

What Love Is and Is Not

It doesn't matter how one is brought up or where one lives, love is one universal word that's on everybody's mind and falls from everyone's lips. Every living soul loves something and someone somewhere. Still, what the world most sorely needs is love.

Love can be broadly defined as the opposite of hate, both of which have similar amounts of power with opposing purposes: love empowers; hate disempowers. Sadly, love loses its way when one gets angry, lets the dark side of human nature take charge of one's heart, mind, and soul -- and then to hate one succumbs.

It's easy for anyone to *talk about* doing a labor of love for the world, but actually *doing it* can be as hard as climbing a very high mountain and clinging to its steep wall. It's no small wonder we still witness much anger and anguish, violence and war.

Understanding love first requires that one discern the tyranny of our nature's dark side, known as *sin*. By nature we were "sold" to *its* "bondage" (Romans 7:14). Paul is truthful when exposing the power of this tyrant: "For the good that I wish, I do not do, but practice the very evil that I do not wish" (Romans 7:19).

The other side of human nature is more God-like. We were created in *His image* and *wonderfully made*. This is why people are also capable of loving, as God is love (1 John 4:7-21), even when they know Him not. The difference between us and Him is that we are human. We can't love the way He loves us, as the dark side of our nature controls the flesh of life and can tip the 'balance of power' in favor of hate against love. So what's love?

Love is kind and gracious; patient, not impetuous; humble, not arrogant; genuine, not pretentious. This is not all: love "does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." This definition of love is beautiful, straight from the Bible (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Members of humanity desperately long for this type of love, but fall short of solidifying this most important foundation of life. I will soon elaborate on the Way of Love and share more of my thoughts on why love should and can still lead the way.