

What's Love Got To Do With It?!

By Laura L. Shaw

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart."

1 Peter 1:22

I **LOVE** that blouse! Oooooo, I **love** your hair! Didn't you just **love** that movie? Tell me, what's **love** got to do with it anyway? I love (*not really*) the way we've taken the loveliest word on earth and abused it. While I don't mean to make such a big deal out of it, it is kind of ironic, isn't it? Let's look at just a FEW of hundreds of verses about love as mentioned in Scripture:

Jeremiah 33:11- "His love endures forever."

Lamentations 3:22- "Because of His great love, we are not consumed."

John 15:12- "Love each other as I have loved you."

1 John 3:16- "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

This sure puts "loving" a movie or a hairdo in context for me. What was really enlightening to me as I looked over some scriptures on the topic is that many of them speak of "great love" or "deep love" or "how much" He loved us. Can we even **truly** grasp this concept?

The specific verse God laid on my heart one morning is the one at the top. I had no concept before that moment that we can have sincere love for one another without loving each other deeply, and my friends, we are called upon to do so. My mind is pooling over the sheer number of people that I could write down that I claim to love. Take a moment to think of some yourself.

After doing so, can we honestly say that all those people that surfaced our minds are someone we would die for as the verse in 1 John describes? What I envision when I picture dying for a friend is really just dying to myself. Do I put their genuine needs before my own? (*Notice I said "genuine," as we don't want to end up in God's place as Need-Meeter. Co-dependent love is not what the Lord has in mind for sure.*)

It is my belief that we can only love others on the deepest level when Jesus Christ, through the power of the Spirit, loves through us. And once again, it all comes down to a life that is surrendered to Him, growing in Him, knowing Him and loving Him first. Isn't it amazing that **every** spiritual discipline comes back to our relationship with Him? It compels me to call on Him right now.

When we hit our knees to the floor today, can we all go together in unity, asking the Lord to show us the vast number of ways He has loved us deeply? His salvation will come to mind, of course. What else? How has He loved us in a way no one else has loved us before? How has He loved us when others have hurt us or let us down? How has His love changed our love for others? How can we love more deeply, whether in word or in deed? Is there someone specifically that He wants us to love more sacrificially?

What's love got to do with it? Nothing, if we try to love in the flesh. Everything, if it has to do with Him loving through us. Let's take root in His rich soil of perfect love this day, praying for one another to do the same.

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and DEEP is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to HIM who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,

Forever and ever! AMEN.

Ephesians 3:17b-21