

When Love Falls Short

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple Internet sources)

Introduction:

A. Do we understand love?

1. While we are familiar with the concept of love, we are often confused about it.
2. We can and sincerely do love God, family, friends, and others, and still overlook a fundamental truth about love
3. Only God is perfect; we are always striving toward perfection, and that includes in the matter of love, too
4. Our loves at best are only secondary, learned, or responsive
 - a. We love because we are the objects of God's love - 1John 4:19
 - b. We love because we are taught to love by God - 1Thes. 4:9
 - c. We love because of the love we get in return - 1John 4:10
5. Common love is based on some personal benefit. We love others because we receive love in return. We love others because of some benefit that we receive from them. While our love for others may be strong and enduring, in the end, we love because there is something in it for self.
6. Even our higher forms of love are imperfect: love for helpless children or helpless persons

B. To learn about the perfect love of God, read about it in His word

1. To learn more about the flawed loves of men, consider some examples of this life
2. Mark 12:38-44 - The Pharisees loved some of the things associated with the practice of their religion, but their love was seriously flawed
3. In contrast, it was clear that this woman loved the Lord and the poor, but it must be understood that even her love was flawed, and at best, derivative of God's love for her

I. SOME LOVE FOOLISHLY

A. Who love themselves first

1. What they think, what they say, and what they do is driven by self-love. That means, nothing that interferes with the pursuit of self is allowed. They do not allow friends, neighbors or God to keep them from the pursuit of self-interests.
2. 2Tim. 3:2-5, 4:10; Phil. 2:21; 1Cor. 10:24, 33

B. Who love material things - When Jesus finished teaching the people, He took a seat near the "treasury." This area was in the "Court of the Women" and was set aside for personal offerings. The treasury consisted of 13 repositories where people could make contributions. These containers were topped with metal trumpets, with the large end at the top and small end at the bottom. Each of these trumpets was labeled as to the purpose of the offerings placed in it. Nine of the trumpets were for dues related the Law. The other four were for voluntary offerings of specific charities. People gave by approaching the trumpets and dropping in their offerings.

1. Matt. 6:1-4 - describes some of the excesses that marked the Jews and their giving in Jesus' day. Some would hire trumpeters to go before them so that attention would be drawn to them and their giving. They would come to the treasury and make a great show of casting in their money. As their money fell into the trumpet, it would make a great noise. Heads would turn and people would stare in admiration at these people who gave great sums of money to the Temple.

2. Most of these people were not giving for the glory of God; they were giving for the praise of men. According to Jesus, when they received the praise of others, they got all they were going to get

II. SOME LOVE THE BEST THAT THEY CAN

A. The people shouted and applauded for the rich people and their large gifts. No one noticed this widow. Widows were the poorest of the poor in that society. There was no Social Security. There was no welfare. Widows lived hand to mouth. She comes into the presence of God to give to Him. She doesn't have much. "Two mites" translates the word "lepton", which means "the thin one". Scholars are divided over how much these coins were worth, but it was a mere fraction of an average day's pay. When she dropped her two little coins in that trumpet, they made no noise at all among the clamor of the people and clanging of the gifts of the rich.

1. Why would she bother to give such an insignificant gift? Her two cents among the thousands given by the wealthy seems so small. She was everything the religious scribes and the rich hypocrites were not. She was a living illustration of Mark 12:28-31.

2. The poor widow gave her all - Mark 12:43-44

a. The same thing is happening today; the greatest and most moving offerings, whether of money, time, or work, is most often given by those with the least resources who can ill afford a sacrifice so large

b. Those with much more extensive resources are generous, not with offerings, but with the excuses they offer for holding on to what they possess

3. Abraham offered his son - Gen. 22:1-14

4. Hannah gave her son Samuel to God - 1Sam. 1:28

5. The widow gave the last of her food to Elijah - 1Kings 17:8-16

6. Mary gave up a very expensive box of ointment and her own hair to honor the Lord - John 12:1-8

7. Stephen, James, and others who gave up their lives for the Lord

B. In every case, it was a small offering relative to the need or purpose; God made the apparent small size of the gift large enough to cover the need.

1. The lad's lunch in the hands of the Lord fed a multitude

2. God took the offering of the Corinthians and made it cover all of the needs in Judea - 2Cor. 9:6-15

C. The attitude of our hearts in giving makes all the difference - 1Cor. 13:3

1. 2Cor. 9:7 - How we give is more important than how much we give

D. So it is with our love: Both loves fall short, but when it is our best, given with our all, God makes it big enough and good enough to cover the need.