

Show Love  
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Several years ago, I went to a professional football game with a group of people. We got there a bit early, and I had the chance to sit back and watch the people who were entering the stadium. It is always interesting to watch people who you don't know and their interaction with those around them. One sees many things, but the one thing that stood out for me on this occasion was the brusque way of many people as they dealt with others around them. Without consideration for others, they pushed and shoved and, in one case, actually knocked someone over. They moved on without even stopping to check on the condition of the person.

This is not to say that everyone in the stadium was like this, but it was very prevalent. Our society has become self-absorbed and self-centered. Concern for others takes at best second place to our own interest. Unfortunately, this is also evident in Christian communities as well. We forget that the way we treat others says volumes more than what we say. St. Paul addresses this when he says, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol." (I Cor. 13:1) In other words, "a lot of noise."

We as Christians are challenged to show love to all of those around us. It is not just a nice platitude, but it is a true sign of the Christian heart when we love one another. Paul goes on to say, "love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. It **always** protects, **always** trusts, **always** hopes, **always** perseveres." (I Cor. 13: 5-7) Think about the four words that follow "always". If we did these things, think of the relationship issues that would easily be solved and fade to nothingness.

We are not perfect! No, we are more likely to act in ways contrary to these. When we do fail, we fall into the forgiving arms of our loving Lord, who in all things loves and cares for us. Even when we ignore His love, He continues to shower his blessings upon us. Christ always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. The love demonstrated on the cross wraps us in His righteousness and empowers us to live a life of love to others.

As you begin a new school year or a new year in service within the church, strive through the power of the Holy Spirit to make an effort to live the love of Christ that is within you. Reach out to those who don't return the love or even demonstrate unkindness. Grow the fruit befitting the price that has been paid for you.