

Unconditional Love...Not Our Definition

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When we love someone, we often think we love them unconditionally. It is so easy to do when things go well and there aren't challenges. But when things go in a different direction than what we like, want, or desire, loving them sometimes takes on a different style.

What if the person you love does something that is very wrong and hurtful? What if the person you love betrays you or leaves you? What if the person you love chooses to do something that you don't approve of or agree with?

Then our definition of unconditional love gets put to the test. So often, in these situations, we resort to punitive methods in order to "get back" at them. Or we resort to manipulation..."I won't treat you like trash if you come back, and I will stop saying intentionally hurtful things if you stop what you are doing". Or, we often manipulate the other in subtle ways which can include covert set-ups with our children. For example, we can knowingly say or do something in the presence of our children knowing that they will relay it to the other person. This is a form of manipulation and it is hurtful to the kids, and to the relationship. Actually all these scenarios, which most of us have engaged in at some level, are controlling behaviors and they are as far from unconditional as one can get.

Jesus Christ set the example for unconditional love.

He encountered many who rejected Him, betrayed Him, and mocked Him. Yet, He loved them anyway, and did not once try to manipulate them into following Him or believing in Him. Unfortunately, their choices led to their peril, however, He did not force His way into their lives and He honored their free will. He gave them ultimate respect and He allowed them to make their choices, without consequence.

He knows we all make mistakes and we all fall short of His glory, but we all have a chance to recognize our sins and our mistakes and repent of them and turn back to Him. The best way for this to happen is to allow us to make our choices, stay on our path, and realize on OUR OWN that our ways and our choices are not leading us where we want to be. Once we realize it on our own, we can CHOOSE to turn back to Him and we can CHOOSE to leave our old lifestyle..and it will be the best choice we could ever make because it will not be coerced, manipulated, or controlled. It will be our free-will and it will become the desire of our heart.

Are you in a situation where you need to exercise this kind of unconditional love with someone? Check your heart and your motives. Are they pure? Are they free of manipulation and coercion?

Unconditional love is not easy, but it is powerfully magnetic if practiced. The Lord has provided us with "blueprints" on how to live our lives. We get to choose to stay within those parameters or not. If we deviate from His standards, He does not come after us with any form of control or manipulation. He stands there with His arms open, waiting for us to see the error of our ways and choose to come back to Him...by our own free-will...and He welcomes us with loving arms.

That's unconditional love.