



Love: Not An Option Devotion

*My children, we should love people not only with words and talk,
but by our actions and true caring (1 John 3:18 New Century Version).*

One dictionary definition for the word option is “the power of right of choosing: something that may be chosen; a choice.”

Options are good aren't they? We exercise many options in our day-to-day choices of what to wear, eat, say, and do. Some options have great impact in our lives: what career to pursue, what college to choose, whom to marry, what home to buy. As modern people, we expect options; the individual rules? “Have it your way,” one fast food restaurant encouraged us. Some may recall Frank Sinatra's famous line from a song, “I did it my way.”

As Christians, we look to Jesus to guide our lives. “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another*” (John 13:34). Jesus provides the **pattern** for our love as He has loved us. As we read the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, we see examples of His love for sinners, just like you and me. He gave us examples and demonstrated what it means to love people.

In John 14, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit. “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*” (John 14:15–17). The Holy Spirit brings us to the truth of God and provides the **power** that we need to be able to love other people.

The love that God, by the Holy Spirit, empowers us to show in our actions and true caring goes beyond mere words and talk. We can love because God first loved us. He showed us the pattern, provides the power, and allows us the **privilege** of loving others. Yes, love is not an option: it is a privilege that we, as dearly loved children of God can demonstrate to those around us and in our world.

Prayer: Thank You, heavenly Father for Your provision for each one of us. In Jesus, You have given us the pattern to follow and a reason for loving others. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have the privilege of loving others as You have loved us. May Your love live in us that that we are able to reach out to others and tell them of Your love. In Your holy Name, we pray. Amen.

Take some time this week to think of specific ways that you can show God's love to others in your home, church, community and the world.

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