

How Extreme is Your Love

There are fans ... and then there are FANS.

- You many know fans who gladly sleep outside a concert venue waiting for a concert that won't start for 24 hours. But extreme fans follow the same band around and camp outside before several shows.
- Manolo el del Bombo has damaged family relationships because of his fan loyalty to Spain's national football team—a loyalty he has carried for 45 years. He has followed the team around the world so much he's now allowed to fly on the team's plane. [Source]
- I know one prominent Christian leader who loves Alabama football. I mean, *really* loves the Crimson Tide. I'm not sure I have ever heard him speak or preach that he did not say something about Alabama. Someone jokingly commented to him in a large public setting, "I hear your mother likes Auburn." His response? "I hate my mother."



This leader's comment was meant as a joke (he really does love his mother), but it captured the heart of a true fan. His retort also captured the essence of one of the statements Jesus made that makes me sit up and ask, "Whoa, did Jesus really say that?"

"Now great crowds were traveling with him. So he turned and said to them: 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life — he cannot be my disciple'" (Luke 14:25-26).

Yes, Jesus really did say that.

I don't understand the level of fanaticism that leads people to make jokes at the expense of their mothers ... or strains family relationships just to follow a team. It's just a game. But the kind of love and loyalty that places everything else a far second is the kind of commitment Jesus calls for.

My love and commitment to Christ should be so intense and unmovable that, by comparison, my love for others seems like hate. The distance between my love for Jesus and, say, my love for my wife should be as far apart as love is from hate.

The best commentary on Scripture is Scripture, so let's read this passage in light of other truths in Scripture.

- The marriage bond is tight and is bound together by love and respect, A husband's love for his wife should reflect Christ's love for His church (Eph. 5:22-33).
- In love, we should lay down our lives for others (1 John 3:16-18).
- We are to love our enemies (Luke 6:27-28).

The command is obvious: we are to love others. But that love for others is never to supersede our love for Jesus Christ. We must say an unflinching "no" when others ask things of us that might pull us away from our commitment to Christ.

Any love you have for sports, music, or possessions ends when you die. Your relationship with Christ is eternal. Your love for family and friends won't necessarily end when you die, but that love will be overwhelmed in the light of the glory of Christ when you stand before Him.



Christ's love for us is immeasurable. We know God loves us, but we can't fully comprehend the depth of that love. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians believers was "to comprehend with all the saints what is the length

and width, height and depth of God's love, and **to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge**" (Eph. 3:18-19).

Christ's love for us is extreme. Our love for Him should be the same.