

# Love—*More!*

Jim Elliff

You can never love too much. You can dote too much, cuddle too much, stare at a picture too much, and even fix more cookies than is acceptable, but you cannot *love* too much.

Paul emphasized this to believers in Thessalonica:

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more . . . . (4:9-10)

“Excel still more.” If there is anything that we should be excellent about, it is love. Paul made love practical when he wrote this memorable list in 1 Corinthians 13:

Love is patient, love is kind.  
Love is not jealous.  
Love does not brag, and is not arrogant.  
Love does not act unbecomingly or seek its own.  
Love is not provoked.  
Love does not take into account a wrong suffered.  
Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.  
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.  
Love never fails.

Paul is saying: you do some of that, but you can do a lot more of it. So *excel still more!*

Storyteller C. Roy Angell once illustrated the beauty of such self-abandoning love. Here are his own words except for a slight modification or two:

A college friend named Paul got an automobile as a present from his brother before Christmas. On Christmas Eve, Paul found a street urchin walking around his shiny new car, admiring it.

“Is this your car, mister?” he asked.

Paul nodded. “My brother gave it to me for Christmas.”

The boy looked astounded. “You mean your brother gave it to you, and it didn’t cost you nothing? Boy, I wish . . . .” Paul knew what he was going to wish. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But instead, the boy said, “I wish I could be a brother like that.”



Paul was so impressed he offered the kid a ride in his car. The boy asked if they could drive in front of his house. Paul thought he wanted to show his neighbors his “sweet ride.” But he was wrong again. They stopped in front of the boy’s house, and he ran inside. He came out carrying his little polio-crippled brother. The older boy sat him down on the bottom step and squeezed up against him, pointing to the car. “There it is. His brother gave it to him for Christmas, and it didn’t cost him a cent. Someday I’m going to give you one just like it, so you can see for yourself all the things in the Christmas windows I’ve been telling you about.”

Paul lifted the little boy into the front seat of his car. The older brother got in next to him, his eyes shining, and the three of them took a trip to see the Christmas windows. Paul learned that night what Jesus meant when he said, “There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.”

What would life be like if there were more of this kind of love? What would happen to others? What would be the difference in you? You can understand why the apostle Paul never tired of saying, “Keep on loving; do it even *more!*”

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