

Unadulterated love

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.
(Romans 12:9-10)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.
(Romans 13:8)

In talking to pre-Christians, the primary complaint I hear about the church revolves around hypocrisy. They say we are judgmental, and that we act as if we “have it all together” when we plainly do not. Unchurched people love to point to some high-profile preacher caught in a scandal, and everyone knows a “Christian businessman” who mistreats his employees and cheats on his taxes.

Which makes it strange to hear Paul describe love as a debt. Attaching a legal obligation to love smacks of the kind of contrived, plastic religion that unchurched people perceive in the church.

Real love—the kind of love Christ calls us to—is sincere. Not contrived or put on. We are called to be earnestly devoted to one another. Some might say: “I am just not feeling it...should I fake it?” or “How can I love a person who clearly does not love me?”

The answer is that we must tap into a source of love much bigger than ourselves. As we love Jesus, He imparts His love to us. As we submit ourselves to Him, He implants His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Then—an only then—can love truly be sincere; without hypocrisy, duplicity, or false motives. Only when we become conduits of Jesus’ love can we truly be devoted to one another.

Job one is for us to love one another. Job two is for us to love the skeptics that might wander into our meeting. When they experience Jesus’ love—love that is sincere—then they will know that while humans are flawed, Jesus is flawless and He gave His life for them.

Pray

Thank you, Jesus, for your extraordinary, immeasurable love for us. We see it every time we look at the Cross and it stuns us every time. Thank you for patiently dispensing love to us, even when we are oblivious and even resistant. Amen.

RECURRING NEEDS

Revival
Repentance
Wisdom
Marriages
Families
Sick/Grieving
Depression/Mental illness
City Church
Church leaders
Children
Youth
Singles
Senior citizens
Volunteers
Teachers and support staff
Emergency personnel
Business community
Elected officials
Missionaries
Worldwide church
The lost

REFLECTIONS
