

## Love Someone to Life

Maybe I'm treading on thin ice by commenting on a phrase that probably goes back to the beginning of the English language, but I've often wondered about the statement, "I love him (or her) to death." Perhaps the phrase means that the person will love this other individual until the point of death. More than likely it's just a phrase that was coined to express how deep one's love is for another, but it does seem rather unusual. Shouldn't we instead talk about loving someone to life? If so, then here are some ways in which we can do just that.

We can love someone to life by teaching him or her the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Is there anything greater that we can do on earth than tell others about Christ? We may hold two jobs, run a household, drive children to three sets of recreational activities five days per week, hold committee positions and much more, yet the fact is that there are souls who are lost and who need us as Christians to take the Gospel to them. Are we so busy with the mundane that we forget the eternal?

Paul was a good example of someone who loved others to life. Look at the depth of his feelings for his fellow Israelites. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." (Romans 10:1). In Romans 9:3 he wrote, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." As one who dearly loved the souls of men and women, Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles because he wanted them to be saved eternally. How many of us have friends and family members whom we dearly love who are not New Testament Christians? What have we done to try to teach them the truth? Do we love them enough to overcome any hesitation or fear? Do we love them enough to make the time to speak God's Word in their hearing? Will we love them to life or neglect their spiritual wellbeing to death?

We can also love someone to life by setting a Godly example before him or her. Do we want to see our loved ones saved in eternity? They're watching us, aren't they? They're looking to see if our lives are consistent with the Bible that we teach. They're looking to see if we're ever willing to compromise the truth. Luke 17:1-2 warns about the poor example that drives people away from God. "Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." We cannot let up even for a moment in our faithfulness to God. The ears of the lost could close forever when the eyes of the lost see hypocrisy in those who claim to be faithful Christians.

Our love is to be "without dissimulation" (Romans 12:9). The word translated "dissimulation" is a compound word literally meaning "without hypocrisy." It's translated "unfeigned" in other New Testament passages that speak of unfeigned love (II Corinthians 6:6; I Peter 1:22) as well as unfeigned faith (I Timothy 1:5; II Timothy 1:5). Paul was not afraid to tell others to follow his example as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). We should be able to set an example that will have others wanting to know more about the Lord and wanting to be closer to Him.

We can love someone to life by being a servant to him or her. Jesus said, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:27-28). Paul referred to himself and Timothy as servants of Christ in Philippians 1:1. Later in that same epistle Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:5-7). Being a servant is being humble and willing to help at all times possible. It is doing what we can with what we have. It is showing care and concern for a soul. Many a door has been opened for the teaching of the Gospel by virtue of the servant attitude of Christians.

How many people do we know whom we "love to death?" Let's look at our examples, look for ways to be of service to them and look for opportunities to teach them the Gospel. In so doing, we might be able to lead them to salvation in Christ and thus, love them to life eternal.

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