

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL

07 - SUNDAY – August 9, 2026

The Essentialness of Love

Last week we touched on the theme of love, such as seen in 1 Corinthians 13. We need to explore Paul's words here in even more depth.

The kind of love Paul is talking about is not expressed in such sentences as, "I love strawberries" or "I love my friends" or even "I love my spouse and children." Neither is he talking about the kind of love that one sees in movies. And no, it is not erotic love, although this passage has been commonly used in wedding sermons.

This love cannot be reduced to affection, or charity, or virtue, or benevolence. Yet, they all represent it to a lesser or greater degree. This love is a special grace bestowed upon us by the Spirit. Indeed, love in 1 Corinthians 13 is the Spirit-given motivation that leads us to act with affection, charity, virtue, and benevolence. It is a total commitment of our actions, feelings, and thoughts toward Christ and our neighbors.

Read Matthew 24:12. What warning does Jesus give us here?

Matthew 24:12 (NKJV) "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

What Is Jesus Warning Us About?

- In the last days:
 - Sin increases
 - Lawlessness spreads
 - **Love grows cold**

Not hatred first...**Coldness first**

Key Insight:

- The greatest end-time danger is not just deception
- It is **loss of love**

II. What Is Agapē Love?

Key Text: John 13:34 "Love one another; as I have loved you..."

Definition of Agapē Love:

- Selfless
- Sacrificial
- Unconditional
- Christ-like

- Not based on feelings
- Based on **decision and surrender**

III. The Greatest Example of Agapē Love

Key Text: **Romans 5:8** “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

At the Cross:

- Love when rejected
- Love when betrayed
- Love when undeserved

Agapē gives when nothing is returned

Power Statement: “Agapē love does not ask, ‘Do you deserve it?’ It asks, ‘How can I reflect Christ?’”

IV. Why Agapē Love Is So Important Today

1. Because Sin Naturally Kills Love

- Lawlessness hardens the heart
- Repeated sin numbs compassion

2. Because Cold Love Leads to Broken Relationships

- Homes become divided
- Churches become fractured
- Communities become disconnected

3. Because Love Is the Evidence of True Christianity

Key Text: **John 13:35** “By this all will know... if you have love...”

- Not doctrine alone
- Not position alone
- **Love proves discipleship**

V. How Do We Keep Love From Growing Cold?

1. Stay Connected to Christ

Key Text: **John 15:5 (NKJV)** “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Without Him—we cannot love like Him

2. Choose Love Daily

- Love is not automatic
👉 It is intentional

3. Guard Your Heart: Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV) “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

- Limit: Bitterness, Offense, Resentment

4. Practice Love Actively: Speak kindly, Forgive quickly, Serve intentionally

VI. Real-Life Impact: When Agapē Love Changes Lives

Question: When could this kind of love have made a powerful difference?

Answer (Application Examples):

- When someone:
 - Felt rejected → Love would have restored them
 - Was struggling with addiction → Love would have lifted them
 - Failed publicly → Love would have covered them
 - Was alone → Love would have reached them

Truth:

Many people don't need more criticism

They need **Christ-like love in action**

VII. Final Challenge

The question is not: **"Is the world growing cold?"**

The real question is: **"Is my love growing cold?"**

1 John 4:7-8 (NKJV) "(7) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (8) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."