



# Let's Talk CHANGE DEVOTIONALS

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## CAN YOU PASS THE LOVE TEST?

Dr. Vanessa Dantzler Ussery | June 28, 2017

I am relatively certain that if we were to interview people every one would give a similar but different definition of what love is. As a Christian the word of God teaches us that "God is love," 1 John 4:8b. The beginning of this same scripture states, "He who does not love does not know God..." That statement is a mind boggler as most people are convinced they are capable of showing and feeling love with or without a belief in God. Could it be that in the mind of God love is perceived differently than most people think? I think so. God's ways are above our ways and thinking surpasses ours. It is possible that when God evaluates our capacity to love it is not centered as much on those we easily love as much as it is on those who are difficult to be loved, such as enemies and people outside of our social circle. In Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27, we discover the teachings of Jesus where he indicates one is to love your enemies, do good to them, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. Then in Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus answers the lawyer's question about which is the great commandment in the law and states, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

In review of what is written, we should love our enemies, our neighbor and our Lord. It is evident we should love the Lord with every fiber of our existence: heart, mind, soul and strength (Mark 12:30). That requires engaging our whole life, our feelings, intellect and energy. Do we really love the Lord like that? Being truthful, I believe many Christians have this type of love toward the Lord although we are challenged in our flesh many times to demonstrate this in our daily living. When we accepted Jesus it's because we Love Him with all we have. The test of life reveals that we can be weakened in this love under pressure. An expression of our love of the Lord is reflected in how we love our enemies and our neighbor. It is not easy to love those who hurt us, insult us, use us, or dishonor us in some way. The Lord challenges us to love these people not because they earn it, but because we Love Him, we must love them. To love our neighbor means we are expected to love all people who cross our path and offer to be of service to them if the opportunity arises. Jesus served enemies and neighbors throughout his three year ministry on earth, depicting what real love really looks like. Above, all He died because He loved us before we loved Him. The question remains, can you pass the love test? The chance to do so will come and when it does, what will you do with it?

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