



Authentic Love

Key idea:

Authentic love is rooted in the character of God, displayed in the life and death of Christ, described in God's Law, and is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life.

Key text:

2 John 1-6

The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth — and not I only, but also all who know the truth — ² because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: ³ Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. ⁴ It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵ And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

Key points:

1. John is the apostle of love, the biblical writer who speaks of love more frequently than any other.
2. There is no way to understand God, the life and work of Christ, the Gospel, or the Christian life apart from authentic love.
3. Authentic love is rooted in and defined by the character of God. This means authentic love is not defined by human emotion but the nature, character, and actions of God.
4. Authentic love is displayed in the life and death of Christ.
5. Authentic love is described in God's Law. Any idea of love that embraces desires or actions contrary to God's revealed Law and will is actually inauthentic love!
6. Authentic love is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. How do I think authentic love is portrayed in movies, music, and mass media in our culture? Can I think of specific examples of this in these cultural portrayals? What are some common parts of this portrayal of love?
3. Why can't I define love merely from human desires and actions? Why is this inherently futile and doomed to failure?
4. How does our culture mean by the word 'authentic' in popular usage today? How would Scripture define 'authentic'?
5. We often pit 'love' and 'holiness' against one another as if they are mutually contradictory. Why is this incorrect? How does this distort the nature of authentic love?
6. Can I choose to do actions of love towards someone or something - even if I do not "feel" love? Is this hypocrisy - or a display of character? Is it "authentic"?
7. In Revelation 2:4-5, Jesus rebukes the Ephesian Church for having forsaken their first love. He then tells them to "repent and do the things you did at first." Can doing actions of love actually change the way I feel towards someone or something? What is the relationship between actions and desires?
8. What actions can I do this week that will stir up authentic love for my spouse? For fellow believers? For those whom I find difficult to love?
9. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For further Study:

[The Path of Authentic Love](#) (July 26, 2015)

[Authentic Brotherly Love](#) (July 12, 2015)

[Unwrapping Love In Christ](#) (December 11, 2011)

[The Summary of God's Law](#) (October 27, 2019)

Preview of next week: UnAuthentic (2 John 7-11)