

Kingdom Identity: I am a Lover of People

I am grateful that my surname, Nyamuda means *one who loves all others*.

2 Tim 1:6-7 (Berean Study Bible)

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power, love, and self-control.

One of the core characteristics of the born again spirit is love. When Paul is trying to encourage Timothy to step out in his area of gifting and purpose he reminds him of what he carries in his inner man. We see here that identity precedes fruitfulness.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The word used for love here is Agape (God's Love)

Loving one another is central to our identity as Kingdom people.

We must first receive the love of Jesus experientially in order to love people with that kind of love.

It's not another type of love. It's not love with a hook. It's not tit for tat love. It's love as He has loved us. How has Christ loved you?

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Lay down = appoint, assign, set, lay aside, serve. Jesus literally set aside His life for us. To whom have you given your life.

Love is seen in selflessness.

Two people can do the same thing but one does it laying down his life whilst another does it for personal gain. The issue is not the act but the driving force behind the act.

This is not just something Jesus alone was expected to do. There is a biblical instruction for husbands to love their wives in this same way.

Eph 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Do not judge others' love based on your level of grace in an area.

Perhaps you have the gift of mercy and you spend a lot of time feeding the hungry and marginalised. Maybe others around you have the gift of giving and are continuously making a difference through their generosity. Others have the gift of teaching and are starting night school for adults. The important thing is that these deeds are done in love.

Many people in the Body of Christ do good things but from the wrong motive. Some do sacrificial deeds in search for significance. For example, some cook lovely meals for their spouse to win their love. When we look at John 15:13 the key learning is that love involves laying down your life. You are doing the deed purely for the other person. The Apostles in Acts 6 saw that waiting on tables was not a good thing for them, so they delegated this and decided to focus on the Word and Prayer. They were devoted to this and laid down their lives through this. Did that mean they were not loving because they were not actively involved in feeding the widows? No, there are many ways of showing love. You show love when you sacrificially stand in the gap in intercession. You show sacrificial love when you labour for many hours counselling people through their troubles. The evangelistic person might say you are not loving because you are not reaching the lost souls in your area but you, (a teacher) might be saying they are not loving because they don't care to teach and disciple the next generation. We also have seasons. When I was at school I was involved in Kukura Neshungu school for the mentally handicapped.

Gal 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

All our acts of faith need to be expressed through love for them to truly count. If there is no love in our deeds then they do not count. They have no value from heaven's perspective.

Romans 5:5

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Love is a spiritual resource that is supplied by the Holy Spirit

As a believer you can't say "I don't have love". You can't say "I can't love." The divine ability to love is part of the born again spirit.

1 John 4:7-8

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

If God is love and we were created in His image then we too ought to be identified by love

God is the source of love

Loving people with God's love is a fruit of being born again

As I grow in my knowledge of God I should also be growing in my love for people.

When we do not walk in love we are demonstrating our ignorance of God

1 Peter 1:22

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

Love = Philadelphia (Philos) = Affection for the brethren, fellow believers.

Deeply = ektenós (an adverb) – properly, fully-stretched, i.e. describing the verbal idea as extended out, to its necessary (full) potential ("without slack"); strenuously, without undue let up (as "completely taut").

In King James Bible: *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*

The Parable of the Good Samaritan:

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'^[1]; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'^[2] " ²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" ³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii^[3] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" ³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Key things to note in this passage: Probably took place in Bethany as the road from Jerusalem to Jericho runs through Bethany. The road is 18 miles (29km) and has ravines etc. It's 2 miles from Jerusalem. Sharp descent of 3500ft (1000m) down to Jericho. It's quite a deserted area after Bethany once known as "The Bloody Way" due to crime there. Priests usually travelled down this road as they had quite a presence in Jericho. It's interesting that Jesus hated racism and addressed this, not didactically but by using the Samaritan as the embodiment of love. Jesus did so despite just having been rejected in a Samaritan village a couple of weeks earlier on His way to Jerusalem (Luke 9:53 when James and John asked if they could call down fire from heaven to consume them like Elijah did.). The lawyer (nomikos) was an expert in the Mosaic Law.

Most people are comfortable with the concept of love at a theoretical level. Our challenge is when it comes to the object of our love. The key question many of us have is, "Who qualifies to be loved by me?"

Jesus answers this question in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is interesting that it wasn't the religious people that demonstrated true love.

This parable teaches us that LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO.

Matt 5:46-47

⁴⁶ *If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?* ⁴⁷ *And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?*

Greater love is demonstrated when you show kindness to those who will not and have not shown it to you.

Jesus died for us while we were still sinners.

For unsaved people, it is normal to show love to those who have done so to you. This is not Agape. Sometimes it can be motivated by pride, because you are too proud to receive from others so your giving is to make you feel like you are still powerful over them.

What is the character of love? There is the giving dimension of love and there is the character aspect of love.

1 Cor 13:1-8

¹ *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*
² *If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.* ³ *If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.* ⁴ *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.* ⁵ *It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.* ⁶ *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.* ⁷ *It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* ⁸ *Love never fails.*

In verse 3 we see that giving and sacrifice does not automatically mean one loves. So what is the character of love. All these great works need to be embedded with the character of Agape.

Patient = makros and thumos = long suffering, perseverance

Kind = Chrestos = serviceable, good, useful, gentle, pleasant, kind.

Envy = Zeloo = Set your heart to possess something, boiling over with eagerness for something (same word used for coveting the greater gifts). It's where we get zealous from.

Boast = perpereúomai (from perperos, "a braggart") – to act as a braggart, i.e. a "show off" who needs too much attention. It's a word that is only used in this verse.

Proud = Phusioo = to puff or blow up, to inflate, puffed up, arrogant, proud. like an egotistical person spuing out arrogant ("puffed-up") thoughts.

Dishonour = aschémoneó = to act unbecomingly, act improperly, am unseemly, behave unbecomingly (or even dishonorably); perhaps: I consider (something) unseemly, indecent.

Self-seeking = Zeteo and Autos = to seek its own. Search for, desire, require, and demand but for myself.

Easily angered = paroxuno = to sharpen, to have sharp edge, to stimulate, to provoke, arouse anger, provoke, irritate.

Record of wrongs = Logizomai and Kakos = to reckon, to consider, to reckon, count, charge with; reason, decide, conclude; think, suppose with regards to malice and evil against you.

Delight in evil = Chairō and Adikia = "favourably disposed, leaning towards" injustice, unrighteousness, or hurt.

Rejoice in truth = Sugchairō and Aletheia = I rejoice with, congratulate. To mutually participate in God's grace and favour. I rejoice in the truth, but not merely truth as spoken; truth of idea, reality, sincerity, truth in the moral sphere, divine truth revealed to man, straightforwardness

Protects = Stegei = to cover closely (so as to keep water out), generally to bear up under. I cover, conceal, ward off, bear with, endure patiently. To endure because shielded, i.e. bearing up (forbearing) because under the Lord's protection (covering). To cover over with silence; to keep secret; to hide, conceal. Also covering to keep off something which threatens

Trusts = Pistis = to think to be true; to be persuaded of; to credit, place confidence in;

Hopes = Elpizo = To actively wait in expectation

Perseveres = Hupomeno = to stay behind, to await, endure (a) I remain behind ie to not flee, (b) I stand my ground, show endurance, (c) I endure, bear up against, persevere.