

Add Love

The word "love" is used constantly in our culture. It is thrown around all the time. It is one of those words that everyone seems to know what it means until you ask them to define it.

Can you define love? Can you define Peter's use of it in 2 Peter 1:7? The love Peter speaks of here is not a mere feeling or emotion. He is using the powerful Greek word "agape." This is God's same kind of love for us (John 3:16). It involves action. It is when one chooses to be benevolent and selfless towards others. It is one-directional (it is not based on other people's responses).

This is another ingredient for spiritual growth that we must add to our faith (2 Peter 1:5-7).

Love as it relates to God.

- God loves us.
 - He is love (1 John 4:8). God is the source and ultimate expression of love.
 - He gave us His Son (John 3:16).
 - The Son died for us on the cross (John 15:13; Romans 5:18; 1 John 3:16).
 - God's love is costly, active, and sacrificial at the highest level.
- We must love God.
 - This is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). We must hold nothing back and love God with every fiber of our being!
 - We must sacrifice and be obedient (1 John 5:2-3; John 14:15). Those who truly love God submit to His will.

Love as it relates to our family.

- We must sacrifice, nourish, and cherish our spouse (Ephesians 5:22-33). We must respect and be gentle and sensitive to their needs. We must be honest, compassionate, unselfish, and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32).
- We must teach our children about the Lord and how to serve Him (Ephesians 6:4). We must protect their hearts and discipline them (Proverbs 22:15).
- We must love one another (John 13:14-35; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:7, 11, 19-21). Paul tells us to practically love one another in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Loving our brethren involves actively seeking their good and best interests.

Love as it relates to our neighbors.

- This is equal to the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-40).
- Our neighbor is anyone who needs our help (Luke 10:29-37).
- It includes the people who live next door to us, our waiters, schoolteachers, co-workers, classmates, coaches, cashiers, etc.
- The Lord requires we actively seek to bless and help those not part of God's family.

Love as it relates to our enemies.

- Love stretches beyond those who are easy to love (Matthew 5:43-48). We are even to love those who insult, mock, reject, and hurt us.
- How do we love our enemies?
 - Pray for them (Luke 23:34).
 - Be kind to them.
 - Seek peace.
 - Avoid seeking personal vengeance (Romans 12:9-21).
- We need to remember who we were before we became Christians (Romans 5:10). We didn't deserve God's love and kindness.

Conclusion:

Do you need to respond to the love of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3)?

- Shawn Jeffries