

# How's Your Love Life?

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The Bible tells us that God is love (1 John 4). Also, the two greatest commandments, according to Jesus, center on love — loving God and loving people (Mt. 22).

We're in a new message series here at Victory Church called *"Overcoming Life's Negatives"*, and I've noticed how all of these various negatives in life that we are studying tear down love. God is a positive God, not negative. He understands there are problems, and He will ultimately judge sin, but He's so positive, so loving, that He sent His only Son Jesus to die for us, to save us, and He is holding off His return in judgment so as many people as possible can be saved! (2 Pe. 3)

So, how positive are we? How loving?

Let's judge it by God's Word. 1 Cor. 13.4-7,13. *"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, end endures through every circumstance... Three things will last forever—faith, hope and love—and the greatest of these is love."*

If we allow negatives in our life like judgment, criticism, gossip, insecure self-defensive anger, cruel sarcasm, pride, unforgiveness, bitterness, vindictiveness, rejection of others, and on and on, it will literally stop the flow of God's love in our lives. Both to us and through us.

Instead of all those negatives, think about this... Who are you reaching out to instead of writing them off? Who are you being patient and kind to? Who are you trying to help even though they are a wreck and a pain? Instead of rejecting them? Instead of getting bitter and mad at them? Who are you forgiving instead of getting bitter and unforgiving towards them? Who are you praying for instead of criticizing them and judging them in your pride? Who are you trying to help and cover their nakedness and help them grow spiritually instead of gossiping about them to others? (It's amazing how negative people find each other!) If you're not doing some of these things then you are allowing your life to be controlled by negative forces and you won't be a help to anyone. God's love will not flow through you. Jesus said anyone can love those who love them. The challenge is in the heat of relationships. That's where spiritual growth really happens! That's where people are really helped!

The Bible says *"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* Are we helping people to come to know Jesus by living a life of love for others, or are we hindering them by allowing all these selfish negatives to tear down God's love in our life?

The Bible also says that God's Church, which is the one thing that He is building (Mt. 16), is Jesus' bride.

It's His wife. He loves His church (Eph 5), AND his Church is built up by LOVE! (Eph 4.15-16) That means if we allow negatives in our life instead of God's love, it means that instead of building up God's Church we are tearing it down! If we do that, we will have to answer to God for it. He takes very seriously hurting His wife, and harming His church! (1 Cor. 3.16,17)

So, instead, let's BUILD UP God's Church, and love others, and let's seek to help those who are struggling, need to grow, or need change and healing. Of course there will be problems. We live in an imperfect and fallen world. Human beings are flawed and sinful. But we get things solved by God's positive love, not the negatives of the flesh and the sinful nature. Point a finger at someone else, and you have to deal with the three pointing back at you! Or as Jesus said, the speck and the log. (Mt. 7)

So, let's try this instead...

*From Gal. 5.13-15 "You were indeed called to be free, brothers and sisters. Don't turn this freedom into an excuse for your corrupt nature to express itself. Rather, serve each other through love. All of the law can be summarized in a single statement, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." But if you criticize and attack each other, be careful that you don't destroy each other."*

*And from Ephesians 4:1-7, 29-32; 5.1-2 "I Paul, a prisoner in the Lord, encourage you to live the kind of life which proves that God has called you. Be humble and gentle in every way. Be patient with each other and lovingly accept each other. Through the peace that ties you together, do your best to maintain the unity that the Spirit gives. There is one body and one Spirit. In the same way you were called to share one hope... God's favor has been given to each of us... speak only what is good so that you can give help wherever it is needed. That way, what you say will help those who hear you. Don't give God's Holy Spirit any reason to be upset with you... Get rid of your bitterness, tempers, anger... Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ. Imitate God... Live in love as Christ also loved us.*

So, how's your love life? It matters big time to God, and will hugely impact you!