

“NO GREATER LOVE”

John 15:13 – Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.



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Let's look at what "love" is. Webster defines "love" as an intense affection for another person based on personal or familial ties. There are three degrees (definition) of love. Eros = between a man and a woman. Phileo = friendship. And Agape = this type of love is the greatest and most enduring of all Christian virtues. There are three dimensions (reaction) of love. Visual: see/attraction. Physical: touch/affection. And Emotional: feeling/adoration. There are also three dynamics (action) because of love. Pamper = to treat with excessive care and indulgence; spoil. Provide = to supply needs and secure wants. And Protect = to keep from harm, attack or injury. Love will cause you to either act or react. When you see, touch or experience love, it causes you to react – sometimes in a negative manner. But when you act on love you are moved to do something for that person or thing that is the object of your love. So it is with God. All He wants to do is love us unconditionally -- in spite of ourselves.

Because of God's love for His creation, He prepared a plan of salvation for humanity after Adam messed up in the Garden of Eden with the consequent giving of His Son. God knew that He needed to restore us back into right relationship with Him. The direction that humanity was headed grieved God so deeply that He desired that His people should be saved and not lost so they can reign with Him eternally. God wants you to know and experience His love. He wants to reach everyone in the world with His love. The fact: God so loved. The evidence: God gave. The purpose: to save – from perishing and by believing. The proof: God sent His only "begotten" son: not to condemn the world, but to save the world. The means: thru Christ's broken body and shed blood for the remission of our sins. Christ's death, burial and resurrection paid the debt for the sins of all those who believe. And to all who believe, they shall have life and have it more abundantly.

Love is part of God's character. It's His nature. It is, in fact, His genetic makeup. It is who He is. And it is what He is. Therefore, He cannot be swayed by passion or diverted by disobedience. He acts, demonstrates, and shows His love towards us. The depth of the His great love is emphasized in that its object is the whole world. Though the coming of Christ involved judgment, the direct purpose of that coming, resting on the divine love, was not condemnation but salvation. Christ's sacrificial death was the supreme expression of the greatest love. We pick and choose who we love based on how they treat us and what they can do for us. But God loves every person. Not just the religious and the good; and not just those who love Him. But He even loves the unlovely and the unloving, the unbelieving and the obstinate, the selfish and the greedy, the spiteful and the vengeful. Could you genuinely love those who hate you, those who reject your one and only son, those who say all manner of evil against you falsely?

God demonstrated His love in the most perfect way possible. Without question, the greatest act of love is the sacrifice of a man's own life. God gave His Son to the world, and He gave His Son to die. It cost God dearly to give His Son up to the world and up to the cross. Because He demonstrated the greatest love, He allowed His Son to come into a world that was depraved, wicked, rebellious and revolting and into a world full of darkness, hostility, bitterness, anger, war, immorality, shame and sin. The bottom line – God gave His Son so that we might be forgiven and saved. Because of His great love, He gave up His Son to be separated from Him allowing Jesus to die for your sins and mine. Now tell me if that's not love at its best!

As you're out shopping for the biggest box of milk chocolate and those overpriced roses for that special someone, never forget that as much as you may love that person, your love pales in comparison to the greatest love ever shown. God so loved us that He gave everything He had to us. And through the shed blood and broken

body of His Son, Jesus Christ we now have everlasting life. There is no greater love!

Happy Valentine's Day!

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