

Understanding Love

It is human nature to seek to understand why things happen. With two science teachers in the family, I have observed the scientific thought process in action that goes into analyzing and explaining things. Science helps people to better understand God's wonderful creation. When it comes to love, science has a tough time explaining what love is and *why* we love. One dictionary describes love as "an intense feeling of deep affection."

Love causes us to act in unexplainable ways. We buy flowers and candy on Valentine's Day for loved ones. We enjoy giving gifts to our spouse, children, and grandchildren. A mother sacrifices personal time to care for her family. We tackle a difficult project because it will help someone else. We do all of these because of our love for others.

Love helps deepen our interpersonal relationships. Love causes us to value another person more deeply. As we seek to know people more intimately we are more vulnerable with them. A familiar Bible verse reminds us of some of the attributes of love: that love is "patient and kind," it is "not easily angered" and "doesn't keep a record of wrongs" (The entire passage from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is shown below).

When the disciples asked Jesus what is the greatest commandment, he answered that the greatest commandment is to love God. Then, He said to love our neighbor as ourselves (see Matthew 22:36-40 shown below). Jesus talked about the importance of love when He said, *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments (Matthew 22:40).*

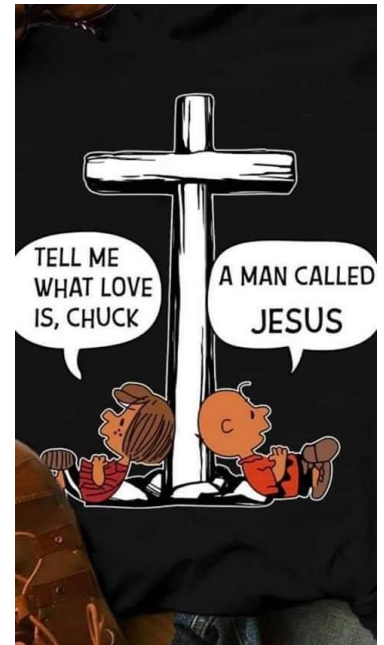
"Acts of Service" is one of the ways we express our love to others. Those who go on mission trips seek to share God's love with others, as do those who volunteer at soup kitchens and other Christian service organizations. 1 John 4:7-8 reminds us about the origin of love. *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

Sometimes love involves sacrifice. Our sacrificial tasks are minuscule compared to the sacrifice God made for us on the cross. *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9-10).*

To scientists love is a mystery. The fact that we don't fully comprehend love is irrelevant. It has been said that love is not among us to be fully understood. ... *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).* Love is an outward witness to the power and mission of God which shines through us. May the love of God shine brightly through you!

Question: In what ways do you try to exhibit God's love through you?

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord. We love others because you first loved us. Let us share that love through the way we serve and treat others. Amen.



*We love because he first loved us.
(1 John 4:19)*

Two Key Bible Verses About Love: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).*

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:36-40