

True Love

By Dana Chau

What comes to your mind when you hear the word, “Love”? Valentine’s Day? A mother cradling her baby? A father teaching his son to play baseball?

Part of the difficulty of love and loving others is defining what love is. To a baby, love is being fed, clothed and changed. To a teenager, love is that unexplainable good feeling. To a parent, love is making sacrifices to protect and provide.

Differing definitions of love often lead to difficulty in experiencing love and knowing how to love others.

See 1 John 4:7-21

The author of 1 John was the Apostle John. He was known as the Son of Thunder because of his hot temper. In Luke 9:54, John and James, in anger, wanted to call fire down from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village.

But Jesus left a life-changing transformation on the Son of Thunder. John became known in Christian history as the “Apostle of Love.” Here’s what he says about true love.

1st, we must experience true love before we can define it. Vs. 7-11

Each of my daughters has said to me at one time, *“You don’t love me.”*

And I would come back with twenty reasons for why they should believe I love her. And then Susan would whisper, “Dana, just hug her.”

John says that we can define true love only when we have experienced the true love of God. Because God is love. And God loves tangibly.

Paul wrote in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

When sinful mankind asked the Creator, “Do you love me?”

God came in the form of man (Jesus Christ) to stretch out His arms on the cross to say, “I love you this much. As far as the East is from the West, so endless is My love for you.”

2nd, we must possess true love before we can give it. Vs. 12-16a

On February 9, 1960, Adolph Coors III, millionaire head of Coors Company, was kidnapped and held for ransom. Seven months later his body was found shot to death on a remote hillside. Adolph Coors IV was then fifteen years old. He lost not only his

father, but also his best friend. For years Adolph Coors IV hated Joseph Corbett, the man who was sentenced to life for slaying Adolph Coors III.

In 1975, almost 15 years later, Adolph Coors IV became a Christian. Yet, his hatred for Corbett, the murderer of his dad, still consumed him.

Adolph Coors knew he needed to forgive Corbett to move ahead with God. So he visited the maximum-security unit of Colorado’s Canon City penitentiary to talk with Corbett. Corbett refused to see him.

So Coors left Corbett a Bible with the following inscription: “I’m here to see you today, and I’m sorry that we could not meet. As a Christian I am summoned by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to forgive. I do forgive you, and I ask you to forgive me for the hatred I’ve held in my heart for you.”

Later Coors confessed, “I have a love for that man that only Jesus Christ could have put in my heart.”

John reminds us that true love for others is an overflow of God’s love for us.

3rd, we must depend on true love before we can be secure in it. Vs. 16b-21

A husband who says, “I just don’t love her anymore,” is not talking about true love. He’s talking about the loss of good feelings.

True love doesn’t rely on good feelings. True love is not a reward for good performance. True love is not withdrawn for poor performance.

Paul wrote that true love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8). True love is secure.

God demonstrates through Jesus that His relationship with us is based on love, not on performance. When we have God’s love, we do not have to fear God’s judgment or punishment.

When I first heard about God, I thought He was like the video camera at a Seven-Eleven store. He didn’t matter until I did something wrong.

After I became a Christian, I saw God like the video camera held by a loving father. He waited to catch me doing well.

But the longer I am in relationship with God and the more I’ve studied the Bible, the more I realize God isn’t waiting for me to perform. In fact, God isn’t even holding a camera. ***He’s holding me.***