

LOVE IS

By Rev. Bill Banuchi - Marriage Newsletter January 2012

Looking forward to Valentine's Day, and the celebration of love, it might be a good time to stop and see if we really understand what love really is. We've all seen the cartoons with the little boy and girl and the caption, "**Love is...**" It's as though no one really can know what love is so we'll just put out a lot of nice ideas to at least get the feeling of love.

Well, love is no mystery. God made it plain,

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life." -John 3:16. (Tim Tebow's favorite).

In a practical sense, love is "**sacrificing for the needs of another.**" You see, God didn't send His Son to die on a cross for the desires of the people. They desired to be set free from the Romans, never mind their sin! But Jesus knew the need was to be set free from the consequences of sin, so he willingly sacrificed Himself to meet that need.



So we see that there are two elements to love:

1. the need on the receiving end of that love, and
2. sacrifice on the giving end.

Both must be present to demonstrate love. We can go wrong in one of two ways: We can give to meet a real need, but if it's not perceived as sacrifice it doesn't communicate love. It's been said that a person's generosity is not measured by what he gives but by what he has left over. Christ had nothing left. He gave all. That's love.

The other way we can miss it is by sacrificing, but totally missing the need on the part of the one we're trying to love. This is seen in the husband who knocks himself out working overtime to provide for the family, when the real need might be spending quality time with them.

You see, real love means taking the time to understand the real needs of the one being loved, and being willing to give all—just as Christ gave all—to meet that need.

That is love. Anything else is a relationship built on co-dependency, a mutual use agreement or something else, but whatever it is, it isn't love.

Oh, and by the way, without God you don't stand a chance because

"Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.—1 John 4:7,8

So now, we no longer need cartoons to give us a feeling about love; we know exactly what it is, and what two elements need to be present: the need on the part of the one receiving, and unconditional sacrifice on the part of the one who is giving.

So what does that look like in our relationship?

"Dear friends, let us love one another..." —1 John 4:7