

Active Love

God is love, and when his Spirit lives inside us, we are inspired to express a godly love. Agape is the benevolent, selfless love that God shows. Godly love's characteristics are patience and kindness; lack of envy, boasting, or disrespect; it is not proud or self-seeking, not easily angered, does not keep track of wrongs, and does not find joy in evil; this love protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres; and this love never fails (1 Cor. 13:4-8). Most of these attributes produce a fruit that is visible or tangible.

God's love is active. He sent his only Son to save a lost world. True love continues to give despite difficult circumstances and lack of reciprocation. In other words, a Christian does not stop showing love even when the recipient of the love cannot (or refuses to) give anything in return. There is a selflessness in God's love that is not found in any other type of love or emotion.

Love is often considered an emotion, more a feeling than a practical expression. As Christians, we may find that we are also lured into this belief. Unfortunately, this concept often results in a shallow love that shelters self and hinders outreach. We may settle for offering thoughts and prayers when God would have us give more. For some cultures, expressing care may not come naturally. If this detached nature is not recognized and worked on, this will eventually result in people who cannot mirror the warm love of God to those around them.

Scriptures

Romans 5:8;

Romans 13:8

Proverbs 10:12

1 John 4:7-21

1 Corinthians 13

Matthew 5:43-48

Questions

1. Why do we frequently relax in the thought that we do not need to demonstrate our love because others should be able to feel it without display?
2. If all we notice are our sacrifices when we reach out to others, is this still an expression of godly love?
3. The term "thoughts and prayers" has become synonymous with putting forth the minimum effort possible for others in times of difficulty. Is there any truth to that assessment?
4. We regularly express during revivals that we love everyone. If asked to describe this unique love, what would we say?
5. What is a practical way to motivate ourselves to continue to show active Christian love when the person we are trying to help or reach is not responding or is responding negatively?

6. Does a soft heart come automatically with the new birth, or does it require a proactive effort to cultivate?
7. What is wrong if I find that the pain of others does not touch me?
8. Will Christians naturally care about those who are disabled? Enfeebled? How about our treatment of people we deem to be beneath us, such as waiters, cleaning people, etc.?

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