



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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In this month we celebrate Black History. During this month, we often reflect on the accomplishments of African-Americans in this country. Many people do not know the names Garrett A. Morgan, Frederick McKinley Jones, or Dr. Charles Drew. Morgan invented the automated traffic signal in 1923. Jones invented the portable air conditioning unit used at military field hospitals in WW II. Drew discovered the technique for storing blood plasma.

Interestingly enough, I never learned anything about these men during my early years in history class. We have seen the continued advancement of Black Americans after the Civil Rights Movement, which helped change race relationships in our country. Amidst the struggles curtailed in this movement, we find the Black Church. As stated by Elgia Wells*, "They became meeting centers for the organization and strategic planning of the effort for equal rights. Regular church members, church leaders, and pastors took a position at the forefront of the work to change a racially and ethnically segregated America."

When we realize the impact of the Black Church in the lives of Black Americans, we must realize its impact on America as a whole. There have always been risks, as those of us who are old enough remember churches that were burned and bombed during the Civil Rights Era; but Black Christians continued in the struggle. They remind us of the church's great tenacity.

Unfortunately, we are still challenged by a divide between men with different features and skin colors who share a common relationship with Jesus Christ. The struggle is not over, and

the local and national headlines remind us there is still a journey ahead; but it will not be completed with the Black Church or White Church. The task of reconciliation will be completed when we simply become the Church.

Latasha Morrison, founder of Be the Bridge Ministry, indicated**, "One of the foundational verses for Be the Bridge is John 17, which says that we should be one, so that the world will know who Jesus is. Jesus' heart is not for Him to see us be the same. We can be uniquely whom He created us to be and still be one, because unification doesn't always look like agreement. It means putting the gospel of Jesus at the center of everything that we do." She continued to say, "I do believe that the Body of Christ is the only place that is equipped to do this well and do this right. . . . That credible witness for His glory as it relates to racial reconciliation. We are all created in His image. We're called to love our neighbor regardless of who they are or who they look like. This is something that's become cliché; but at Be the Bridge, we want the church to be just that."

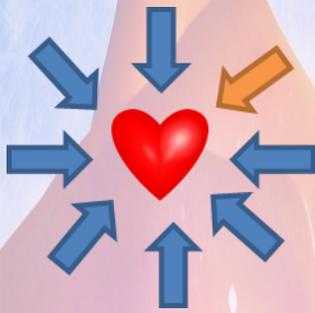
I'm hopeful that we will continue to remember the great contributions African-Americans have made to this great country. But let us remember that to reach the unity Morrison spoke of, we cannot be a Black Church or a White Church; we must be the united Church of Jesus Christ. Let this month serve as a reminder to the Church to be the Bridge that unites all people!

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

*Wells, Elgia, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Black-history-month-celebrate-black-church-life>, February 3, 2017.

**Morrison, Latasha, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2017/january/latasha-morrison-church-is-only-place-equipped-to-do.html>, February 3, 2017.

Bibleway Q&A



Q: What is the best side of love?

A: Some would describe love as the warm, fuzzy feeling you get when you and another person share mutual interest in one another. Love involves feelings; but it is not only feelings — the feelings are certainly not the best side of love, because they fade with time.

Others would describe love by what the mutual affectionate feelings inspire both members to give one another: things such as hugs and kisses; cards, gifts, and birthday wishes. These things make us feel good when we receive them. Love certainly involves an exchange of gifts, but the giving or receiving aspect is not the best side of love, either — the time comes soon enough when one party or the other has nothing else to give.

If you asked a child how she knew her parents loved her, she might point to the needs they met, the time they spent with her, the way they treated her, and the fun things they did with and for her.

If you asked a friend how she knew you loved her, she might point to your presence during a particularly difficult time in her life. She might recall your timely words of encouragement when she had lost all hope.

If you asked a husband how he knew his wife loved him, he might list the various ways she fulfills his physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. He might cite her faithfulness in caring for the house or providing transportation to the children. He might mention the time she spends with him.

If you asked God how He knows we love Him, He would point to our obedience of His Word. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

Each of these responses reveals a different side of love. It's not easy to reduce love to its least common denominator, but Jesus did it in one statement. He said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) What He meant was, at its essence, love is self-sacrifice. The greatest expression of self-sacrifice is in giving one's life for another, and that is what Jesus did when He died on the cross.

Romans 5:7-8 takes the concept of self-sacrifice a step fur-

ther: *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Jesus applied this self-sacrificing love toward His friends and enemies alike, not only in His physical death, but in His daily death to self. Every day, He surrendered His desires to the will of His Father. Sometimes that looked like healing the sick; sometimes it looked like condemning the hypocrisy of the religious elite; sometimes it looked like getting alone to pray; sometimes it looked like sweating drops of blood in a garden.

In a word, love is selflessness. If our love is selfless, it will be sensitive to the needs of the other person, give the best it has, and embrace God's best while forfeiting our perceived good.



Contact Dr. Edwards if you would like to have him as your special guest.
PO Box 3862, Barrington, IL 60011
847-909-8543/biblewayministries@sbcglobal.net

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