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Sincerity of Love

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Sincerity of Love

Abstract

"When we love something simply because it benefits ourselves, our love is selfish and insincere."

Posting about Christ's example of love from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<http://inallthings.org/the-sincerity-of-love/>

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Comments

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The Sincerity of Love

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May 31, 2017

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Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 113](#)

[1 Samuel 2:1-10](#)

[Romans 12:9-16b](#)

After spending a brief time with my young niece, you will quickly learn that she *loves* gymnastics, she *loves* kittens, *loves* her teacher and *love love loves* mashed potatoes. She is more than eager to talk about any one of her loves. She proudly performs her gymnastics routines for any audience, and kittens bring forth a squeal of delight. For Sunday lunch at Oma's house, she mounds the mashed potatoes high on her plate and carefully sculpts a volcano, watching in eagerness as gravy runs down the side. As there are for my niece, there are many things in life that intrigue us, captivate our hearts and bring satisfaction to our lives—especially the people who serve us, inspire us, and bring us happiness. Like my niece, we so easily proclaim our love for the people and things that bring pleasure to our lives.

Often times we say we “love” something or someone simply because of what it/they can do for us and because it/they meet our needs. We unabashedly profess our love for the newest phone we just bought. Or exclaim how much we love our favorite restaurant in an effort to convince our friends to eat there with us. Maybe some of us have even come home after a day at work proclaiming our love for the coworker who brings cookies for the whole office every Wednesday.

Do we really *love* them though? Why do we say we love all these things?

We love our phone because it makes our life simpler with its updated, high-speed technology. We love our favorite restaurant because of the wonderful patty melt or because the servers treat us especially well. We love our coworker because, well, the cookies she brings are downright delicious! Is this really love?

So often our “love” for people and things often lies within selfish means. We “love” them because of what they do for us or because they bring fulfillment and happiness to our immediate needs. When we love something simply because it benefits ourselves, our love is selfish and insincere. In Roman's 12:9 the apostle Paul expresses that our love must be quite the opposite: “Love must be sincere.”

What, then, is sincere love?

Well, the next eight verses continue to describe a love that is selfless, not selfish. It is one of self-denial, not self-determination. Showing sincere love is being “other-minded,” placing the needs and interests of others in front of your own.

Our society tells that love is something based on emotions. It tells us that love is something you feel, and when you no longer have the affectionate feeling you once had, the love is gone. This is a huge lie to which many people fall prey. Not once does Paul mention love as a feeling. In fact, love is something one must do, despite changing feelings and emotions. Our scripture reading today is full of action words: “Be devoted... Honor... Be joyful... Share... Practice... Bless... Rejoice.” Love is an action! Read Romans 12:9-16 once more, and this time take note of the instances Paul mentions love being for our own benefit. How many did you find? What we see in this passage is a reflection of the love Christ displayed towards us and a model of what our love towards others should be. A love where we honor one another above ourselves, share with the needy, practice hospitality, and are willing to associate with people of low position. It is a selfless, sacrificial love.

Saying we “love” something is commonplace for many of us. It is a part of daily language and a habit that is hard to break. I am not asking you to change the way you speak. However, the next time you exclaim, “Oh, I love _____!”, may it remind you of what love really means. May it remind you that love is not a feeling, but an action. Act today by selflessly serving those around you as Christ loved us in laying down his life.