

What Does Authentic Love Look Like in the Church? Romans 12:9-16

Authentic love sees the church as a gym, not a stage. Romans 12:9

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

- **Authentic Love has no hidden agendas** (v.9a)
Hypocrisy = fakeness, insincerity or acting
- **Abhors (hates) evil** (v.9b)
- **Clings (glued) to what is good** (v.9c)

“True love leaves the stage and walks the path of real life.” – Donald Barnhouse, Pastor/Theologian (1895-1960)

Authentic love sees the church as a family, not a collection of strangers. Romans 12:10

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...”

- **Like a mother or father to a child** (v.10a)
philostorgos = a natural affection between parent and child
- **Like a bond between siblings** (v.10b)
philadelphia = a love between siblings
- **Like a family would give to an elder, giving honorable preference** (v.10c)

Authentic love sees the church as a way to serve God, not gain people’s praise. Romans 12:11-12

“...not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” (v.11)

- **Hardworking, not lazy** (v.11a)
- **Like an active boiling pot** (v.11b)
- **Serving the Lord** (v.11c)
- **Rejoicing in hope** (v.12a)
- **Preserving in tribulation** (v.12b)
- **Devoted to prayer** (v.12c)

Authentic love sees the church as a place to pursue generosity, not selfishness. Romans 12:13-15

“...contributing to the needs of the saints...” (v.13)

- **By meeting needs** (v.12a)
- **By pursuing hospitality**
(*philoxenia* = love of strangers) (v.13b)
- **By blessing those that persecute us** (v.14)
- **By rejoicing with those that rejoice** (v.15)
- **By mourning with those that mourn** (v.15b)
- **By living in harmony with other believers** (v.16a)
- **By caring for the “unimportant”** (v.16b)
- **By walking in humility** (v.16c)

“Love never stands aloof from people’s joys and pains. Love identifies with them, sings with them and suffers with them.” – John Stott, Pastor/Theologian (1921-2011)

Measure your Authentic Love for Others

My love for other Christians is free from hypocrisy.

- never rarely some of the time most of the time always

I love and treat other Christians as brothers and sisters, not strangers.

- never rarely some of the time most of the time always

My motive to love other Christians is to serve God, not receive praise from people.

- never rarely some of the time most of the time always

I love other Christians generously, not with selfish conditions.

- never rarely some of the time most of the time always

Be encouraged: Jesus is the perfect portrait of Authentic Love Romans 5:8, Philippians 2:1-11

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

“...being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.” Philippians 2:8

LifeGroup Discussion:

(Adapted from Chip Ingram’s book and study guide, “True Spirituality: Becoming a Romans 12 Christian”)

1. Share a time when you’ve experienced authentic love from brothers and sisters in Christ. What made it so special to you?
2. Describe a time when the hypocrisy of a Christian was a stumbling block for you.
3. Why do you think authentic love is so important in relationship? In demonstrating the reality of Christ to others?
4. Read Romans 12:9-16 out loud together as a group 3 times. Then share a specific step God is calling you to, in order to demonstrate authentic love to one another and to other brothers and sisters in Christ.

Next Steps:

1. **LifeGroups** are the way at Calvary Church to connect, grow and reach together and practice authentic love in a small group environment. Email Laura at lcopeland@calvarylife.org for more info.
2. **Pursue Hospitality** (Romans 12:13) by becoming a Safe Families for Children Advocate like the Bucher family did. You can sign up or gather more info about this life changing program today in the Worship Center Lobby or email Jen McAveney at jennmac@me.com or go to **safe-families.org**
3. **Demonstrate Authentic Love** by being generous with your time, treasure or talents (Romans 12:13-16) and volunteer or donate to Calvary’s VBS (June 23-27). Go to **calvarylife.org/vbs** for more info on how to donate or get involved.

Additional Resources:

1. Check out Chip Ingram’s (Matt Doan’s Pastor while growing up!) excellent study and video series on Romans 12 called, “True Spirituality: Becoming a Romans 12 Christian” on Calvary’s Right Now Media site. Need a login and password? Sign up at **calvarylife.org/rightnow**
2. Missed a message from our Romans “Set Free” series or from our current “Live Free” series? Go to **calvarylife.org** and click on the sermon download button on the right sidebar.
3. Great cross references to this study in Romans 12: John 13:34-35, John 15:12-17, John 17:1-26, Acts 4:32-27, I Corinthians 13:1-13, Philippians 2:1-11, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28, 1 Timothy 1:5, Hebrews 13:1-2, 1 Peter 4:8-11



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