Where Convenience Ends

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”
—1 John 3:16, ESV

We seldom object to love when it brings us joy.

We welcome companionship, affection, shared laughter, and the reassurance that someone cares. These are good gifts. There is no virtue in pretending they do not matter.

But eventually, love asks something of us.

Someone needs our attention when we are tired. A responsibility interrupts our plans. A difficult conversation threatens the comfortable peace we would rather preserve.

And we discover that another person’s good may require something we had intended to keep for ourselves.

Time.

Comfort.

Money.

The satisfaction of having our own way.

We may begin to wonder why loving has become so difficult.

Perhaps nothing has gone wrong with love.

Perhaps we have reached the place where its meaning becomes clearer.

In *What Is Love?*, I described love as “the deliberate and enduring choice of the will directed toward the true well-being of another.”

That direction matters.

If my willingness to care lasts only while caring satisfies me, the other person’s good remains secondary to my own experience.

John directs our attention to Christ.

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us.”

We understand love by looking at what the Savior willingly gave for people who needed His mercy.

His death accomplished what ours never could. He bore our sins. Our sacrifices cannot redeem anyone.

Yet John draws a direct connection between the love that saved us and the love we owe one another.

Then he brings the matter into ordinary life.

What happens when someone has material resources, sees a brother in need, and closes his heart?
1 John 3:17

We might have expected a call to some extraordinary act of courage.

John asks whether we will open our hands.

The cost of love often arrives quietly.

A spouse needs patient attention after we believe we have already given enough. A friend’s sorrow continues beyond the first few conversations. Someone needs practical help that will consume an afternoon we had reserved for ourselves.

There may be no recognition.

There may not even be gratitude.

The absence of a reward does not make the good unnecessary.

But we must be careful here.

Suffering alone does not prove love. We can give from fear, remain silent to avoid disapproval, or permit wrongdoing because confrontation feels too costly.

Love seeks another’s true good. It must remain governed by truth.

Sometimes that means giving more.

Sometimes it means saying no, seeking help, or establishing a boundary. Love does not require anyone to remain exposed to violence or cooperate with deception.

The question is what faithfulness requires, rather than how much pain we can endure.

And weariness does not mean we have ceased to love.

We may need rest. We may need others to help carry a responsibility. We may need to confess resentment before it settles into our treatment of someone.

We can bring all of that to Christ.

He knows the weakness of those He calls to follow Him. We seek His help as people already loved, already received, already dependent upon His grace.

Then we consider the person before us.

What good can I faithfully offer?

What am I withholding simply because it will cost me?

We need not search for a dramatic sacrifice.

There may be an ordinary act of love waiting for us today.

And it may begin where our convenience ends.

Just a Thought.

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