

# Love with Action

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If your love cannot be linked to some specific action –  
what's love got to do with it?

Consider why God tells us to love with action:

## 1. Love with action is the measure of our sincerity.

Romans 12:9 (NIV) says "love must be sincere." The word used for sincere in the language of the New Testament means without hypocrisy. It means that we are not to say one thing and do something else. That supports what I John 3:18 says.

### a. Believers are characterized by sincerity.

In the New Testament sincerity seems to be a measuring rod for godly characteristics.

Acts 2:46 (NIV) tells us that the first Christians fellowshiped together with "glad and sincere hearts." The word "sincere" may be used in this passage because it speaks of unity or singleness of purpose. All the believers sincerely loved the Lord and one another.

Sincere is also a word that characterizes our faith. Paul told young Timothy in II Timothy 1:5 (NIV), "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." Evidently, sincerity ran in the family – not just Timothy's but the family of God.

### b. Believers are cautioned about insincerity.

II Corinthians 11:3 (NIV) says, "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

It's easy to lose your sincerity. That's why we need to constantly measure it.

## Title: What's Love Got To Do With It? Text: I John 3:18

**Introduction:** In her hit single, aging rock singer Tina Turner asked the question, "What's love got to do with it?" I'm certain you are not surprised that in her song Tina found no solace when someone said they loved her, but acted in such a way that it broke her heart. What she was really singing about is the truth that one's actions speak louder than one's words. She seemed to be saying, "You can't call what you are doing love – what's love got to do with it?"

That's exactly what God is saying to us through John, known as the Apostle of Love, in I John 3:18: "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

The Apostle John may have referred to himself in the Gospel that bears his name as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23). We don't really know why he referred to himself like that except that he must have felt especially close to Jesus. It was to the disciple whom Jesus loved that He gave the responsibility of caring for His mother, Mary. John's life testifies to the fact that he was radically changed by Jesus' love for him. His life's message and ministry are summed up in I John 4:7: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."

God's Word reveals that everyone needs to be transformed by love. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God (Mark 12:30). Then He said you need to love yourself and your neighbor (Mark 12:31). And, of course, you are to love others in the family of faith (I John 4:7). We are to love in every direction – up, in and all around.

Our passage brings into focus how we are not to love and how we are to love. We are not to love "with words or tongues." We are to love "with actions and in truth." That means exactly what you think it does. Just as faith without works is dead, love without actions is dead.

I John 3:18 is telling us how to measure the sincerity of our love. We don't measure it with the words on our lips. We measure our love with the actions of our lives.

OK, let's apply the truth. If you love Jesus you will do what He tells you to do. You won't just sing about your love for Him. If your love is sincere, you'll obey what He tells you to do.

To measure your sincerity you only have to ask yourself one question: "Does my walk match my talk?" Is your life characterized by actions that support your words or are you all hot air? John admonishes us to measure our sincerity by our actions. Saying you love someone and showing them your love are two different things – both are commendable, but one without the other falls short of God's will.

What if we could measure our love? Most churches keep track of attendance in worship and Bible study. Someone always seems to count the offerings. What if we had a way to measure how well we did in love? Well, there just might be a way. How sincere we really are can be seen in our actions. Wouldn't it be something if a church report could say, "This week we were up in actions that demonstrate our love and so far this year we've increased our sincerity by 40%."

Love with action is the measure of our sincerity and...

## **2. Love with action gives meaning to our service.**

I've heard it said that you can serve without loving but you cannot love without serving. Sincere love fuels our actions but without sincere love our actions soon cease. Why? Because sincere love and sacrificial action go together.

We must be careful to ensure our actions are flowing from sincere love because...

### **a. Without love our actions mean nothing.**

The Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 13:1(NIV): "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." And in I Corinthians 13:3 (NIV) he repeated the thought: "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

God wants you to speak to others about Him and God wants you to give yourself in service for Him, but He wants you to do it with sincere love. I can always spot a believer who is serving because he or

she feels obligated or coerced. There is no joy or sense of fulfillment in his or her life. That's the result when you serve without loving. Serving God and others from a sincere love guarantees our satisfaction.

We must also be careful to ensure our actions are flowing from sincere love because...

### **b. Without actions our love means nothing.**

A young man in love told his girlfriend, "I love you so much that there's nothing I wouldn't do for you." She was so impressed with his words that she married him. After years of a miserable marriage, the disappointed wife told her marriage counselor, "Well I guess he didn't lie to me. He said there was nothing he wouldn't do for me and that's exactly what he's done for me all these years – nothing."

