

Valentine's Day

It's that time of year again, when businesses pull on the heart strings of couples to buy cards, chocolates, flowers, or jewelry — Valentine's Day. This annual holiday is symbolized with hearts and images of "Cupid" shooting his arrow — but the real symbol of this special day is the almighty dollar. Last year, Americans spent \$18.9 billion dollars on Valentine's Day gifts for their loved ones.

Guys, I know that you love your wives and I don't think you need some marketing ploy to guilt you into purchasing flowers or chocolates. In fact, I would think you would enjoy buying her special treats and gifts when she is not expecting it, just because you want her to know that you love her all the time — not just when society indicates it's Cupid's turn for our wallet. Those who know you I'm sure know it is not uncommon to see fresh flowers in the kitchen all throughout the year — not just in February.

If you would indulge me for just a moment, this is a rant that Christians start looking at love from a biblical perspective rather than a Hollywood version. Hollywood and those profiting from Valentine's business want the general public to view love as a mushy feeling that causes someone to feel warm and fuzzy inside. But real love is an action. Listen to the biblical definition: "Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Want to really spoil your wife? How about obeying the command that Paul wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26). Notice it doesn't say to love your wife if she cooks your favorite meal or if it is Valentine's Day!

Want another biblical wakeup call? Read Titus 2:4: "... that they [older women] admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children." Did you catch that? Older women are to teach younger women to love their husbands. Why? According to the view the media presents, "love" is something you "fall into" if you wear the right perfume, clothing, or drive the right car. Yet, the Bible is commanding older women to teach younger women to love their husbands. Want to know why? Because brethren, love is an action that requires work. Sometimes your husband may not be very lovable, and it is in those moments when older women are to instruct how to love him anyway! That's real love. It's easy to love someone who loves you back or who is kind. But what about someone who is having a rough month, is sick, or knows your faults?

Hollywood would not like the real picture of love, because the picture painted by Scripture is a selfless love. The beautiful picture we are given is Christ and the church, and the text reminds us that Christ gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25). Real love is about lifelong commitment — not some short-term fling that you can announce on

Facebook in an effort to gain attention and real love is about loyalty. Jesus Christ would never cheat on His bride, the church and we are to follow His example.

Yes, Valentine's Day took place a few days ago, but isn't it time you demonstrate to your spouses and children what real love is about? Take some time to read together Ephesians 5, Song of Solomon, 1 Corinthians 13, and Titus 2. It is way past time for children to understand what real love is all about, and not base their relationships on some phony Hollywood version. Yes, you may shell out \$5-8 on a card, and you may even purchase a special gift for your wife this year, but the real gift to her is what you're trying to do the other 364 days in the year — and that is to love her the way Christ loves the church.

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