

## THE COST OF LOVING

Ephesians 4:32 ... “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Financial experts often refer to the “cost of living,” which is how much goods and services cost in a particular place. In the Philippines, which has a depressed economy, the cost of living is generally quite low. In America, Britain, Japan and other developed countries, the cost of living is very high. For instance, a loaf of bread that might cost P50 here, would be the equivalent of P160 in the U.S.. If you pay P500 per month for electricity in Maitum, the same usage could cost you about P3,600 per month in California.

OFWs often overlook the cost of living before going to another country to work. They are shocked to find that the cost of apartment rent, transportation, food, electricity and water, income taxes, and other basic necessities quickly consume all of their salaries because it is so much more expensive in the country in which they work. Then their relatives back home complain because remittances are small. I often tell Filipinos planning to work abroad, that their children need their parents more than they need money. Millions of Filipino children are growing up with single parents, or no parents at all. This contributes to drug use, crime, poverty and immorality among young people.

Loving others can also be costly. God gave his own Son to be tortured and murdered on a cross to save us from sin. Mothers often give up jobs and careers to give birth and raise their children. That can be very costly for a family. Young people give up the closeness to their parents when they marry and leave the family home to start their own families. It is emotionally and financially costly to leave the comfort of your home and get married, unless you insist on living at home and letting your parents continue supporting you, your spouse and kids.

If you are in a loving relationship and your love for your spouse is not costing you something, you are not loving as God designed. Living with a husband or wife, loving them through thick and through thin, and sacrificing your own desires and comfort to please your spouse, should cost you something. It is a cost you should pay gladly and willingly. It is a cost that might deprive you of your own desires. But it is a cost that is required. Loving someone is a privilege and requires compromise and sacrifice.

Consider your love for your spouse, children or someone else. Are you sacrificing and giving yourself to that relationship, or are you just enjoying their sacrifices? If you are an OFW, do you love your children enough to stay home and care for them, train them, ensure they apply themselves in school, and devote themselves to God? If you believe you can accomplish these basic parenting duties by sending money to them, you are wrong. You are not paying the true cost of loving your spouse and children if you leave them.

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