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## Extreme Love

Katie Davis Majors, founder of Amazima Ministries, “abandoned her upper middle-class upbringing” and bought a one-way ticket to Uganda “to become a modern-day Mother Teresa, her childhood hero.” Like Mother Teresa, Majors helps the poor and sick and shares Christ’s extreme love. Her greatest sacrifice was becoming a mother to 15 Ugandan girls, creating “a safe and loving home in the midst of unfathomable adversity.”

When asked why she left a comfortable life to help the poor of Uganda, Majors said, “Jesus wrecked my life.” She said her love for Jesus led her to want to do what Jesus did, so she quit everything—college, expensive clothes, and her boyfriend—and moved to Uganda. Her life there isn’t easy. She lives in conditions best described as “poverty and squalor,” and she doesn’t have electricity every day. But “she has joy and a peace knowing God’s plan for her life is much bigger than what she could have ever imagined.” When she was 19, she founded Amazima Ministries, “a non-profit ministry that today helps provide education, medical care, and food for thousands of children daily.” Through this ministry, Majors shares the love of Christ with people who may be ignored because of their socioeconomic status.<sup>1</sup>

When Paul wrote his letters to the Christian believers in Corinth, he was dealing with a church in deep trouble. Immorality, infighting, and serious divisions between social classes existed within the congregation. While they were trying to be Christians, they were also deeply immersed in the Corinthian culture that valued status and social position. Those who were less wealthy or of lower social status were regularly snubbed in the church by those who were concerned about social climbing. Despite calling themselves followers of Jesus Christ, they forgot his teachings about empathy, compassion, and love for one another.

In his letters, Paul wrote about Christian love, *agape*, which puts aside concerns of personal rights or fairness and instead demonstrates a radical concern for others. *Agape* is how Christians imitate Christ, and it is often best seen when it’s most unlikely. While it can be love between friends, *agape* can also be demanding love that loves the unlovable, the rejected, or the difficult people in the world. It’s love with an eye to our Savior, not with an eye to payoffs and paybacks in this world. *Agape* is love in action that responds to the needs of others.

Paul finished the letter by admonishing the Corinthians to love in this difficult, demanding way. In 1 Corinthians 16:13, he told them to stay awake, stand firm in their faith, “be brave, be strong.” Paul used Greek words that were military terms to stress the discipline needed for extreme faith. But verse 14 was and is for us the true challenge: “Everything should be done in love.” Love should be the motivation for every action. According to Paul, to live a Christlike life, we should constantly ask ourselves why we are doing the things we do. If we live in a state of gratitude for the grace God has given us, then it is only right that we offer that grace to others.

First Corinthians 13:8 is translated as “Love never fails.” The Greek reads, “Love never falls to the ground.” There may be times when love is misunderstood, unrecognized, or rejected, but offering *agape* love or doing something for another in the spirit of *agape* love is never a worthless gesture. Our moments of radical love are our moments of most profound obedience to the will of God.

1. Have you ever struggled to love someone who is difficult to love? How can Paul's teaching about *agape* love help you respond differently?
2. How can you do "everything in love," especially when it feels inconvenient or unappreciated?
3. How can you live out extreme love every day?

<sup>1</sup>From "Extraordinary Love," by Shelly Esser, *Just Between Us Magazine*.  
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