

Theme: Development of Love=Development as a Person

Development as a Person=Development as a Christian

Development as a Christian=Perfection of Love(GOD IS LOVE)

In order to find Christ in the world today and become a true Christian witness, it is necessary to understand the meaning of LOVE which can only be found through our development as mature PERSONS.

Only through a mature love for ourselves, and others (all men) can we ever hope to find Christ(the only reality).

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What love is not:

1. it is not an emotion which anyone can indulge in, regardless of age or background at anytime they wish.
2. it is not a selfish attitude.

The true meaning of love implies such things as: humility, courage, faith, trust, discipline, knowledge, understanding, generosity, patience, and sacrifice.

These characteristics reveal that LOVE is not an easy game to play. Love is an art which requires a great deal of work, time and effort to achieve.

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How do most people look upon Love(today in the 20th century)

1. as that of being loved. People seem to try to make themselves lovable.
  - a. by "winning friends and influencing people."  
This means being popular and having sex appeal.
  - b. by having "sales appeal".  
This means that people become objects and prizes to be bought and sold, also, prizes to be won in a game.
2. as that of falling in love.  
This is pure infatuation and is purely a feeling.  
TRUE LOVE IS A KNOWING, NOT JUST A FEELING.

These false concepts of love are the reasons why we in the 20th century have wars, riots, hunger, disease, and mental illness.

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In order to properly understand the meaning of Love, it is necessary to understand the component parts of love.

These are:

1. Care. It is an active concern for life, growth, and welfare of those whom we love.

Examples: Mother's love for her child  
CHRIST'S LOVE FOR MANKIND

2. Responsibility: It is a free response to the needs of others.  
It is a willingness to be my brother's keeper, and help him out at any cost.

Examples: Missionary serving in Africa.  
You helping a friend with his studies.  
CHRIST GIVING HIS LIFE FOR ALL MEN.

3. Respect: It is to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality, and to treat him just.  
It is not using another person for your own selfish purposes.

Examples: boy-girl relationship  
all men are brothers, regardless of race, religion, nationality.  
CHRIST'S BELIEF IN THE INDIVIDUAL  
WORTH OF ALL MEN AS HIS OFFSPRING.

4. Knowledge: It is knowing a person as an individual and as a member of the human race (God's family) before we can love him.

Examples: My love for her.  
My love for my parents.  
My knowledge of my friends.  
OUR KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND WHAT HE IS DOING FOR US.

IT IS ONLY THROUGH A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THESE FOUR COMPONENT PARTS OF LOVE,  
THAT WE CAN EVEN ATTEMPT TO WRITE A DEFINITION OF LOVE.

MY DEFINITION OF LOVE IS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Love develops in the human person as he develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Yet it is not something which just grows automatically, but it needs much work, time, and effort.

DEVELOPMENT AS A PERSON:

Infancy: You are aware only of yourself.  
Your needs, wants, and desires are all you know.  
Love is receiving, knowing someone cares, is responsible for you, respects your right to live and grow, and wishes to know and form you as a person.

Example: Parents love for child.

Childhood: You now become aware of others as individuals, and see that their purpose in life is not just to serve you. You now see others as persons. You begin to have respect for them, care for them, desire to know them, and a responsibility to give love to them.

Examples: Your relationship with parents, teachers & friends.

Adolescence: You now begin to become more fully aware of yourself as an individual person.

Changes begin to occur which enable you to do more, more for yourself and also to be more aware of the needs of others.

You now become conscious of a certain freedom and independence. You can now exercise free choice in making friends, in entering into personal relationships with others. (before he needed parental approval.)

Also, at this time, you become aware of the freedom to respect the rights of other persons (and of society which is a moral person) or to completely disregard them. (to live selfishly with little respect of others).

You now possess a new role within the family structure. You are involved in the independence-dependence syndrome. You desire complete freedom to do whatever you want, yet you are still dependent upon your family for many maternal things and guidance.

You now begin to gain greater privileges within the family structure, but you must also share greater responsibilities. Your knowledge as a person begins to deepen, more respect is demanded of you, and if you become other-person centered, you begin to care for the needs of others.

At this time you begin to form your own set of values, to know the difference between right and wrong.

You question authority; parents, government, Church

This is good, if done with an open mind and will lead to mature development as a Christian adult.

Characteristics of an individual, mature, Christian person.

1. honesty: it means more than just speaking truthfully.

It means carrying out your sincere beliefs and convictions without counting the cost.

It also means dealing squarely with yourself, others (all people and above all GOD).

2. facing reality: it means facing up to who you are as a person, what you are, and what is expected of you at this time.

It means living without a mask of insecurity and the use of tools to destroy the blatant truth of reality.

3. Self-love: This is not selfishness.

It means respect for one's own integrity and uniqueness as a person.

It means understanding of oneself, knowledge of oneself as a person, care of one's self (physical, mental, and spiritual), and responsibility for one's actions.

It cannot be separated from respect, care, responsibility, and knowledge of others. This alone brings true self-love.

A selfish person cares only for himself --- demands for himself --- He lacks interest in others and he judges everyone and everything from their usefulness to him (Willie in Willie Catches On, Holden Caulfield in Catcher in the Rye, and Joe Clay in Days of Wine and Roses before he faced reality).

Also, Peter, in Nobody Waved Goodbye

A selfish person really hates himself. He cares too much for himself as a coverup to compensate for his failure to care for his real self.

4. Sensitivity to needs of others

Growing up means growing out of yourself.

This requires generosity (it is not just gift-giving)

It means going out of yourself to show the 4 components of love to all men.

(TO BE DISCUSSED IN DEPTH LATER ON)

5. Humility: This does not mean bowing your head when you do something good. It means accepting success and stating your strong points and capabilities without being conceited.

It also means accepting defeat and failure without going to extremes. Being able to pick yourself up and start all over again.

6. Have a sense of humor: This doesn't mean that you must laugh every three seconds. Yet it does mean that you have a happy outlook on life, and when something is humorous and on the light side that you enjoy it.

It means not worrying excessively about things, but accepting them and working to improve them with a good outlook. Smiling, GET ALONG WITH OTHERS. DON'T HAVE GUILT COMPLEXES ABOUT PAST FAILURES.

7. Courage to stand up for what you believe in, regardless of the cost to you physically. TAKE A STAND ON IMPORTANT THINGS and do what you know is right at the expense of criticisms.

These are the seven characteristics each person must possess to be truly a PERSON. If these are true (you try to develop them) you are on the way to being a mature person who can LOVE. As a result of this attempt to LOVE, you are truly on the road to being a true Christian person.