**The Many Sides of Love**

**Introduction:**

Have you ever heard someone say, “We just need to love each other.” But what does that mean? And what does that look like?

**Body:**

1. **Love Is Discerning**

* Discerning means discriminating, critical. Love sees things as they really are – never satisfied with half-truths or half the story. I John 3:18 “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” NKJV Love is not blind. It does not shut its eyes to the faults of others. Love will rebuke and discipline if needed. Note Hebrews 12:5-11 “And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens; And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” NKJV Paul asked the Christians in Galatia this: Galatians 4:16 “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” NKJV

1. **Love Is Demanding**

* Love is more than a feeling or emotion. It is shown in the keeping of God’s commandments.

I John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” NKJV Those who love God will hate evil and worldliness. I John 2:15-17 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” NKJV

* Love does not indulge. Permissiveness is not a sign of love. It can be very unloving. Jesus did not indulge the money changers in the temple: Matthew 21; the rich young ruler: Luke 18; or even the mother of James and John: Matthew 20.
* Love sometimes has to say no! If we truly love someone, hard things may need to be done for the good of his soul – tough love. It is because we love our children that we can’t let them go unpunished. Proverbs 3:11-12 “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.” NKJV God said no to Moses, to Jonah, to David, to Saul, etc. Think about all the “no’s” Paul wrote in his letters to various churches. Revelation 3:19 “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” NKJV

1. **Love Is Deliberate**

* Love is real, sincere, and genuine. Romans 12:9 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.” NKJV Love is not superficial or hypocritical.
* Love is a deliberate choice of the mind, the will. It is something done day in and day out, regardless of how we feel. It does not depend upon circumstances.
* Love is consistent and reliable. It does not always agree or pat one on the back. It demands self-sacrifice. Love is not jealous of others. James 3:16 “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

Love truly has many sides. It rarely exists as the world believes. Let us all love as God loves.

[Adapted from P. Butler]

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