

Love: What the World Needs

Ponder: What type of love does the world need?

Scripture: “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent . . .” (Philippians 1:9, 10a, NKJV).

I remember listening to the radio as Dionne Warwick sang Burt Bacharach’s song, “What the world needs now is love, sweet love.” Amen! Has there ever been a time when the world didn’t need love?

Not only does the world need love, it needs the right kind of love. The Christians in Philippi already had love, but Paul prayed that their love would continually increase. Three positive qualities would characterize the love for which Paul prayed:

1) Knowledge: Genuine love wants to know. Specifically, a person who truly loves God and loves other people wants to know what God’s will is. It’s difficult to love someone of whom you know little or nothing. In His word, God tells us of His own nature and love for us, as well as informing us that we are made in His image. This knowledge enables us to love Him through obedience to His will, as well as loving one another by treating each other with respect and kindness.

2) Discernment: Authentic love wants to know the difference between right and wrong, between truth and error. Much of modern society denies that there is any concrete standard of right and wrong. Everything is a matter of personal taste and preference. To the contrary, God’s word teaches that the mature Christian will be able to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

3) Approval of what is excellent: Real, Biblical love, having learned what God’s will is, and having developed the ability to discern right from wrong, will approve of what is excellent. That is, a truly loving person will approve only of that which God’s word teaches is good. Because our culture makes almost everything a matter of personal choice and opinion, faithful Christians are accused of being haters when we do not approve of sinful behavior.

Christians are not called to be rude or cruel. Neither are we called to give “rubber-stamp” approval to wickedness. May God help us to practice Biblical love!