When we sincerely love God, serving Him is a blessing and not a burden. Serving God becomes a natural expression of our love for Him. True Christian love means loving with action. The opposite of loving with action, according to our passage, is loving with words. The Apostle James gives an example of loving with words in James 2:15-16 (NIV): "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?"

What good is it indeed? Your walk must match your talk.

[This would be a good place to give the example of Ken Dean's ministry or Monta Jo Erikson's ministry included in the CMO stories provided under the "Mission Stories" tab of the CMO Website ([www.calmissions.com](http://www.calmissions.com)). Videos of Ken and Monta Jo can be viewed online and downloaded at the CMO Website ([www.calmissions.com](http://www.calmissions.com) > Promotional Materials > DVD) to use in place of telling the story if you prefer.]

Love with action is the measure of our sincerity, and love with action gives meaning to our service.

Finally, notice that...

## **3. Love with action was modeled by our Savior.**

God will never ask you to do what He has not already done. Becoming more like Jesus is the lifelong ambition of every disciple. A navigator depends on a compass to help determine course. Why? Because a compass shows where one is going. Jesus' entire life serves as a compass for you to follow. If you will follow His example in all things your life will always be headed in the right direction.

The Bible teaches us that...

**a. Jesus loved us because the love of the Father was in Him.**

In John 15:9 (NIV) Jesus told His disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."

Jesus followed the model of the Father and we are commanded to follow the model of Jesus. How does one "remain in" the love of Jesus? To begin with, one cannot remain until one is already in Jesus' love. When we begin a personal relationship with Jesus by confessing Him as our Lord we get in His love. The Bible calls that salvation. Romans 10:9 (NIV) says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Once we are saved His love abides in us. In fact love becomes the evidence that we are truly saved. I John 3:14 explains, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death."

Is the love of Jesus in you? Have you confessed Him as your Lord? If not, you can today. Romans 10:13 (NIV) says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

If you already have a personal relationship with Jesus, are you following His model? I John 3:23-24 summarizes, "And this is His command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us. Those who obey His commands live in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us."

Once you have the love of Jesus you can grow in your ability to love by following His example.

**b. We know what love is because of Jesus' actions.**

I John 3:16 (NIV) plainly states, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us."

Jesus did not love us with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. After washing the feet of His disciples, Jesus told them, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15 NIV). I would add emphasis on the words "do" and "done." We are to do what He has done.

What did he do? He gave us His all. He didn't just say He loves us. His actions let us *know* He loves us.

I Peter 2:21 bridges every believer's life to Jesus' actions: "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps."

Love has no greater expression than the actions of Jesus.

Thomas a' Kempis, author of the book, *The Imitation of Christ*, said, "Whoever loves much, does much."

An unknown poet wrote:

*Love ever gives,  
Forgives, outlives,  
And ever stands  
With open hands.  
And while it lives,  
It gives,  
For this is love's prerogative  
To give, and give, and give.*

That's a picture of Jesus. He gave, and gave, and gave until He had given us His all. Jesus didn't just talk the talk, He walked the walk.

God is calling us to live a life of love. How's that going for you? Can you identify specific actions that prove your love? Have you given your life to Jesus by confessing Him as your Lord? Have you given of your time? Have you given of your talent? Have you given of your wealth? If not, what's love got to do with it?



The California Mission Offering is inspired by S.G. Posey, a CSBC missionary pioneer.



## What's Love Got To Do With It? I John 3:18

“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”

**Introduction:** God's Word reveals that everyone needs to be transformed by love:

- Jesus said the greatest commandment was to love the Lord your God (Mark 12:30).
- Jesus said you need to love yourself and your neighbor (Mark 12:31).
- You are to love others in the family of faith (I John 4:7).

Just as faith without works is dead, love without action is dead.

Consider why God tells us to love with action:

**1. Love with action is the m\_\_\_\_\_ of our s\_\_\_\_\_.**

Romans 12:9 (NIV) *“Love must be sincere.”*

**a. Believers are c\_\_\_\_\_ by s\_\_\_\_\_.**

Acts 2:46 (NIV) *“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”*

**b. Believers are c\_\_\_\_\_ about i\_\_\_\_\_.**

II Corinthians 11:3 (NIV) *“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”*

**2. Love with action gives m\_\_\_\_\_ to our s\_\_\_\_\_.**

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**3. Love with action was m\_\_\_\_\_ by our S\_\_\_\_\_.**

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Romans 10:13 (NIV) *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

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