

Covenant of Love
R.C.I.A. Chpt.#4
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The essential nature of God is LOVE. From love all other virtues flow. Love is not a visible quality, except through actions. Although not visible, love is a reality of existence; which humans can experience and reflect upon.

Jesus encouraged humanity, "You must be made perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." This is startling and at first seems to be impossible; yet a sharing in this perfection, be it ever so humble, is possible through the imitation of God's love. We can never completely achieve this perfection even in eternity. However we can have a share, for love is the golden thread that ties man to God in a covenant. Love is limitless.

When we think of love, even on a human level we must ask, "what does love want?" It wants the freedom to choose to love, for love cannot be forced. A forced love will turn to hate. It must be a free decision of the will. When one falls in love it's desire is to be freely loved in return. True mutual love first seeks exclusivity in order to fully reveal itself. It seeks procreation to fully express itself. It seeks self-sacrifice for the aggrandizement of its beloved. It seeks trust in order to surrender. It seeks dependability, forgiveness and forbearance. Love is all about self-sacrificing, which is a suffering. True love is a suffering love. Jesus demonstrated this by His suffering and death for us on the cross. If a person has never suffered, they have never really lived, for there can be no true empathy. Love is empathy in action.

Love does nothing out of selfishness, for it is only a generosity. When both parties of a marriage are of the same heart, this imitates God's relationship to man. God's love never falters, for His perfection endures forever. If we can understand love on a human basis, how much more the same analogy of faithfulness applies to our

love for God. This is how we can share in God's perfection, by love of spouse, [family] love of neighbor and respect for one's self. If God can forgive our shortcomings when we request forgiveness; how can we do less to others, [as we do so shall we receive] for true love is also the virtue of justice. God's perfection is also true justice. His covenant endures forever.

"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it even entered the mind of man what God has prepared for those who keep His Covenant." By implication the opposite is also true for those who do not keep His Covenant.