

How to Hug

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction. Text: Romans 12:9-21.

II. Love must be sincere.

- A. This means that there was no hypocrisy.
- B. Love was so evident in the early Christian community that people began to imitate it.
- C. Love was easily imitated in the day because it was so evident.
- D. Sham love comes from the flesh—wanting to be perceived in a certain way.
- E. True love comes from the Holy Spirit.
- F. True love is manifest from learning how to love from the Word and then depending upon the Spirit to do so.

III. Love as its manifest in the church.

- A. True love rejects sin and not persons.
 - 1. Man is made in the image of God.
 - 2. However, this is hard to do.
 - 3. Hypocritical love rejects people because they do not behave according to a certain standard.
 - 4. It is also hypocrisy to condone sin just because you like a person.
- B. True love knows that relationship is the basis and not friendship.
 - 1. The basis for concern is a familial tie.
 - 2. All Christians are related.
- C. True love regards others as more deserving. It gives the credit to other people.
- D. Real love retains fervor despite setbacks.
 - 1. This is a notable mark of a Christian walking in the Spirit.
 - 2. The Lord cannot stand lukewarmed-ness.
 - 3. An awareness that we are serving the Lord keeps our enthusiasm high.

E. True love rejoices in hope.

1. When trials come, begin with prayer.
2. Pray in everything.
3. If you are faithful in prayer, you will be able to be patient in affliction.

F. True love responds to needs. Practice hospitality.

IV. How Christian love looks acting in the world.

A. Love speaks well of its persecutors.

B. Love adjusts to people's moods—rejoices and mourns appropriately.

C. Love does not show partiality to persons.

D. Love does not pay evil for evil.

E. Love seeks to live at peace with everyone.

F. Love does not try to get even.

1. God is already doing it—leave room for God's wrath.
2. Do good and God will bring justice.
 - a. You will be able to think positively, overcoming evil with good.
 - b. The enemy will be overcome—you will make him your friend.
3. We are admonished to behave as Jesus—though He was reviled, He did not revile back.

Application questions:

1. What is sham love?

2. How does the speaker characterize true love? Which characteristic stands out to you, and why?

3. Which aspect of love do you struggle with the most? How will you attempt to love in this way today?
