preaching to as many students as possible and even in some cases, my teachers. The same thing applies to all men, when you are at work, in school or at home, you must take advantage of any interaction you have with

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