

Agents of Love
Digging Deeper
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My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:12 NIV

Most of the time, there is an ebb and flow to life, much like the ebb and flow of waves up and down a beach, that takes us from good times to bad times and back again. But these last few years have been very, very different. Divisive politics, racial unrest, Covid, climate change, war, inflation, immigration, economic inequality, and clashes over abortion rights, gun rights, voting rights and gender identity have

piled one on top of the other, creating constant tension and unbearable stress. Friends have become enemies, family members have stopped talking to each other, and churches have broken up into tribes at war with one another.

And there is no end in sight.

What the future holds for all of us depends a great deal on one simple choice that each and every one of us needs to make.

Are we going to become agents of hate and division, or agents of love and reconciliation?

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the church at Galatia, which struggled mightily with division and discontent, wrote “the only thing that matters is faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians 5:6). If we truly do love God and His love really does live in us, then our life must bear witness to that love. We must become agents of His love in everything we do.

And that can be hard.

The first step to becoming an agent of love requires asking ourselves some hard questions to see where we are. These need to be questions about real life situations that reveal how our heart may need to change. Questions like,

Did I turn the request to wear a mask during the early days

of the CoVid outbreak into a cause protesting government intrusion into our lives? Or did I turn it into a crusade to protect the elderly, the frail and the vulnerable until a vaccine could be developed for those who wanted and needed it?

Because being an agent of love requires personal sacrifice.

When it comes to abortion rights, am I pro life, pro choice or pro love? Do I donate money to political action committees for one side or the other? Or do I donate it to teenage pregnancy crisis centers and shelters for unwed mothers? Do I love those who are unloved and at risk of jumping into a sexual relationship with someone who is equally unloved and conceiving a child neither is capable of loving because there is no love in them? Or do I walk away because their life is just too messy for me to get involved in?

Because an agent of love never walks away.

Do I share my life only with those who are the same color, practice the same religion, and belong to genders I identify with? Or do I call everyone who crosses my path my brother and my sister?

Because an agent of love is blind to differences that don't matter to God.

These are big things that we, as agents of love and reconciliation, need to do.

But we also need to do the little things that say I see you, I hear you, I love you, and I care. Things like,

Listening without interrupting (Proverbs 18:13)

Speaking without accusing (James 1:19)

Giving without sparing (Proverbs 21:26)

Praying for others without ceasing (Colossians 1:9)

Answering without arguing (Proverbs 17:1)

Sharing the truth without offending (Ephesians 4:15)

Doing for others without grumbling (Philippians 2:14)

Trusting without wavering (1 Corinthians 13:7)

Forgiving without punishing (Colossians 3:13)

And promising without forgetting (Psalm 89:34)

Martin Luther King once wrote in a letter to a friend “Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God.”

If we are to be a participant in the being of God, if we are to be a vessel for His love, we need to be **intentional** in our love for each other, as He is in His love for us.

We need to **abide** in His love, being continually connected to it and allowing it to dictate everything we think, say and do.

We need to be **authentic** and **vulnerable**, being open about our struggles and how He has worked in our life and not judge ourselves or others.

And we need to **love** and **accept** ourselves and others just as we are and not as we should be because we are all a work in progress.

The power of God's love to change lives is unmistakable and incomparable. There is nothing else like it. It is, as Martin Luther King said, the greatest force in the universe.

It needs to be the driving force in our life as well.

Reflect

The love of God living in me needs to be the driving force in my life.

Pray

Heavenly Father, fill me with your love and help me share it with others. Make it the driving force in my life, guiding every thought that runs through my mind, every word that comes out of my mouth, and every thing I choose to do

each and every day. Make my life a witness to the power of your love to change lives so that others will seek you and help spread your love to every corner of the earth.

Amen

Discuss

Agents of love **must** be able to listen attentively and share openly. Which of these is harder for you, and why?

Jesus said “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). It is a call to both give and receive love. It is something agents of love **must** be able to do to form spiritually intimate and impactful relationships. We learn to **receive** love very early in life when we are dependent on our parents. If we don’t get the love we need, for whatever reason, we crave love and become emotionally needy or give up on love and become emotionally distant. We learn to **give** love by watching our parents love each other. If they don’t openly do that, we will have a hard time knowing how to give love to others. Is it harder for you to give or to receive love? Are you able to share a little about that?

In what ways do you **intentionally** love others?

Final Thought

Being an agent of love who can listen attentively and share openly, give and receive love, and be intentional about

loving others is hard. Spend a few moments each day listening to God and sharing your struggles, your hopes and your dreams with Him. Open your heart to His love and tell Him how much you love Him. Think about all He has given you as an expression of His love and be intentional about giving some of that to others. If you commit to doing these things regularly, it will make love the driving force in your life and you will become an agent of love.