

Love Unlocked: How to Love Difficult and Different People (2nd Service)

The Transforming Church

Love Unlocked: How to Love Difficult and Different People (2nd Service)

Rev Sam Oye

August 16, 2026

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (TPT)

Preached by Rev. Dr. Sam Oye. Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (TPT)

Transcript

Minister: Rev. Dr. Sam Oye

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (TPT)

Topic: LOVE UNLOCKED: HOW TO LOVE DIFFICULT AND DIFFERENT PEOPLE

If I were to speak with eloquence in earth's many languages, and in the heavenly tongues of angels, yet I didn't express myself with love, my words would be reduced to the hollow sound of nothing more than a clanging cymbal. And if I were to have the gift of prophecy with a profound understanding of God's hidden secrets, and if I possessed unending supernatural knowledge, and if I had the greatest gift of faith that could move mountains, but have never learned to love, then I am nothing. And if I were to be so generous as to give away everything I owned to feed the poor, and to offer my body to be burned as a martyr, without the pure motive of love, I would gain nothing of value. Love is large and incredibly patient. Love is gentle and consistently kind to all. It refuses to be jealous when blessing comes to someone else. Love does not brag about one's achievements nor inflate its own importance. Love does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honor. Love is not easily irritated or quick to take offense. Love joyfully celebrates honesty and finds no delight in what is wrong. Love is a safe place of shelter, for it never stops believing the best for others. Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up. Love never stops loving. It extends beyond the gift of prophecy, which eventually fades away. It is more enduring than tongues, which will one day fall silent. Love remains long after words of knowledge are forgotten.

This Scripture anchors a non-negotiable truth: you can possess every spiritual gift and master every divine mystery, but without love, you are functionally bankrupt. Love is not an optional add-on to your calling. It is the foundation, the motivation, and the true measure of everything you do for the Kingdom.

No matter what happens, no matter who walks away, no matter how they treat you, whether they appreciate you for all you do or whether they fail to see you at all, love never stops believing the best for others. Ultimately, what determines the true value of a believer is how much love we carry within us. Knowledge and spiritual gifts will eventually cease, but love remains the eternal bond of all things. It is therefore critical for every child of God to grasp the supreme importance of love.

We were first loved by God, and every believer is a beneficiary of His grace, called to love others in the exact same manner God loved us. We were far from perfect when God began to love us. Before you were born, before you ever stumbled or misbehaved, you were loved. Even through years of human stubbornness and rebellion, God loved us without

requiring prior perfection.

None of us are easy to live with or work alongside. We are complex, flawed, and often difficult to comprehend. Yet, in the face of all our shortcomings, God never stops loving us. The call on our lives is clear: as God actively loves difficult people like us, we must learn to love others in the exact same way.

Real agape love chooses patience over reaction, kindness over revenge, and generosity without keeping score. True love does not dwell in the reservoir of past offences because the love of God removes our iniquities as far as the east is from the west and remembers them no more.

In this part of the world, our regional teaching has historically focused heavily on power and faith, primarily because the pressing and desperate realities of our environment seem to demand those topics. However, I have come to realize a crucial reality: one of the main reasons faith and power have not operated in our lives as effectively as they should is because faith works by love.

As I began to look deeply into the love of God, it kept rebuking the way I have been living, thinking, and functioning. The love of God is challenging me to my very core. I am realizing that I see more of the power of God and the demonstration of His grace at work in my life simply because I allowed myself to genuinely fall in love with people. Look at Jesus in Scripture: He had compassion on the people, and then the divine power flowed. He did not fast in that exact moment to generate power; He simply operated out of deep compassion, and power flowed. Power works where love flows, and when love saturates the atmosphere, God's power naturally finds expression.

I used to observe believers in the Western world and wonder why, despite not fasting or praying for as many hours as we typically do, they still demonstrate remarkable measures of God's power. I initially assumed it was a matter of culture or background, only to realize they simply dwell deeply in the love of God. And where love abounds, the power of God flows with extraordinary ease.

This truth has transformed how I view people. Recently, while ministering in Ghana and Rivers State, my heart was completely consumed with compassion for the people, and the love of God overwhelmed me. When you begin to function in pure, divine love, what God accomplishes through your life will continually baffle your mind.

Why Relationships and Marriages Fail

Why do Christian marriages fail in such alarming numbers today? How can the love of God reside in a family, yet the marriage still collapses, when Scripture explicitly declares that love never fails (1 Cor. 13:8)?

The answer is painful but clear: the absence of God's active love is the reason marriages fail. When we refuse to allow the love of God to prevail and flow through us into daily interactions, relationships begin to wither and die. In Ezekiel 47, the prophet beholds a vision of a divine river, noting that wherever the river flows, everything that was dead came back to life. The love of God cannot enter a marriage without bringing restoration. You cannot starve a relationship of God's love and expect it to survive.

Love is a deliberate choice and a firm decision, not merely a passing emotion. It is the conscious choice of patience over reaction, kindness over revenge, mercy over vindictiveness, and tender care over cold callousness. The beauty of divine love is that it does not depend on another person's behavior; it remains consistent with your character. Because God is love, every child of God is a child of love, and that is your core identity. Another person's poor behavior should never have the power to alter who

you are. Love is not merely something extended, it is an identity. We love others not because of their tribe, background, or regional ties, but because they are worthy of love, just as the Father loved us when we were completely undeserving.

