

REAL LOVE:
What it is and What it Ain't

Hosea 3:1-3 NIV

3 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

² So I bought her for fifteen shekels^[a] of silver and about a homer and a lethek^[b] of barley. ³ Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you."

I. Introduction

- a. Like the song implies, everyone is searching for real love.
 - i. However, not everyone finds it.
 - ii. People are unable to find real love when they are unable to discern what is real from fake.
- b. Real love is not what popular opinion defines it to be.
 - i. Real love is not infatuation.
 - ii. Real love is not lust.
- c. Real love is the kind of love that God shows.
- d. Popular opinion's definition of love has been tainted by lies, cheating and betrayal.
 - i. We've seen people abandon abuse and take advantage of those that they claim they love.
 - ii. As a result, our view of love can be tainted or twisted to be something different than what God says it is.
- e. The purpose of this lesson is for everyone to have an accurate understanding of the concept of love.
 - i. This understanding will equip us to desire to grow and display love the way God has intended.

Colossians 3:12-14 NIV

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

II. The Importance of Love

- a. Scripture has consistently listed love as the most important principle to live by.

- i. It is important for someone who has accepted Christ to learn how to give and receive love from God.
- ii. Then it is important to learn how to let love be the motivating factor behind every action.
- b. It is important to love people regardless of their race or level of intelligence because Christ first loved us.
- c. Loving God is not just a saying; it is action.

1 Corinthians 13:13 NIV

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Mathew 22:36-40 NIV

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’^[a] ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b] ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

III. The Power of Love

- a. The love of God is the most powerful force in the Universe.
 - i. The love of God can heal any relationship, mend a broken heart and wounded soul and cover a multitude of sins.
- b. Hosea demonstrates the power of real love in Hosea, chapter 3.
 - i. In this chapter, Hosea was instructed to marry a prostitute.
 - ii. After some time, Hosea’s wife went back to prostitution while still married to Hosea.
 - iii. Despite his wife’s unfaithfulness, Hosea continued to love her, remained married to her and encouraged her to come home.
 - iv. Hosea would even go and hire his wife so she would come back.
- c. The demonstration of Hosea’s life illustrates God’s love for his people.
 - i. God loves us and calls for us, even though we walk away from or leave Him, deny Him and sin and rebel against Him.
 - ii. God paid for us to come to Him through sacrificing His son, Jesus, to die on the cross.
 - iii. Despite our current situation or suffering, Jesus’ sacrifice is the ultimate proof of His love for us.

Hosea 3:1-2 NIV

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I Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails...