



If you've been out during Valentines Day, you've probably noticed that almost every store is littered with chocolates, balloons, stuffed teddy bears and flowers in anticipation for the holiday. If you're single, Valentine's Day can be a little rough. You can feel really left out of all the gift giving and love. However, if you're in a relationship, it can be rough too. How do you get the 'right' present? How do you know if you got 'enough' stuff for them? Regardless of your feelings about Valentine's Day, the holiday is a time that gets us thinking about love. So here are three things that love is.

Love is Complex

Love isn't something that is easy to define. If you really think about, we all experience love in different ways. Some people experience love in an act of kindness. Others feel loved when they're complimented, or when someone spends time with them. Others think love is all about doing nice things for another person or giving everyone they run into great big hugs.

Other people see love as an emotion, others a choice. Still others look at love and think it's romance or your crush asking you to prom. With all of the different ways people experience and define love, we can see that love is really complex. In the midst of love's complexity, we know that we all will experience love at some point in our lives.

Love is Impossible

God talks about love in the Bible. One of the places that God lays out what love looks like is in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7.

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. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. – 1 Cor 13:4-7 (NIV)

We can read this verse and feel a little overwhelmed. Here is this big long list of stuff love is, and stuff that love isn't. It can make you feel like a failure. Who's really patient and kind when their brother has just stolen the TV remote from them for the 725th time? Who really doesn't envy when your friend made the football team at school and you didn't? Who doesn't boast and make themselves seem better to others than they really are? Who really doesn't seek their own? Who really doesn't keep score when others treat them wrong?

If we're honest, most of us fall short of what love is. We don't look out for others and we aren't always kind. The definition of love God shows us in this verse is pretty much impossible for us to live up to. No person can be all these things all the time, and until we realize that we're not able to love the way that God describes, we'll never really appreciate the fact that God helps us love.

In the Bible we see that God has put His love in our hearts. He gives us the love we need to love others. We just have to rely on the deposit of love that God has already placed in our hearts.

***And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
– Romans 5:5 (NLT)***

If we're feeling overwhelmed by how hard it is to love, then we need to focus in on the fact that God has given us the love we need to love others. He's poured this love in abundance in our hearts. We just have to believe it and tap into that love that's already there.

Love is Healthy

If you've ever worked out you know that exercise isn't fun. It's really hard and it's a lot of work. However, exercise is something that helps keep you healthy. Sometimes, you've got to do things that aren't fun and don't feel good to get the results you want in your life. We know this is true when it comes to exercise and eating right. However, part of the reason God tells us to love others is because it's healthy for us.

God knows that if we harbor a grudge, it has the potential to make us bitter. He knows that if we aren't kind, we can become ungrateful. He knows that if we envy others we can become discontented with life. God knows us well, He knows the things that are good for us. When He tells us to love, He's not doing it to make our lives harder. Rather God tells us to love because He knows it helps keep us healthy in our hearts. If we love, we don't become bitter, we don't become discontented with what we have. When we love we keep ourselves from becoming ungrateful, hateful and any other habits that are bad for our hearts. God tells us to love because He knows that love is the best way. He knows that it will help us in the long run.

Love is a complex thing, but it's an area that is worth examining in your life. Are there areas where you've let seeds of discontent, anger, envy and other things grow? If so, take the necessary steps to begin the habit of love in your life. Ask God's help for where to begin and what to do. Begin today to develop the healthy habit of love and see what God can do through you!