

MARKS OF A CHRISTIAN – GENUINE LOVE

Romans 12:9 “Let love be genuine.”

The English word “love” is not very precise. It can have a number of shades of meaning. In fact, when you say, “I love you” to someone, they may not be sure what you are trying to tell them. When you say to your wife or significant other, “I love you,” hopefully you mean you love them so completely you would literally give your life in their behalf. When you say “I love you” to your neighbor, you probably do not mean the same thing.

The Greek language provides a number of words that are translated into the English word love. Three of those words are: 1) eros which is a sexual or sensual love; 2) phileo which is brotherly or sisterly love; 3) agape which is an unconditional, totally giving, complete love. The Greek word used in Romans 12:9 is the third of these, agape.

Agape is the Greek word found in John 3:16, “For God loved (agape) the world that He gave His only Son . . .” This verse actually defines the word agape (love.) God’s love caused Him to send Jesus to earth to give Himself up as the sacrifice, the payment for the sins of humanity. “. . .this is love (agape), not that we have loved (agape) God but that he loved (agape) us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

The Greek word in Romans 12:9 is agape. Your love that marks you, that says to the world that you are a Christian is agape. When you love in this manner, your love is “other focused as is God’s love. This love does not demand, but gives without expecting anything in return. As a Christian, this love (agape) is the love with which you love your spouse, children, friends, neighbors, work associates and strangers. Note what John wrote in 1 John 4:11, “If God so loved (agape) us (you), we (you) also ought to love (agape) one another.”

Your sinful nature is incapable of agape love. As a Christian Jesus has replaced your sinful nature. Since He now lives in you, so does His love (agape.) This is how you are able to agape with a genuine love. This genuine love has no pretense. It is authentic. It is real. It is not just words but also is shown in your

actions. “Beloved, let us love (agape) one another, for love (agape) is from God, and whoever loves (agape) has been born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7)

Prayer: Thank You LORD for Your agape for me. Even as You have loved me, enable me to love You and those with whom I come in contact in my daily life. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Love in Christ is strong and living, Binding faithful hearts in one
Love in Christ is true and giving, May His will in us be done.

Love is patient and forbearing, Clothed in Christ’s humility,
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring, Reaching out in charity.

Love in Christ abides forever, Fainting not when ills attend;
Love, forgiving and forgiven, Shall endure until life’s end.
(LSB 706)

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