

# The Dark Side of Love

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When asked about love, many would talk of what a wonderful feeling it is to be loved, or to love. In thinking of love, most of us would probably think of the joy and happiness that are experienced when we are loved.

Love is indeed wonderful. It brings joy, comfort, peace, and even confidence into our lives. However, it is important for us to understand that love is not always pretty poems, flowers, heart-warming love songs, and warm fuzzy feelings. There is also a dark side to love.

This dark side of love is nothing evil. Ironically, the dark side to love is something very good. The dark side of love is how love, in difficult situations, powerfully deals with evil. It is how love responds to the hurts we experience in life from those who are close to us.

Deep down, we all know this dark side of love exists. We do not like to think or talk about it, much less shine a light on it, as we are doing in this writing. We all prefer to talk and think about the warm and cozy feelings of love.

We think so much about the emotional joys of love, that we forget the intellectual aspect of love. It is an intellectually based love to which God calls us. This is the agape love we read about in the New Testament.

Agape love is not a love based purely on emotion. It is loving in spite of negative emotions that spark feelings of hurt, betrayal, or disappointment in another.

Let us be reminded that love sometimes hurts. Loving, as God would have us love, is not always easy. In fact, it can be very difficult, and on occasion, seemingly impossible.

Love asks us to freely forgive those who have sinned against us (Eph. 4:32). We may think it to be unfair. We may still feel the hurt. However, God demands it of us, as He loves us in this same way, forgiving us of our sins against Him.

Love asks a church, on certain occasions demanding such, to discipline a member who is walking contrary to the Word of God (2 Thess. 3:14-15). Though painful to do, would

true love allow them to continue in sin?

Love will require us to speak a timely word of rebuke to a friend (Pr. 27:6). It may hurt. It may be difficult. However, a true friend will offer loving reproofs.

Love will require us to forfeit a liberty for the sake of a brother or sister who is weak in the faith, so as not to create a stumbling block for them (Rom. 14:1 - 15:3). Remember, a liberty is freedom. This means, not only the freedom to do it, but the freedom to not do it, for the sake of a brother.

Love will require us to stand for the Truth when it is unpopular and to difficult to do so. Love will support the Truth when our emotions tell us to do the opposite. Remember, faith comes by hearing, not from emotion.

Love asks us to pray for our enemies, and to bless those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44). Our enemies do not prompt any warm and fuzzy feelings. On the contrary, they prompt anger, pain, bitterness, and evil thoughts. The dark side of love is knowing, as Christians, we must overcome these types of emotions, and demonstrate love.

The difficulty of love is seen in the life of Jesus. In love, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. In love, Jesus went to the cross, suffering in death as He paid the price for our sins.

Do not stop loving, when loving becomes too hard or difficult. That is the time love is most needed. Do not stop loving when there is no happy feeling. Love, even when it hurts to love. When love asks that which is difficult of you, remember how love asked the same of God. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16; cf. 1 John 3:16).