

## Eternity Daily Bible Study

# The Importance Of Love

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**Number:** 24  
**Verses:** Colossians 3:9-10  
**Topic:** Love Does Not Play Games  
**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

**Colossians 3:9-10** *Do not lie to one another, having put off the old man with his practices, (10) and having put on the new, having been renewed in full knowledge according to the image of the One creating him,*

Love does not lie, cheat or play games. Love does not need to sin in order to win. Love does not engage in corporate politics. Thus love is "not of this world". Rather instead, love flows out of the new nature, which is incorruptible, and does not engage in any form of corruption or deceit.

Love "puts off" the old man with his corrupt practices. The old manipulative ways are discarded. The thief stops stealing, and the flatterer stops trying to con people, the flirt stops abusing his/her power and the tough competitive person stops "playing the game" with everyone that they meet.

In Ephesians Paul spells this out at quite some length, please read these verses carefully:

**Ephesians 4:17-25** *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should not walk from now on as other nations walk, in the vanity of their mind, (18) having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. (19) For they, being past feeling, have given themselves up to lust, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (20) But you have not so learned Christ, (21) if indeed you have heard Him and were taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. (22) For you ought to put off the old man (according to your way of living before) who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, (23) and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. (24) And you should put on the new man, who according to God was created in righteousness and true holiness. (25) Therefore putting away lying, let each man speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.*

Christians are members of one another and are to speak the truth in love to one another. We are to be sincere and without hypocrisy. The truth is in Jesus and people who are in Jesus are to be fully truthful in every single aspect of their lives. We are to have a robust soundness of being; without "image", manipulation or flakiness. No "spin", no misleading people, no pressing people's buttons. We are not to say one thing and mean another!

Such transparency, honesty and guilelessness is costly in life and I business. It is "almost impossible" to truly love people and simultaneously be a worldly success! This is because worldly success nearly always requires a strong commitment to self and to selfishness. You get it, and you keep it, and you hold on to it for dear life!

The worldly-wise person sees nothing at all wrong with the occasional lie, a bit of backstabbing, an outrageous profit, the exploitation of the gullible and so on. For the worldly person their motto is: "Sometimes you just have to sin in order to win".

To succeed in life you have generally to be somewhat of a moral failure, and to succeed as a Christian you often have to be something of a failure in the world's eyes (just as the apostle Paul was). There are some professions such as teaching where this is less of a problem but as the world gets worse and worse, more and more pressure is brought to bear on Christians to compromise (for instance to instruct children in anti-Christian values). Most Christians should prepare themselves for a severe conflict between conscience and career at some point in their lives!

Those who end up abandoning worldly success (and its lack of ethics) for conscience's sake or for the work of God are seen as "fools for Christ's sake":

**1 Corinthians 4:9-13** *For I think that God has set forth us last, the apostles, as it were appointed to death; for we have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. (10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honorable, but we are despised. (11) Even until this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. (12) And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; (13) being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.*

I remember talking to some Chinese Christians who told me the story of a lady Christian doctor who chose to have a second child rather than have an abortion. The doctor was fired from her position at the hospital and a heavy fine was levied upon her! People who knew her considered her career-ending move extremely foolish since abortion is so widely practiced in China! This woman chose conscience over career and took up her cross for Christ:

**Galatians 6:14** *But may it never be for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

**Matthew 16:24-27** *Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him bear his cross, and let him follow Me. (25) For whoever may desire to save his life will lose it. But whoever may lose his life for My sake will find it. (26) For what will a man be benefited if he should gain the whole world, but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give as an exchange for his soul? (27) For the Son of Man is about to come with His angels in the glory of His Father. And then "He will give reward to each according to his practice."*

When we play games, even small ones, it is always for some kind of pleasure or pay-off. We think we will gain something worthwhile by the move. But in the process of the game we actually lose things of infinite value. Each act subtracts. With each lie we die. And every trick makes the inner man sick. When others are deceived the Holy Spirit is grieved (Ephesians 4:25-30). We gain the world (which is passing away) but in the process we lose our eternal souls. We are liked but we do not love, we are rich but we are restless, we are successful yet we are without grace in our lives.

So why do people lie, cheat and manipulate? For self-protection, money, status, image, power, sexual favors, to please people, curry favor, get them to do what they want when they want it, and to "win" in every transaction. In some cases they do so simply because: "that is just the way business is always done around here". It's the worldly way, the "wise" way, the way that "gets you somewhere" and because "nice guys finish last". After all with a sucker born every minute why shouldn't you take advantage of them?

However Christians are not to walk in the crafty ways of this world. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that you simply cannot love God and befriend the world (James 4:4), or serve both God and Mammon (Matthew 6:24). We are crucified to the world, dead to the world (Galatians 6:14), and we are not to enter into partnership with the world or the spiritual principalities and powers that inhabit it (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

Not only are we called to leave the world behind but we are also called to renounce the manipulative methods that the world uses:

**2 Corinthians 4:2** *But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the Word of God, but by the revelation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

**2 Timothy 3:12-14** *Yea, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (13) But evil men and seducers will go forward to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (14) But continue in the things that you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,*

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5** *And I, brothers, when I came to you, did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (5) so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

The cost of gamesmanship is way too high, if you "sin in order to win" you will, one day far too late, find out that the wages of sin is death! Games tend to get out of control. Flirting leads to adultery which leads to divorce and even, in some cases, even to death. Lying leads to compulsive lying which leads to being found out, and to distrust, dismissal and sometimes even to jail. One-upmanship leads to continuous competition, which leads to the golden treadmill, which leads to high levels of stress, which leads to nervous breakdowns and heart attacks.

In this life playing the "tougher" life-games can lead you to one of three places: jail, hospital or the morgue. And ultimately if you are a serious hard-ball game-player and keep on lying then your final destination is the Lake of Fire:

**Revelation 21:8** *But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, will have their part in the Lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Blessings,

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