



Unconditional Love

Have you ever heard the word “egregious”? It rose from my spirit one day while I was praying, and, since that time, it has been in my thoughts. Words and their meanings have always been very important to me because my mother was a wordsmith. She frequently rehearsed a word she had just learned or remembered. Through her, we learned to appreciate words.

The word “egregious” means “conspicuous for bad quality.”¹ It reminds me of our world and the obvious “in your face” flaunting of sin. Sin is usually front and center – just turn on the television and watch for a few minutes. Sin abounds there.

When our children were growing up, we did not have a television. I know that is radical, but we chose to live without it. Instead, we bought our son a computer and financed it for a year. The early computers were that expensive. We gave this computer to our daughter and eventually it went to a collector. It was still working. Amazing!

In those days, your computer held only what you loaded onto it. There was no access to ungodly material unless you choose to


purchase it. Usually, if you wanted to soak your mind in sin you had to buy a magazine at the convenience store and those magazines were covered – not in public view. Today, however, sin is not hidden. It is readily available on our computers, televisions, and billboards.

As a Christian, we must stand against sin, guarding our hearts and our children from its influence. The Scripture is still true. “Evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions

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lead to death.”² The apostle Paul also warns us saying, “To be carnally minded is death.” But, here is the good news from this same verse, “To be spiritually minded is life and peace.”³ Oh, the rewards of walking with God!

Yet, there is a problem. Often, when we stand against sin in our world, we hate both sin and sinner. It is so important to love people, even sinners. Yes, we reject their ungodly lifestyles. We cannot sanction or embrace their sinful ways, but we do not despise the person. Although we hate embezzlement and theft, we love the thief. We shudder at the thought of

 infidelity and adultery, but we long to see people set free and reconciled to God.

This stance is not a contradiction in terms. The Scripture records that God hates sin,⁴ but, at the same time, it says, “God so loved the world.”⁵ The Word of God notes, “The whole world lieth in wickedness,”⁶ yet it also says “[God] loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.”⁷ So, how can we hate sinners if God loved them enough to sacrifice His only-begotten Son? After all, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”⁸ We too were sinners and enemies of His righteousness.

God’s great love sent Jesus to the cross even though He hated sin. As parents, we understand this because we love our children even when they disobey us. Of course, we are disappointed in their behavior. Yet, we still love them. We wish they had not rebelled against our authority, but we will not sit on the sidelines and ignore them. We continue to love them and reach out to them.

Parental love is steadfast in the most grievous situations. I have seen parents devastated by their child’s conduct. A child goes to prison, destroys his life through drugs, or lives in gross ungodliness, but this behavior does not sever mom and dad’s heart of love for him. Isn’t God’s love greater than man’s?

In Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus, he testified of God’s abundant mercy and great love. He writes that “even when we were dead in sins,”⁹ “God loved us so much that he made us alive with Christ.”¹⁰ This is the message we carry to the world – to the sinner and the ungodly. We tell them, “God loved you, Jesus died for you, and by faith you can be saved.” We are ambassadors of His love.

We cannot impact their lives with hatred. Hatred and disgust do NOT witness to God’s love. They must know that we love them. However, this does NOT mean we do what they do or go where they go. Certainly NOT!

We are “real” Christians, living in holiness. We are dedicated to God and committed to His Word. When we obey Him, they will see Christ in us and then drawn by the Holy Spirit, they will come to Him.

In the meantime, we do not sit idly by, watching and waiting. God will use us to speak kind words, to give a generous tip, to assist with a child, or to repair a broken pipeline. One family helped their unsaved neighbors paint their house. She said they wanted to demonstrate God’s love to the neighbor. If you are like me, this was a tremendous sacrifice. But, sometimes, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ requires more than our words.

God will lead us as we pray for opportunities to demonstrate His love and declare His Word. But are we ready? Can we see beyond our need and speak a kind word to the stranger that crosses our path? Will we smile at an irritating waitress, a rude salesman, or impatient driver? Does Christ shine through us in our everyday lives? He wants to and, as we yield to His Spirit, He is able. Christ is in us! Let the whole world see Him!



¹Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary ©1959 ²Jas 1:14 NLT ³Ro 8:6 ⁴Heb 1:9 ⁵Jn 3:16 ⁶1Jn 5:19 ⁷1Jn 4:10 NLT ⁸Ro 5:8 ⁹Eph 2:4 KJV ¹⁰Eph 2:4 CEV

