

# Divine Love - A true expression of love

By Ernesto Segismundo, M.S. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

On this Valentine's Day, I reflect on the meaning of love. We use the word "love" in our everyday conversation so carelessly and without thought. But when you really think about the word "love," we find that it is connected to something much more—it has a Divine meaning.

Our modern culture has managed to convince many of us to believe that "love" is a feeling and/or emotion. The Divine meaning of love has less to do with emotions and fuzzy feelings when someone gives you a stuffed animal and chocolate hearts with "BE MY VALENTINE" engraved in it. Many throughout history have died for love (i.e. love for our country; love for our family; love for God, etc.). We seldom think that a day like Valentine's Day should be a day to love God though loving acts for our spouses or significant other. We are to cherish those we "love" as God "loves" them—selfless, gracious, and sacrificial!

## WHERE DID VALENTINE'S DAY COME FROM?

Valentine's Day is connected to Saint Valentine who was believed to be martyred in ancient Rome during the time of Claudius Gothicus, the Roman Emperor who ruled from 268-270. St. Valentine was believed to be marrying Christian couples and aiding Christian believers during Claudius II rule, and such ministry was forbidden and against the law. And punishment for breaking such laws? Death! It was a dark era to be a professing and active Christian. It's hard to fathom, that in some countries such laws (i.e. unlawful to practice Christianity) still exist...it does!

## WHAT IS LOVE?

Love from a postmodern perspective differs from the "Divine" perspective of love. Love is actually defined and laid out in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8...also known as "The Love Chapter"...

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love Never Fails."*

The word "Divine" means – proceeding directly from God; Heavenly or Godlike. In order to understand the perspective of love as stated in I Corinthians, I'm going to dissect this in another way—one at a time.

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## DIVINE LOVE VS HUMAN RESPONSE

1. **Love is Patient** vs. How many of us lose our cool when our significant other hurts us. Some of us hurl insults, or throw objects, result in physical and emotional abuse (we are all guilty of this).
2. **Love is Kind** vs. Because we have been hurt by others in the past we have the tendency to hold on to the emotional pain and therefore show unkind behaviors.
3. **Love does not Envy** vs. Being envious is not a sign of love. We should have the attitude that when someone we care about and “love” experiences fortune we should be happy for them—not envious.
4. **Love is not Boastful** vs. A boastful person in this context would say something like this—“I don’t know why you think I don’t love you.” “I always say I love you to you.” “I always open the door for you.” A boastful person also displays their “love” around people so that they get praises from others. So in this case it’s more about selfishness than loving his/her spouse. This individual loves himself more than others.
5. **Love is not Proud** vs. this is connected to “...not boastful”—a proud individual would say, “See how much I love you, I washed the dishes all this week!” --while at times calling her demeaning and hurtful names. Furthermore, this is the individual that flaunts to others expensive things that he/she has done or bought while ignoring the basic display of love—i.e. respect and sacrifice.
6. **Love does not Dishonor Others** vs How do we talk about or treat our spouse in public? Upholding your spouse’s honor and dignity is a public declaration of love. Honor is defined as - high respect and to uphold dignity of others values and beliefs.
7. **Love is not Self-Seeking** - this is self-explanatory
8. **Love is not Easily Angered** vs. It is so easy to lose self-control when our spouse or significant other fall short of our expectations.
9. **Love does not keep Records of Wrong** vs. We are definitely guilty of this! When our anger and annoyance is triggered we are quick to point out all the violations and lists of wrongs that the other person has done to us. We hurl the grievances done against us like a grenade only to destroy harmony in the relationship. Let’s face it...we all have a list of all the wrongs done to us! Holding on to it is never healthy nor is it productive in helping solidify our relationships. LET IT GO!
10. **Love Never Fails** vs. Our human love is limited and will fall short! Love is a choice! Every day – not just on Valentine’s Day or special occasions – you have to choose to love your spouse, child,

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family member or that special person. Your actions toward them come from your heart. Is there love in your heart? Are you allowing Christ's love to flow through you? His love will not fail!

As you might have already noticed, the Divine love (God's love) is difficult and nearly impossible to carry out. And you're absolutely right! It's not human trait to "live out" pure and genuine love as stated in I Corinthians. This type of love can only be attained with God's help. Well, one can argue—"there are a lot of people who don't believe in God and they still love better than those who profess to be Christian." They are right! But I would also like to add that no matter if you profess to be Christian, according to the Bible "*God created man in His own image.*" Humans have the capacity to live out through true Divine love.

So today as you're buying gifts for your spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend or fiancé, shower your significant other with "kisses," know that true expression of love is rooted in the Divine. In fact, true expression of love is demonstrated by Christ--His life, ministry, relationship, His passion and His death on the cross. After all the humiliation, abandonment, emotional and physical pain that Christ endured, He still managed display love in its purest form—through self-less sacrifice!

**John 15:12** says "*Love one another, as I have loved YOU!*"

If we love the way Christ loves then...

LOVE NEVER FAILS!

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