

BIG BUTS OF THE BIBLE

1 JOHN 3:18

PART 5

Actionable Love

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

INTRODUCTION

As we look at 1 John 3:18, we see that our love is supposed to show itself and not only in a way that is spoken. It is easy to say that you love someone but it can be more complicated to show them that you love them through your actions. Saying it does not prove that there is actually any love pouring out from us. Sometimes, we say that we love someone through gritted teeth and, at best, we are lying. The question then becomes, how can we love others and show them our love more than just using words to make them (or us) feel better?

This is where 1 Corinthians 13 comes in. We can see through those verses what it means to bear the fruit of love. (Recommend reading that chapter) In 1 Corinthians chapter 16 we see Paul, as he is wrapping up the letter, encouraging the Corinthian church to practice actionable love. Every action that we perform should be done in love towards others. In Romans 12 we see how that love takes action towards others. There is a renewing of our minds and a transformation that takes place where we are no longer concerned with our own profit but with the profit of others. This is how we die to ourselves and prefer others ahead of ourselves.

Loving others (including our enemies) is work that we have to practice. It is not something that comes naturally. Jeremiah 17:9 talks about what comes from the heart. We have to put Christ first in our minds and our hearts to even be able to love others. Otherwise, it is a self-seeking, self-preserving type of love. No one likes to feel like we are patronizing them and so actionable love is the most important thing to learn in relationships. How that looks is different for everyone but all people know what it is like to hear the word "love", it is so important to make sure they know that you love them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does love show itself to you? What actions have others taken to show you that they love you and you could see it in them? Why is that so different/important?
2. Have you ever told someone that you loved them but didn't mean it? Has anyone said that to you? Why is it easier to say that you love someone than it is to show it?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13. How do these verses encourage actionable love? What does it look like to love someone actively? Why does it matter?
4. Read Romans 12:9- 21. What do these verses add to the list found in 1 Corinthians 13? How do they better exemplify how we can love each other in our actions more than just our words?
5. How do you think Christ changes your heart to be able to love others? What can you do to increase your actionable love for others?

WRAP UP

In the words of DC Talk, Love is a verb. When you say that you love someone you may make them feel better but, when you show them that you love them, they will be encouraged in a deeper way than just the words. Jesus proved His love for us in that, while we were enemies with Him, He died for our sins. (Romans 5:6-11) His love took action and He physically showed His love for us. Let us walk according to that love and love each other through our actions and not just our words.