Bryana Woodson

HONS 295 - Blincoe

November 2017

## **Christian Love Reflection**

Within the Christian metanarrative, there are many teachings that correlate directly to common human practice. While not everyone in the United States is a Christian, many follow the Bible’s moral code, even if they don’t realize it. There are also Christians who, despite what the Bible says, don’t follow every command and instruction as closely as they should. U.S. Christians are much more encaptured by the “prosperity gospel” that teaches blessing will always come when you serve God and don’t fully comprehend what it means to give everything you have in regard to serving others in the love of Christ.

The Bible describes true, unadulterated love as completely selfless. We are called to love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves.[[1]](#footnote-0) And we are not to exclude anyone as a neighbor, we should think of everyone else before we think of ourselves.[[2]](#footnote-1) According to the teachings of Jesus, everyone is deserving of compassion and grace. When the Pharisees brought the adulteress to be stoned, He not only rebuked the condemnation of the Pharisees, but forgave the woman without a second thought and spared her life.[[3]](#footnote-2) This is the kind of care Christians are called to live in light of, providing it for those around them. The Bible also has set terms on what the purest form of love is. Love is righteous, it is not proud or boastful or jealous.[[4]](#footnote-3) As soon as your love turns sour out of spitefulness or envy, it’s too tainted to fit the Christian view of love.

There are many areas of the Bible that Christians in the U.S. understand the concepts and practice them adamantly. In this country, we are extremely fortunate to have extensive religious freedom, so we have an advantage and ability to practice our faith (regardless of the kind) whenever and however we want. This allows us to talk about God out in the open and spread His name, which we are commanded to do when Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations.[[5]](#footnote-4) Television evangelists are seemingly everywhere now, but it’s names like Billy Graham and the Robertson family from Duck Dynasty that even some unbelievers know of. Also, many Americans have the resources in order to fulfill the compassion commanded in the Bible. We have the ability to help those in less fortunate areas and countries. There are also plenty of Christian organizations aimed to fulfill this commandment to love your neighbor as yourself, or even more than yourself. Organizations such as Compassion International, that allows you to sponsor impoverished children around the world; Operation Christmas Child, that sends shoeboxes filled with toys to children so they have a Christmas present; and End It Movement, that works tirelessly to *truly* end slavery. These are the companies and people that are doing the work Christ commanded His followers to do.

Although, there is still area for improvement where Christians are concerned. We are called to put others before ourselves, but sometimes we become so focused on ourselves that others fall into the background. We’re focused on what we need, what we want, and all the things we have to do, that our actions can become very selfish if we’re not careful. Humans in general also have a tendency to stereotype and pass judgement on others, just as the Pharisees did to the adulteress, without remembering that we have our own problems and sins as well. God does not have a hierarchy of sin, so we shouldn’t either, lest we become even more hypocritical. Along with forgetting to care for others first and making one sin worse than another, U.S. Christians in particular tend to turn their faith into something that they only exercise on Sundays. It shouldn’t be just for looks and it shouldn’t be pulled out on Sunday mornings exclusively. The name of God wasn’t meant to be picked up and dropped on certain days like it has no weight or meaning. The last area where any Christian, including me, could use a bit of work is in holding grudges. God is the prime example of choosing love over past mistakes and choices. The Bible teaches that he forgives sins and casts them as far as the east is from the west,[[6]](#footnote-5) so why can’t we do the same for others? The truth is that we can, but we have to choose to move past what we’ve done or what others have done to us. In light of eternity, those petty little things aren’t truly important.

In the full scope of things, there are times when Christians in the United States have both succeeded and failed in realizing all that the Bible commands concerning love and how it should be expressed. But that’s the whole point of Christianity. Even when you mess up and misinterpret what God is trying to tell you through the Bible, just pick yourself up and try again. God teaches Christians to rise above, aim higher, and love in the most selfless way possible.

1. Matt. 22:37-39, NIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Luke 10:25-37, NIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. John 8:1-11, NIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. 1 Corinthians 13, NIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Matt. 28:19, NIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Ps. 103:12, NIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)