

A Prayer for Loving Difficult People

By Mary Southerland

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35

True love is God's love. It looks beyond abrasive behavior to see and meet the real needs hidden there. Meeting a need in the life of a sandpaper person can be messy and usually demands a sacrifice of some kind on our part. It is easier to simply placate or avoid difficult people than it is to love them the way they need to be loved – not in a way that makes our life easier. For example, when we see that sandpaper person coming, we turn around and head in the opposite direction. When the caller ID shows the name of a sandpaper person in our life, we do not answer. Hurried conversations replace a listening heart. We offer tolerance instead of acceptance.

And God is not pleased. He is committed to our character – not our comfort.

God wants us to love each other in the same way that He loves – unconditionally. In fact, God wants us to love in such a way that the people around us will know we are fully devoted followers of Christ. I wonder what our relationships would look like if we did love the way Jesus loves us.

Nowhere in the **Bible** will you find the words, “When you feel like it, love others.” Nope! It is not in there.

The **Bible** tells us to *practice* love. Love is an ongoing and very deliberate choice – not an emotion or a feeling. I challenge you to step out in **faith** today and choose to love that difficult person in your life the way Jesus loves you.

Let's Pray:

Father, I have to thank You for looking beyond my faults and for loving me unconditionally. Forgive me when I fail to love others in the same way. Give me eyes to see the needs of the difficult people in my life, and show me how to meet those needs in a way that pleases You.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.