



What is Love Actually?

Do you remember those 'love is...' cartoons? I was given one once by a gentleman-friend which read, "Love is... kissing every one of her freckles" - to which he had added, "Erm, perhaps not!" (Freckles are one feature about me which is not in short supply!). Putting it bluntly, he was over-faced by the task of loving, if that was what was required. I have just celebrated 25 years of marriage (to someone else!) and a friend reminded me of another of those cartoons, which read, "Love is... never having to say I'm sorry". They were incensed that anyone would make loving sound so easy. Real love IS going the extra mile; it IS having to work at a relationship, admitting failures and giving and accepting apologies.

What would you say?

I tried googling 'Love is' to see what images came up. I was pleased to see, near the top, 'Love is Patient, Love is Kind' (a quote from 1 Corinthians 13), and then some which you might expect like 'Love is... showing a little

tender care". But then there were a number which bore no relation to my experience of love—for example, "Love is... allowing her to choose your blog banner". Or, more sadly, "Love is... Unrequited—always", and "Love is...Hopeless", "Love is...Blind". I think the most helpful was "Love is...a verb". It is something we choose to do. But it is also something we recognise when it is done to us.

John 3:16

The most famous verse from the Bible is this one: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". There is a lot packed into those 26 words; for now all I want to highlight is that God's love is available to everyone ('the world'); it was expressed in an action ('he gave'); it was costly ('his one and only Son'); but it wants a response ('whoever believes'). Let God's love not be unrequited by you this year.



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