

Barriers to Love Pathway to Love

Rom. 12: 9-10; 13: 8-10

In our emotional lives everyone ^{of us} wants to feel love.

Many may not realize this need - they may try many things to fill that need - but, of course, the realm of things does not fill that need:

Things like - materialism, success, achievements of various kinds, music, drugs. Even wrong sex is used as an enticement to fulfill that need. The world is full of things to make you feel good - which being interpreted means = to feel loved.

Today many try to find relationships to give them love - but there is a lot of failure going on in this area of human relationships.

The thesis is this: if we feel love our entire emotional life will fall into place - this is the thesis of many books & lectures today - it is a crying-out-loud need for love.

I agree with this thesis: the Bible does too. This is the abundant life Christ promised - giving and receiving love is most fulfilling.

In the Bible there are three different words for love, each with different meanings.

- ① eros - romantic love - "I'll love you if you love me"
- ② phileo - family love - "I love you because you love me"
- ③ agape - godly sacrificial love - unconditional and unlimited - the love that is given "in spite of" anything the other one does - & is never withdrawn.

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2] Eros and phileo are natural Roman love — only agape is supernatural — it is the way God loves us — and as we become Xians + walk with the Lord He gives us the ability to love — agape love.

Q → But do we? Today there is so much failure in romantic eros love and family phileo love even among Xians — that agape love seems impossible. So tonight I want to examine some of the barriers we have in our relationships — barriers which inhibit and hinder our ability to love properly in any one of these 3 kind of love.

① Self-rejection — or commonly called poor self image.

Not being able to accept yourself makes it impossible to focus on others: getting to know them, let alone being able to love them.

Why? Because you are so uncomfortable with yourself, so ill-at-ease with who you perceive yourself to be, that you cannot "get outside yourself" long enough to focus on others + build relationships.

But, since life is relationships a person with a rejection — of self problem tends to erect a facade — a false image they project to others.

This is exhibited in various ways

① The braggart is always insecure — trying to push forward in his areas of strength to hide his areas of failure.

② The one who is neg. about himself — his looks, his achievements.

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3] © false life goals: materialism, success, sexual conquest - things to replace feelings of inadequacy often become "workaholics" to get praise & acceptance from the world

Ⓐ Emphasize figure, looks, macho image, sexual conquest, clothes, makeup: the image he projects becomes consuming - it is to solve the problem of self-rejection

Ⓑ People with the barrier of self-rejection find it very difficult to trust God. Subconsciously they blame God for whatever bad characteristics they have - too long a nose, bad shaped body, not as smart as so-and-so. So they develop an attitude that God gave them a bad deal - and they are convinced that He intends to rip them off even more. Therefore, they have a problem with anyone in authority - authority itself is connected to this anger generated by their own self-rejection - their inability to accept who they are.

Ⓒ People with a poor self-image find it very difficult to feel loved - even when others are loving them sacrificially they still do not feel loved. This is often because the false facade they've put up is what they perceive is being loved. They think "If they really knew me, the real me, they'd reject me". So they remain closed, will not get deep - or become open & vulnerable. Often they counter love with neg. comments, or braggadocio, or stay iron-like & unemotional. Finally, people give up trying to love them - this results in a self-fulfilling prophecy: "See, no one loves me - I'm unlovable".