

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

LOVE YOUR BROTHER/SISTER – PART III

1 John 3:16-18 “By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

Jesus came to earth to sacrifice Himself for the benefit and blessing of all human beings. John captures the depth of Jesus’ love (agape), the true meaning of love, in today’s text, “By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us. . .” Jesus demonstrated His love for humanity not only through His sacrificial death on the cross, but also through the compassion He had for the people who sought Him when they needed food, healing, restoration, forgiveness, etc. He always reached out. He never turned anyone away.

“By this we know love . . .” John then says, we know love through Jesus’ love. As Jesus “laid down His life for us . . . we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” Agape is not the emotional love you so frequently see portrayed on T.V., in movies and in romance novels. Agape is a driving force in you that directs your every thought, word and activity to meet the needs of others.

John tells how Agape is manifested, “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need. . . let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” Agape is a no-excuses love. It is a love that sees a need and responds. It doesn’t count the cost in dollars, sweat or pain. As it did for Jesus, it may cost you even your life for the sake of your brother or sister.

That having been said, Agape begins with giving a drink of water to one who is thirsting. Out of love for them praying for a person who is struggling ministers in a way Jesus demonstrated through His prayers in the Garden and the many times He went off to pray. Agape fills your encouraging word to the struggling so they know they do not struggle alone. “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)

Prayer: Move me, O Lord, to reach out to my brothers and sisters out of love for them to meet their every need through Your guidance and blessing. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Lord, help us walk Your servant way Wherever love may lead
And, bending low, forgetting self, Each serve the other's need.

You came to earth, O Christ, as Lord, But pow'r You laid aside.
You lived your years in servanthood; In lowliness You died.

No golden scepter but a towel You place within the hands
Of those who seek to follow You And live by Your commands.

You bid us bend our human pride Nor count ourselves above
The lowest place, the meanest task That waits the gift of love.

Lord, help us walk Your servant way Wherever love may lead
And, bending low, forgetting self, Each serve the other's need.
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