



REFLECTIONS

September 13, 2009

'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 22:39

What is Love Anyway

Mema would always correct my choice of words when I used this one incorrectly. She would say “Love is always about people, never about things.” Even at a young age, I knew what she meant even though I was using the term we call love as a figure of speech to express pleasure I received from something sensory or an object of enjoyment. But she was not tolerant of the misuse of the word. To her love was too precious to misapply.

Perhaps no other word is more powerful than love; yet there may be no other word more misused. Love is a term to express feelings about so many things that have nothing to do with its real meaning. We love chocolate, football, movies, books, and so on. But love is not a fitting term for those. So, what is love anyway?

In his book, *A Second Touch*, Keith Miller explains Christian love by recalling Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He discovers in his own reading that:

“...Jesus was evidently *not* filled with a warm *feeling* of loving desire to die for man. As a matter of fact, our term for extreme discomfort, ‘sweating blood’ likely came from His experience that night. He evidently ‘sweated blood’ and prayed three times for a way *not* to perform this most loving act. And when He did agree to go, the love was expressed not by His *feeling* but by the fact that he acted out of love for His father *whether He felt like it or not!*”

Wow! If this is true, then Christian love is not based on the *feeling* I had always longed for. Christian love is simply an act of the kind God wants performed for another person’s health and wholeness to help fulfill His will for that person. And my *performing* that act in Christ’s perspective and concern is the *love*, not my warm feeling *about* it.”¹

If she was here today, I believe Mema would stand by her belief; and I think she was right. One should never grieve for things that can’t grieve for you, and one should never love something that can’t love back. So what is love anyway? Love is about obedience to God. And except for love *of* God, love is not always about *feelings* toward another. As Keith Miller said, “Christian love is simply *an act of the kind God wants performed for another person’s health and wholeness to help fulfill His will for that person...*”² (Italics added.)

Love is not a feeling. Love is obediently caring for others no matter how we feel.

“*You are the light of the world.*”

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org.

¹ Miller, Keith, *A Second Touch*, Word Books, 1967, p. 86

² Ibid