

## Unadulterated love

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.  
 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above  
 yourselves.* (Romans 12:9-10)

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to  
 love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*  
 (Romans 13:8)

In talking to pre-Christians, the primary complaint I hear about the church revolves around hypocrisy. They say we are judgmental, and that we act as if we “have it all together” when we plainly do not. Unchurched people love to point to some high-profile preacher caught in a scandal, and everyone knows a “Christian businessman” who mistreats his employees and cheats on his taxes.

Which makes it strange to hear Paul describe love as a debt. Attaching a legal obligation to love smacks of the kind of contrived, plastic religion that unchurched people perceive in the church.

Real love—the kind of love Christ calls us to—is sincere. Not contrived or put on. We are called to be earnestly devoted to one another. Some might say: “I am just not feeling it...should I fake it?” or “How can I love a person who clearly does not love me?”

The answer is that we must tap into a source of love much bigger than ourselves. As we love Jesus, He imparts His love to us. As we submit ourselves to Him, He implants His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Then—an only then—can love truly be sincere; without hypocrisy, duplicity, or false motives. Only when we become conduits of Jesus’ love can we truly be devoted to one another.

Job one is for us to love one another. Job two is for us to love the skeptics that might wander into our meeting. When they experience Jesus’ love—love that is sincere—then they will know that while humans are flawed, Jesus is flawless and He gave His life for them.

## Pray

Thank you, Jesus, for your extraordinary, immeasurable love for us. We see it every time we look at the Cross and it stuns us every time. Thank you for patiently dispensing love to us, even when we are oblivious and even resistant. Amen.

## RECURRING NEEDS

Revival  
 Repentance  
 Wisdom  
 Marriages  
 Families  
 Sick/Grieving  
 Depression/Mental illness  
 City Church  
 Church leaders  
 Children  
 Youth  
 Singles  
 Senior citizens  
 Volunteers  
 Teachers and support staff  
 Emergency personnel  
 Business community  
 Elected officials  
 Missionaries  
 Worldwide church  
 The lost

## REFLECTIONS

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