

the right response. It is not “I will love you if.” Instead it is “I will love you regardless.”

- “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). If love were defined by circumstances then this would be a difficult command to fulfill. We only find it difficult because we do tend to apply love when the response is what we want. Let us never forget the words of Paul; “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). We must love all people equally, friend or foe.

Before moving on, we need to clarify what this does not mean. First, agape love does not mean God tolerates sin. The fact that God loves us with an unconditional love does not mean He loves everything we do. Many times in the Bible God reminds us that He hates wickedness. “God is angry with the wicked every day”(Psa. 7:11). “Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:104). “These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:16-19). God will always love us with an unconditional love but He will never love our sin.

Second, agape love does not mean the reception of grace is unconditional. This is a mistake many make of assuming that personal obedience somehow invalidates the love of God. Notice however that John connects God’s love with His commandments. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). God loves us all but we cannot benefit from His love until we obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).

Finally, agape love does not mean Christians can never fall from the grace of God. Some have appealed to Romans 8 as proof, where Paul says we can never be separated from the love of God. However, the passage only affirms that God will always love us unconditionally. Remember that the benefits of salvation are conditional. When we reject the love of God we forfeit the benefits (Gal. 5:4; Heb. 6:4-6). God will always love us even if we forfeit our salvation by turning back to sin (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

NORTH HAMILTON CHURCH OF CHRIST



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“What Is Love?” (Part 5)

David B. Smith

3. Agape love is unconditional. This is not our typical perception of love, since we often allow circumstances to control our affections. “I will love you until you cross me.” “I will be your advocate and profess my love until you make a mistake or embarrass me.” Then we turn love off like a faucet. If we are honest, we will admit that we do this. It’s a struggle. But this isn’t Biblical love. True love is never based on circumstances. Consider these verses:

- “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Notice that God loved us before we could return love. This means that true love is proactive and not reactive. Love is established and settled before circumstances happen. Love is constant and dependable. Love is faithful and trustworthy, precisely because it is not conditioned on

Tina Brown, a frequent visitor with Glen Norwood, underwent surgery on Wednesday to remove a rather larger malignant abdominal tumor. Surgeons feel confident that all cancerous material was removed as well as a small colon section. She may be released to return home on Monday.

Brandon Markwell, Tom Haithcock's nephew, was recently diagnosed with having the Covid-19 virus. We pray for a speedy recovery with no lasting consequences.

Keep in prayer those of our number who cannot attend due to physical health: Nancy Birch, Tommie Grandfield, Jo Hargis, Susie Hargis, Loretta Leffew, and certainly others not named here.

<u>Prayer List</u>		
James Anderson	Judy Lusk	Tim Randolph
Patricia Anthony	Tommie Grandfield	Tony Miller
Jim Bethune	Bill Greer	Lexi Owens
Nancy Birch	Fred Hafley	Carlos Shannon
Mike Bouldin	Kathy Hamilton	Janice Smith
Susie Hargis	Bessie Smithson	Ellen Miller
Grayson Ledbetter	Diane Stacy	Loretta Leffew
John Webster	Juanita Johnson	Dot Bryant
Steve Gaines		

Sympathy

We extend sympathy to Cindy Haynes following the passing of her mother, Ellen Miller, last Sunday. Services and interment were conducted on Wednesday. Keep Cindy and the entire family in your prayers during this time.

Sayings from Proverbs

In this day of so much contention and unwillingness to accept another opinion, perhaps Solomon has some advice: Proverbs 18:2 "A fool has no delight in understanding, but only in expressing his own heart."

Announcements

- **Sunday's Sermon:** David's sermon Sunday is entitled "War of the Worlds." To preview scriptures ahead of time, read 2 Corinthians 10: 3-6. Be here at 10:30 Sunday morning to hear David discuss this war. Looking forward to it.
- **Advance Planning:** If you like to plan ahead and, provided Covid-19 is under control by then, plan on attending Dayton's Annual Lectureship on Saturday, November 7, from 9:00 until noon with lunch to follow. Speakers this year are Cliff Goodwin, Phil Sanders, and Alan Highers. This year's theme is Lessons for Today from the Minor Prophets.
- **Address for Contribution:** Some are mailing their contribution to the building's street address, 8310 Dayton Pike. It cannot be delivered to this address as there is no mailbox. Mail contribution checks to North Hamilton Church of Christ, P.O. Box 517, Soddy-Daisy, TN 37384. Notice that the zip code is different for the post office.
- **Wednesday Evenings:** This is just a reminder that David is on YouTube and Facebook each Wednesday evening at six.
- **Reminders:** Our online worship service is still being posted to Facebook and YouTube each Sunday morning and, for anyone who wishes to do so, contributions can still be made using Venmo: NorthHamilton-ChurchOfChrist or can be mailed as indicated above.

Upcoming Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

- 2 – Jayden Dupree, Autumn Laster, Austin Laster
- 3 – Erica Anderson, Boston Courtney
- 4 – Alice Richardson
- 5 – George Farmer, Madeline Lowman
- 6 – Hank Stewart
- 9 – Nancy Birch
- 12 – Brenda Laney, Kaye Hopkins

Anniversaries

August

- 3 – Tim & Teresa Smith
- 8 – Donny & Cindy Davidson