

What Would I Do For Love?

Introduction. The New Testament is clear on its application of and insistence on love. Jesus taught that all other commands are dependent on the command to love (Matthew 22:34-40). Paul wrote that other commands are summarized by the command to love your neighbor (Romans 13:8-10).

Because love is the royal law (James 2:8), what should I be willing to do for love? Should I be willing to do everything? We'll see that I can't do everything in my power when it comes to love. Some principles are too important.

I. I Would Feed You

- A. Among several behaviors toward neighbors which the Lord takes personally is whether we provide food to those who hunger (Matthew 25:31-46).
- B. James used mere well-wishing in contrast to actually feeding the needy to illustrate the failure of faith without works (James 2:15-16). If we understand the need for obedience as a true expression of faith, then we should understand the need to materially assist the hungry.
- C. Even our enemies should be fed (Romans 12:20). How much more anyone else in need?

II. I Would Clothe You

- A. John preached that if we have two tunics, we have enough to share (Luke 3:11), and Jesus preached that we shouldn't hold onto our stuff too desperately (Luke 6:29-30).
- B. Sharing is what we are meant to do (Hebrews 13:16).
- C. We cannot accurately claim to know God's love while withholding from others what we have and they need (1 John 3:17-18).

III. I Would House You

- A. Strangers should feel welcome in our homes (Hebrews 13:2).
- B. Hospitality should characterize every disciple (Romans 12:13).
- C. Jesus commends those who take in strangers (Matthew 25:35c, 38a, 43a).

IV. I Would Visit You

- A. Inmates need company (Matthew 25:36c).
- B. The implication, of course, is that these prisoners are victims of religious persecution (Hebrews 13:3).
- C. Paul presents an outstanding example of this in Onesiphorus who refreshed him during his own imprisonment (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

V. I Would Adopt You

- A. Genuine religion involves caring for orphans and others in need (James 1:26-27).
- B. God becomes a Father to the fatherless. We should do likewise. Not just offering some assistance, but actually taking in those children who are in need (Psalm 68:5).

- C. The spiritual adoption we enjoy as Christians cannot be understood without real-world adoption being considered. This is what God does, and it is what we should imitate (Ephesians 1:5).

VI. I Would Accommodate You

- A. Strong Christians don't press their rights to the offense of weak brethren. We bear with them and respect their consciences (Romans 14:14-15:3).
- B. The wise will yield to others (James 3:17).
- C. We will be what others need us to be in order to bring them to Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

VII. I Would Treat You

- A. The despised foreigner who rendered aid to a half-dead man neglected by his own religious leaders is the hero in Christ's story (Luke 10:30-37).
- B. Jesus takes it personally when we help the sick and when we don't (Matthew 25:36b).
- C. The sick deserve our prayers (James 5:15a).

VIII. I Would Understand You

- A. We are meant to carry each other's loads (Galatians 6:2).
- B. We need to actually experience one another's troubles and triumphs together. (Romans 12:15-16).
- C. We should be sympathetic and empathetic (1 Corinthians 12:26).

IX. I Would Die For You

- A. Jesus was certainly describing Himself when He identified the greatest love, but we are meant to emulate Him (John 15:13).
- B. It is acknowledged that people are willing, circumstantially, to die for others, but Christ died for His enemies, and, again, we should duplicate that willingness (Romans 5:6-8).
- C. We ought to love as God loved, and God loved by dying for us (1 John 4:7-11).

X. But I Won't Compromise Truth

- A. I cannot offer comfort and hope where there should be none (Jeremiah 6:13-14).
- B. Smooth words and flattering speech are used to introduce contrary doctrines which cause division (Romans 16:17-18).
- C. Ear ticklers need to be ignored. Sound doctrine involves rebuke (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Conclusion. I wouldn't do this because I'm out to prove that I'm the best guy in town. I would do it because it's the eternal law of God, handed down and lived out for generations by godly people.

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