

The love of God as understood by Christians

Christians believe that God is love (1 John 4:8), light, holiness, and righteousness. These divine attributes are the realities and source of the corresponding human virtues, which are merely shadows. Love is the highest attribute of God, the one attribute in which all others harmoniously blend.

Knowledge of Christ's love, in the sense of an inward personal experience of it - its freeness, its tenderness, its depth, its patience - is important to Christians. This love is transmuted into spiritual force. God's love lives in believers through the Holy Spirit. As the breeze fills the sails and bears forward the ship, so the love of Christ fills the Christian's soul and moves it in the direction of God's will. But in its fullness it is infinite, and therefore always presenting new fields to be explored, new depths to be fathomed. The love of God is beyond our understanding, immeasurable. There is a fullness of gracious attainment in every advanced believer that corresponds to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19)

Grace is God's unmerited, consistent, unconditional love and acceptance freely given to all. This grace is incarnate in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16).

How Christianity calls its followers to express that love in their lives

Followers of Christianity are asked to obey God's commandments, to love the Lord their God and serve Him with all their heart and with all their soul.

Jesus Christ said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." "This is the first and great commandment." And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) Christians love God by trying to obey his commandments. God's love is toward people and people who have God's love are committed to loving other people also.

To have the love of God means that Christians value the truth and are willing to stand up for it against falsehood. They are obliged to live up to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

God's commitment of love in their lives, and their commitment to love each other is a paramount tenet. Through faith and perseverance, believers find His grace.

Love is the *modus operandi* of the Christian faith. When Christians' obedience to the Word of God is affected, their care for each other will be as well. Love is a choice and a commitment.

Christians are encouraged to grow in faith and love by following the teachings of Jesus Christ as he summarized them in Matthew 22:34-40 and John 13:34-35. They provide a balance of what "works of piety" (loving God) and "works of mercy" (loving your neighbour as yourself).