No one can love like God without God, no one can love like Jesus without Jesus, and it is impossible to continue walking in divine love if personal fellowship with Him is broken. It takes the sustaining, abiding presence of God within the human spirit to keep loving consistently.

Just as the moon has no light of its own and can only reflect light when positioned toward the sun, a person who loses intimacy with God will immediately find it difficult to extend love and patience to others. It is only from the place of personal fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we connect to the infinite ocean of divine love.

When fellowship was broken in the Garden of Eden, fallen humanity lost the ability to manifest the God-nature. Cain slew Abel because he was disconnected from fellowship with God, and from that moment, human society rapidly deteriorated into self-preservation and selfishness.

Political shifts or societal reform alone can never heal human nature; humanity requires Jesus and the governance of the Kingdom of God established in the human heart. Without Him, human beings remain fundamentally self-centered, and whenever self-centeredness rules, people destroy relationships to serve their own interests. In contrast, Kingdom love operates on a completely different standard:

? Love waits while impatience explodes.

? Love celebrates where comparison competes.

? Love listens where ego defends.

? Love releases pain and forgives while bitterness keeps an itemized receipt of past offences.

? Love stays and builds while convenience disappears the moment the road gets tough.

? Love honors and protects shared confidence while self-centeredness exposes others to advance itself.

Understanding Difficult Temperaments

To love difficult people, we must learn to understand them through a spiritual and analytical lens. Consider Cain as an example of a resentful competitor. He was a highly competitive individual who was difficult to relate to because his fundamental issue was that God rejected his offering, yet he projected his anger onto his brother Abel.

Abel did not reject Cain, yet Abel paid with his life because of Cain's unaddressed frustration with God. The reality is that difficult people frequently attack others for pain or rejection inflicted on them elsewhere. If you are the most accessible or vulnerable person nearby, they will target you rather than confront the true source of their wound.

Another clear example is Martha in Luke 10:38-42, where Jesus lovingly observed, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things." Being a difficult person does not mean someone is malicious; it often simply means they are hard to coexist with. Martha allowed deep anxiety to drive her to constantly do more, carry more, fix more, and control more. While Mary sat peacefully at Jesus' feet, Martha grew resentful, complaining that she was left to do all the serving alone because her identity was tied entirely to doing and controlling.

Individuals with a Martha temperament are typically highly responsible, hardworking, dependable perfectionists. To them, relaxation feels like a crime, rest feels foreign, and seeing others rest generates frustration because they carry the psychological illusion that they are the sole pillar holding everything together. They struggle to delegate, insisting on acting as supervisor, executor, administrator, and evaluator all at once.

Navigating a relationship with a Martha requires understanding their triggers, which are usually disorder, broken promises, lack of operational support, and perceived laziness. At her core, Martha is an active doer. When paired with an internal thinker, she often views the thinker as passive, simply because they process internally before taking action. To a doer, value is measured by visible effort, so abstract planning is only respected when it yields immediate, tangible results.

Coexisting in Wisdom and Grace

When navigating complex temperaments, two core principles must guide our conduct. First, you are not their cure, nor are you their cause. Never attempt to forcibly rewrite a partner's underlying temperament, nor label them as permanently damaged. Second, create an environment for strengths to flourish. Wisdom constructs a peaceful environment where natural strengths excel while learning to navigate personal friction smoothly.

When a difficult personality escalates into criticism or contempt, it stems from evaluating life strictly through their own narrow definition of order. Interpersonal conflict is rarely malice; it is usually a clash of unaligned perspectives. Order for one person may mean an organized display, while order for another may mean a completely clear surface. Instead of resorting to insults, clear communication must explain why tasks are done a certain way because understanding breeds natural cooperation.

We must guard against shrinking our worldview to evaluate everything solely by personal preference. Structured, order-inclined individuals can easily slide into micromanagement and petty control, but in any lasting relationship, one must learn never to major on the minors. Countless minor issues are simply not worth fighting over. Yielding ground on non-essential matters preserves what is truly irreplaceable: your spouse, your children, your home, and your peace of mind.

My wife and I are complete opposites in how we function. Yet, instead of trying to change my nature, she chooses to understand how I work. She lovingly takes the time to organize my study and support my space, and I am deeply grateful to her for that grace. When you choose understanding over control, friction turns into partnership.

When navigating life alongside workaholics, controllers, or demanding personalities, keeping the active love of God at the center of your heart is essential. Consider how Jesus responded to Martha's outward agitation: He didn't take offense, nor did He match her frustration. He looked past her surface anxiety, spoke directly to her underlying heart, and extended a gentle grace that brought stillness to her soul.

That is our standard to follow. Anchored in God's presence and overflowing love, we receive the strength to understand people beyond their reactions. We are empowered to extend grace, rise above minor friction, and choose love on purpose. We choose to love not because people are easy, but because the God who lives inside us never gives up on anyone. Love is our victory, and through Him, it never fails.

May God deepen this revelation of love within our hearts, that we may truly comprehend the depth, width, length, and height of a love that surpasses human understanding.