

## *“How Much Love”*

Time and time again, we all make the mistake of saying that we "love" something we are temporarily in favor of. For instance, a small child could say that they love their new toy. Or, perhaps, a grown man can claim to love his new car. In reality, however, love mainly applies to our interactions with other people, as stated by Jesus himself, who told us to love our neighbor. Despite the simplicity of this commandment, we as a planet still seem to have trouble defining exactly what that is.

The word "love" applies to many things, but in the end the measure of love is to love without measure. This means that someone would do anything to protect that which they love, let it be another person or God. In reference to God, who loves us, in return our love for him should show no bounds. We should take every chance we can to bring God into our lives.

In reference to another person, love takes on a role of unity, creating a bond between two people through marriage. Love is not a separate object to be exchanged between two people, but instead is the exchange of the people themselves, giving to each other all that they have. This love should not be temporary, but permanent, as it is given without measure. Parents should also love their children, and take on the common pledge many mothers make, to love their children under any conditions.

This brings up another point of immeasurable love; it should never be conditional. Being immeasurable in magnitude, it should also be immeasurable in duration, like God's love. Parents are obliged to love their children always; therefore, practices such as abortion, which end a child's life before mothers are "expected to love them" are against God's command to love our neighbor. Similarly, a person should love all people, including themselves, regardless of the conditions they are put in. Why? Because they possess life, which is sacred and should be protected. Unconditional love also promotes an unconditional respect for the value of life.

So if God says to love your neighbor, God is saying that because love is unconditional and without measure, the only thing that should be placed above your neighbor is God. So next time you're trying to identify love, remember this; love is an unparalleled respect for life which he has given to us all.

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***“The Measure of Love is to Love without Measure”***

This is one of the truest quotes about love, which is indefinable. When you love someone, love knows no bounds. You cannot measure how love is supposed to be, it just is. I've never felt this measure-less love, but I have seen it firsthand between my grandparents. When I read this quote, I immediately thought of their marriage.

From what my grandmother has told me, my grandparents had been married for a little over fifty years before my grandfather past away. Coming from a traditional Italian background, my grandfather was the worker in the family, the person who provided for them and worked his hardest to give his wife and their children the best life he could. For most of her life, my grandmother was taken care of by my grandfather. He paid the bills, put a roof over her head, and when he could got her little presents to remind her of his love. On the other hand she cooked for him, washed his clothes, cleaned the house, and made his life when he came home easy. Their relationship went two ways. They had no measure of their love and they worked together in a partnership.

When my grandfather was in his early sixties, he was diagnosed with cancer. At first, he seemed to beat it, but almost ten years later it came back. I remember it as if it was yesterday, all those hospital trips, the nurse in his house, family members coming to see him. Throughout the whole thing, my grandmother was there for him. She continued to cook what he could eat provided his medicine, and most importantly, which I know he appreciated the most, sat next to him and held his hand when she had time to relax. My grandmother no longer was being taken care of, but now she was the sole caretaker. Her love for my grandfather knew no measure. She did what she needed to do in his toughest times and stuck with him the whole way. She never hospitalized him because she could not take care of him anymore, she never asked for more people to help her out and she never left my grandfather's side. She was with him until the end.

Even now, after my grandfather passed away, my grandmother's love for him is strong. She visits the cemetery every weekend to talk to him and she wore black for a little over a year to respect his death. It is hard for her to sleep in her own bed because she misses him so much. My grandparents love was like no other. They did their best at their marriage and never stopped loving each other through the hardest times. You can't measure love like that; I can hardly even put it into words. They never took the easy way out of their marriage by getting divorced like everyone seems to be doing these days; their love was limitless. Marriage is a two way relationship, doing what is best for the other, not doing what is best for you. True love really has no measure.

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***“Disability”***

When you see a disabled person, do you see the person or their disability? For most people, when they see others with a cane, wheel chair or prosthesis they place limitations on them. Does God place limits on the disabled or does He love everyone equally? I know a disabled person who does not let his disabilities stop him from being an ordinary person.

My next-door neighbor Ryan is three years older than me and disabled. He was born with one eye and has an artificial one to replace his missing eye. He needs glasses to protect his "good eye" and has worn hearing aids since he was young. Before his third birthday he received speech and occupational therapy. At age four, Ryan attended a school for children with special needs. However he does not attend a special school anymore, is currently a junior in public high school and is involved in several sports.

When I look at Ryan, I see him as a normal person. However people think that he is incapable of doing things that other children can. A few years ago, my neighbors were going to play football. I watched from the front porch as the captains were selecting players, I noticed that Ryan was one of the last chosen competitors. Neither team captain wanted the disabled child on their team. They had judged him too quickly to know that Ryan was a good football player.

The Bible quote, "Not as man sees, does God see because man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks in to the heart" from 1 Samuel 16:7 coincides to how the measure of love is to love without measure. God doesn't place limits on anyone, loving everyone without measure. Love is not unconditional we judge a person first. God calls us to love one another without judgmental opinions. The team captains during the game were looking at Ryan through selective eyes. However, God sees Ryan for who he is, not as a disabled person, but as a good person who loves everyone.

Even though Ryan is disabled he's a child of God, no different from anyone else. If we could see the disabled through God's eyes, we would no longer see people's disabilities but rather the individuals themselves. If we could learn to love the disabled equally, then we would be loving others the same way that God loves us, without measure.

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