



**“Dear friends, let us love one another,
for love comes from God.” 1 John 4:7**

A Love Without End...AMEN!

By Dr. Henry A. Harbuck—General Overseer/President



Most people, including Christians, look forward to Valentine’s Day each February. Everyone knows it’s a time when people express their love for one another. As such, I’m reminded of country singer George Strait’s song, “*Love without End, Amen*,” which tells the story of a young boy who, coming home after a schoolyard fight, anticipates forthcoming punishment from his dad. Fully expecting the wrath of his father, the son prepares for the worst. However, the father’s response was ... “*Let me tell you a secret about a father’s love. Daddies don’t just love their children every now and then -- it’s a love without end. Amen.*” The boy grew up and passed this secret on to his children. Isn’t it comforting to know that we have a Father like this? To believers, our Father’s love is no secret. Our God doesn’t just love His children “every now and then” -- indeed, His is a “love without end, Amen.”

Webster’s dictionary defines love as “a strong liking for someone or something, or a passionate affection for another person.” Notice that Webster’s definition of love involves objects of the world, using the words “person” or “something.” Yet Webster’s definition seems incomplete because it falls short of how I would describe my love for my wife Jan, our children, and grandchildren. Likewise, any human definition falls short in an effort to describe “love.” Human beings are somewhat limited in their attempt to properly describe things which evoke deep emotions – such as the colors of a rainbow, a beautiful sunset, autumn leaves, or the aroma of spring flowers. I don’t have the vocabulary to fully express myself in such matters. And if I did, I’m not sure I have words that are descriptive or vivid enough to express what I feel.

The non-Christian Greek writer Lucian, who lived from 120-180 A.D., made an observation about Christians. He said, “It is incredible to see the fervor with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator (Jesus) has put it into their heads that they are brothers.” Lucian said that Christians “spare nothing.” *Sparing nothing* is an example of unconditional love. So, where can we find a definition of love that is valid and real?

First, we need to remember that real [true] love is *of* and *from* God; therefore, a human definition will never suffice to describe it. God is the only completely accurate source for a definition that is primarily by, or an observation of, His actions. The love that God demonstrates (and defines) is even harder to grasp, thus we call it “unconditional love.” Second, unconditional love is the goal that we are [all] trying to achieve as Christians. The only way God’s love is made real and complete is for people to show love to others – both inside and outside our churches.

Now I’m not speaking of just platonic love, the kind of human love found within a family, or the conjugal love expressed between husband and wife. Rather, I refer to the kind of love and forgiveness we are commanded by God to have for others. This includes those who may not love us; but in fact, may even hate us. “Unconditional love” for those who hurt or hate us is difficult to attain even when we desire and pray for it. However, it is attainable by God’s grace and help.

We observe this “unconditional love” in Joseph after he had gone from *the pit to the prison* ... and finally to *the palace*, a position of being second in command only to Pharaoh (Gen. 37-50:15). Yet when his brothers came to Egypt to buy food, he wept over them, forgiving them with a “God-like” love although they had sold him into slavery. This is what we need today.

A Christian is a person who has met and believed on the [only begotten] Son of God, having passed from death to life through Jesus Christ. A Christian is one who has died to self and now lives for Jesus. A Christian is one who has experienced a change of mind and repented of his or her sins. A Christian has become an imitator of Christ. Jesus demonstrated agape love, sacrificial love, and unconditional love. Likewise, we must do our best to imitate His actions, and His servanthood. There’s a lot of difference between saying, “I love you” and really expressing that love to others. Sacrificial (or unconditional) love automatically includes actions. When there is a person who doesn’t know God, the most common way they learn about God’s love is through a person who knows and portrays God’s love.

We can all be thankful that God never stops expressing His love for us. He doesn’t change His mind when we disappoint Him. God’s love is unconditional. His love is Light and all that God does is measured with compassion and grace—**“A Love Without End...AMEN!”**