

23 Things That Love Is

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What is love?

You won't find the best answer on the pages of Wikipedia, Merriam-Webster or Shakespeare. No, the best definition of love was established at an event, the most important event in human history: the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ's sacrifice of love is the ultimate example of what love is and what love does. Here's a definition I like to use:

Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.

If we are followers of Jesus Christ and believe in the cross for salvation, then our words and actions and responses must be motivated by cruciform love. That is, love that shapes itself to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (cruci = "cross" and form = "in the shape of").

Here are 23 more ways that you can express cruciform love in your daily living:

- 1. LOVE IS** being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of others without impatience or anger.
- 2. LOVE IS** actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward another while looking for ways to encourage and praise.
- 3. LOVE IS** making a daily commitment to resist the needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses.
- 4. LOVE IS** being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding.
- 5. LOVE IS** being more committed to unity and understanding than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.
- 6. LOVE IS** a making a daily commitment to admit your sin, weakness, and failure and to resist the temptation to offer an excuse or shift the

blame.

7. LOVE IS being willing, when confronted by another, to examine your heart rather than rising to your defense or shifting the focus.

8. LOVE IS making a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to another is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient.

9. LOVE IS being unwilling to do what is wrong when you have been wronged, but looking for concrete and specific ways to overcome evil with good.

10. LOVE IS being a good student of another, looking for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs so that in some way you can remove the burden, support them as they carry it, or encourage them along the way.

11. LOVE IS being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the relational problems you face, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response.

12. LOVE IS being willing to always ask for forgiveness and always being committed to grant forgiveness when it is requested.

13. LOVE IS recognizing the high value of trust in a relationship and being faithful to your promises and true to your word.

14. LOVE IS speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack the other person's character or assault their intelligence.

15. LOVE IS being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to co-opt the other person into giving you what you want or doing something your way.

16. LOVE IS being unwilling to ask another person to be the source of your identity, meaning, and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of theirs.

17. LOVE IS the willingness to have less free time, less sleep, and a busier schedule in order to be faithful to what God has called you to be and to do as a spouse, parent, neighbor, etc.

18. LOVE IS a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your relationships.

19. LOVE IS staying faithful to your commitment to treat another with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when the other person doesn't seem deserving or is unwilling to reciprocate.

20. LOVE IS the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of a relationship without asking for anything in return or using your sacrifices to place the other person in your debt.

21. LOVE IS being unwilling to make any personal decision or choice that would harm a relationship, hurt the other person, or weaken the bond of trust between you.

22. LOVE IS refusing to be self-focused or demanding, but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired.

23. LOVE IS daily admitting to yourself, the other person, and God that you are unable to be driven by a cruciform love without God's protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace.