

Love: The Qualitative Difference (4)

Authentic Love for the Whole Person Body, Soul And Spirit

Training Ourselves to See and Respond to People Holistically

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When Jesus says “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” he is speaking holistically. The self is me, body, soul and spirit. 1 Thess.5:23, 24 “May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.”

Which part of you do you not love? Body, Soul, or Spirit?

- Much time is spent daily attending to the body.
 - Medications, dr, appointments, supplements, exercise
 - Food and drink (Shopping, cooking, cleaning)
 - Clothing and accessories
 - Shaving and haircuts and trimming nails and brushing teeth-and flossing
- Much time is spent daily on the soul
 - Learning new things
 - Listening to current events/social media
 - Mental Health
 - Music
 - Working and hobbies
- Much time is devoted to the spirit
 - Bible study
 - Prayer
 - Christian relationships
 - Being and making disciples

In the life of Jesus we see him giving attention to all of these:

- BODY: Matt.15:29-32, “Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on the mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at His feet; and He healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. Jesus called the disciples to him and said, ‘I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.’”

- SOUL: John 11:32-36, “When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at His feet and said, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ‘Where have you laid him? He asked. Come and see, Lord. They replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, See how he loved him!’”
- SPIRIT: Jesus’ spiritual concern for man is written all over the NT. The very crucifixion of Jesus was about the spiritual. His commission to go and make disciples was spiritual. His teaching on love, grace, responsibility, heaven and hell, eternal life, His Father, the Holy Spirit, and holy living is all about the spirit.

God loves us holistically. He ministers to our bodies with healing. He even promises us a new one at the resurrection. He ministers to our souls by offering comfort and peace for the anxieties of life. And, He certainly ministers to us spiritually offering us eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ. Because he touches every aspect of our lives we become AUTHENTIC just as surely as the Velveteen Rabbit became real.

The Velveteen Rabbit (or How Toys Become Real) is a British children's book written by Margery Williams (also known as Margery Williams Bianco) and illustrated by William Nicholson. It chronicles the story of a stuffed rabbit's desire to become real through the love of his owner.

“When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.” “When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.” “Weeks passed, and the little Rabbit grew very old and shabby, but the Boy loved him just as much.

So when we are told to love others as we love ourselves it means to love them authentically-to really love them-all of them, body, soul and spirit. What does this mean?

- I am not just concerned about one’s physical wellbeing, but their spiritual
- I am not interested only in “this world” talk, but spiritual talk that adds value to one’s life.
- I am not in the relationship for some quick fix, but for the long haul, through ups and downs, through all that touch a person body, soul and spirit.
- I have in mind to live with others so that the whole person will arrive one day at their final destination all together-not broken apart as Paul wrote, “May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.”
- In so doing I am cooperating with God who is also working to keep others blameless until Christ comes again.

This is our mission statement: It is the mission of the Central Church of Christ to lead others to have an authentic and growing relationship with God the Father and with others through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Is this the mission you are ON?