

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 NLT

Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you. There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us. I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us!

The Apostle Paul loved the believers in Corinth, and he showed that love in many ways to them. One way we can show love is through open communication - he shared what was going on in his own life, his struggles, feelings, pressures and he let them know how he was coping with it. When we open up to others this is a mark of love. On the other hand, to close up and not communicate is to violate love.

Many people, even Christians actually think it is right for them to be closed, guarded, private persons, unwilling to communicate who they are and how they feel and where they are in their lives. Often we don't want people to see who we really are. But we need to understand that when we become Christians, we must learn to open up to one another. Paul loved the people in the churches - he loved them all: the nice people, the difficult to get along ones and the ones who may be struggling.

The problem was that they did not love him in return. This can be a problem in churches, in individual lives, in homes, in families, and in marriages today. It is a failure to understand the reciprocal nature of love. Love is a two-way street. Despite Paul's love for them, they were not loving him back. They were closed, unresponsive and self-contained toward him. And the result? Paul shows they were restricted and limited (2 Corinthians 6:12).

That is why Paul pleads with them to open and widen their hearts. If you really want to EXPERIENCE the richness of love (Eph.3:19-21), then love back when you are loved. When you are loved, what do you do? Do you love back, or do you say, "That's a wonderful feeling! I hope they will keep that up?" Love requires a reciprocal response.

PRAY: Heavenly Father, help me to respond with an open heart to those who have reached out to me in love. Thank You for the love You have shown me.

LIVE: Transparent communication stretches us and makes us vulnerable. Are we learning to be open-hearted to all? Thus, loving, for Christ's sake and by His power?

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