False Love

Reading the book, *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, he brings up our ability to detect false love, p.211. And he makes the point that no matter what our home life was growing up, even when deprived of love, we all have this innate ability to recognize false love vs. genuine love.

He begins to define false love in three areas. 1). False love shows signs of limitation where something somewhat obvious is being held back from the other person. 2). False love shows signs of control to the point of manipulation. 3). False love shows signs of detachment, where the person shows apathy, indifference, and the ability to be un-hurt.Take for example Jacob’s love for Rachel. “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.” (Gen. 29:20). Seven years to pay for the price of a dowry, might begrudge some men, but not Jacob. Jacob was not holding back anything. Jacob gave himself without begrudging has all the marks of genuine love. Jesus is the ultimate example showing all three signs of genuine love.

1). Jesus’ love is limitless. Jesus’ willingness to love people is seen in how he was willing to love his enemies. When Peter was motivated by a misguided zeal to cut off the ear of one of the men who came to arrest Jesus, what did Jesus do? “And He touched his ear and healed him.” (Luke 22:51). Jesus even prays for Peter, even before Peter sins against Jesus by denying him three times, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:31-32).

2). Jesus loves us without being controlling or manipulating. Obviously, most people do not love Jesus back. If we love Jesus back it is a volunteer act of choice. Jesus says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15). Jesus does not force anyone to keep his commandments, it’s a love choice.

3). Jesus’ love is vulnerable. Jesus is not indifferent nor apathetic, nor un-hurt. The pain of love Jesus suffers still. My question is how does he get used to it? Most of us stop loving and caring because it hurts to extend yourself, spend yourself, towards people who could care less. Our love dries up. When someone stands under the cross for several hours, he must conclude that Jesus’ love is vulnerable, he hurts. You will never, never, never meet anyone like Jesus. His pure, genuine love, even for his enemies seems out of this world. That’s the point, his love is divine. God came to earth and loved us on the cross, and he loves freely still. How should I then respond? Dan Peters