

# What Does Love Look Like in a World of Compromise?

Compromise often gets a bad rap, like you're selling out. That's not always the case, and marriage is a great example. Strong marriages are built on a willingness to compromise for the sake of the other.

- I like smooth peanut butter; my wife likes crunchy. When we got married, we compromised. We use crunchy peanut butter.
- There's the way my wife folds socks, and there's my way. So we reached an agreement, and I fold socks her way.

You may think those are more examples of giving in, not compromising, but these are matters on which I am willing to fully compromise and give in. Why? These are battles not worth fighting. I love my wife more than I love peanut butter.

True compromise is seen when we eat out. My wife loves Chinese food; I don't. I love Nashville hot chicken; she doesn't. We reserve those preferences for when we're not together; no one is forced to go along with the other's choice. When we eat out together, we choose places to eat that we both like.

So far, the compromises I've mentioned have to do with preferences, not convictions. Convictions—those truths and beliefs we firmly believe—should never be compromised. I would not have married my wife had we not shared the same convictions. Paul wrote, "Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe" (2 Cor. 6:14). The most important person in my life is Jesus Christ, so why would I make the second most important person in my life someone who is not pursuing Christ in the same way I am?

Yet I am surprised by how many people compromise or change their convictions "out of love" for someone. This is seen most overtly in the matter of sexual identity. People who long held the belief that homosexual behavior is wrong changed their tune because their son "came out of the closet" or they discovered a coworker is gay. (*He's such a nice guy!*) I've read of churches that changed their stance on homosexuality, and when I dig into the story, I found that often someone close to the pastor had announced he or she was gay.

The assumption is that if you truly love someone, you will embrace them in whatever lifestyle they have chosen. The

assumption is that you will change or squelch your convictions "out of love" for the person.

But is that love?

Love does not compromise on what matters. A kid can fuss that he doesn't want to go to the doctor, but a parent who loves that kid will still haul him to the doctor when he's sick. In fact, not to do so would be considered by most of us to be a very unloving act. Yet when it comes to sinful behavior—those actions that the Bible clearly calls out as sin—too many think it is a loving action not to confront the sin.

**Hold on to your biblical convictions.** Truth is truth, and it doesn't change simply because someone doesn't like it.

**Speak the truth in love.** Unfortunately, Christians have gotten a bad rap and been labeled homophobic because some in our ranks address issues related to homosexuality with every ounce of fire and brimstone they can muster. They hate the sin *and* the sinner.

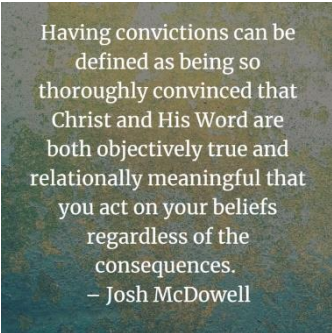
We can separate the sin from the sinner, and experience has shown me that it is not the church, but the world that refuses to separate the two. Sadly, the LGBTQ+ crowd ties everything about themselves to their sexual preference. It's like their sexuality is their religion and their god.

As followers of Christ, we can paint a different picture. We can love the individual as a friend. We can laugh and cry together. We can be genuine people who talk about sports, movies, or dog grooming. We can express our love for Jesus.

If we adopt a "let's agree to disagree" stance on the subject, we can still have a friendship and relationship with the individual. And as long as that relationship stays open, we're in a position to still influence, witness, and be the presence of Christ to them. With that stance, we do not compromise our hold to righteousness and biblical truth, but we communicate our love for God, our love for what is right, and our love for the individual.

**Pray for conviction.** Pray that the individual would see in you the love and grace of Christ. Pray that he would see his sin as God sees it, and that he would see himself as God sees him: a loved individual who needs to turn from sin and run into the arms of a forgiving Savior.

Let God use your uncompromising love to bring others to Himself.



Having convictions can be defined as being so thoroughly convinced that Christ and His Word are both objectively true and relationally meaningful that you act on your beliefs regardless of the consequences.  
— Josh McDowell