

DO YOU SHOW LOVE?

By Randy Nusbaum

By what do men know that we are His disciples? (John 13:35) It is by our love one toward another. Love is the means by which men know we are Jesus' disciples. By what then do we know the love of God? By this we perceive or we know the love of God. By what? Because He laid down His life for us and we ought to love the brethren or, we ought to lay down our life for the brethren. (1 John 3:16) There is no greater love. Say what you will, but there is no greater love than this. John 15:12 says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another...". Most people stop right there. They say we should love one another but the verse reads on, "as I have loved you...". You don't just love, but you love "as I have loved you...". You don't just love, but you love "as He loved" or by His method. What was Jesus' method of love? We don't have to turn to another book of the Bible to find the answer. We don't even have to turn to another chapter to find His method of love. In fact, if we stay within the context of the scripture we will find in the very next verse the answer we are looking for. Jesus said to love as He loved in verse 12. In verse 13 He states, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". Why settle for a lesser love?

Some people actually judge a church according to the lesser love instead of greater love. If everyone isn't smiling and overly considerate or if the sermon wasn't a compassionate, loving message, then some people won't come back to that church because they do not have the kind of love they are seeking. We preach the cross which means destruction to the flesh, but what a message of love. The flesh seeks love that will pet it and say all will be alright. God's love didn't have compassion on the flesh, but took it straight to the cross that it might be destroyed. You can't know the love of God by compassion and acts of emotion, but by a laid-down life.

People don't understand why we place so much emphasis on the cross. Some even say we have no love but actually we cling to the greatest love. The fact that I'm here day after day shows my love for the brethren. You may come and hug and kiss me: You may have compassion for my affliction: Your love may be genuine, but if you are not laying down your life for the brethren, it is a lesser love.

The disciples could have all gone home to live their own lives and just write love letters to one another, but this wasn't the love Jesus asked them to carry on. Jesus could have just come to earth and told us how much He and the Father loved us, that they were praying for us and then gone immediately back to heaven and not given His life. However, this kind of love would have done us little good.

Too many christians are labeling displays of affection as the love of God and as the love we are commissioned to continue in verse nine. This wouldn't be so bad except most of these christians are not laying down their lives for the brethren. Many will hug and tell you how much they love you but you never see or hear from them the rest of the week. They spend the rest of the week caught-up in their own lives, seeking to further their own private ambitions. They stand in church and testify "I would be happy just to be a door-mat in the house of God" but the first time someone wipes their feet on them they throw a fit. When men spat in Jesus' face, He still loved, when they pierced His side, He said, "Father forgive them", when He could have called ten thousand angels, He didn't for He loved and showed it by laying down His life.***