

Live in Love

A Disciple's Response to God's Love

Jesus was not only God incarnate, He was also God's Love fleshed out. He personified a perfect love for God and for men. And He expected His disciples to do likewise.

Memorize 

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another."

John 13:35

Love is to be the identifying mark of Christians. It is what ought to set us apart from everyone else. Why? Because we belong to God and God is Love. Love is part of His very nature, and thus, the natures of His children. Love is also the fulfillment of God's Law.

- 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"
37 And (Jesus) said to him,
 "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD
 WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND
 WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND
 WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'
38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.
39 "The second is like it,
 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'
40 "On these two commandments
 depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40

1. What does the commandment (v 37) mean? _____

2. What is the significance of the great commandment? _____

3. How is the second commandment like the first? _____

In order to fully understand these preeminent commands, it is essential to understand the nature of the Love God expects of us. The word 'Love' has been used and misused in various ways, and it becomes necessary to determine its specific meaning, especially and specifically as it is used in these verses.

John 13:35

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ What all men will know.
- ✓ If we have what.



Acts 4:32-35

Matthew 22:36-40

Circle or Underline ...

- v 36 What was asked of Jesus.
- v 37 What was commanded.
How we must love God.
- v 38 What commandment this is.
- v 39 Who else we must love.
How we must love.
- v 40 On what depends these two commandments.

When we love God first and foremost, we are recognizing the truth of God's preeminence. A person who loves God absolutely is a person properly aligned to Heaven and one capable of living a meaningful life on Earth.

First, this kind of Love is not ...

1. ... sexual in nature, as in the phrase, "They made *love* in bed."
2. ... lust, as when young men tell young women "I *love* you," when they really mean "I *want* you".
3. ... the attraction that draws us to a person or thing we find captivating or rewarding.
4. ... even the affection shared among friends, family or people with shared experiences.

So what is this Love? The writers of Scripture chose the Greek word 'agape' to symbolize this kind of Love And they defined *agape* by the way they applied it to God's Love for us.

The Nature of this Love

Memorize 

"But God demonstrates His own love (agape) toward us,
in that while we were yet sinners,
Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

Romans 5:8 shows us the nature of this Love. It comes from God Himself ('His own love') expressing His own nature (He loved us 'while we were yet sinners'). **It is not influenced by the attractiveness or the pleasurable nature of the object or person.** This Love originates from God's very Being and expresses the priorities of His heart. It shows us what He **values** and what He **esteems**. Here, it is the salvation of people who are 'yet sinners', who possess no worth in themselves, but only that which is given them by God. He loves us because He **chooses** to love us. And only with this love, God's love, are we able to love unconditionally and unfaithfully.

The Extent of this Love

Memorize 

"For God so loved (agape) the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish,
but have eternal life."

John 3:16

Whereas Romans 5:8 shows us the nature of this Love, John 3:16 shows us its **extent**. God 'gave His only begotten Son' for a world in rebellion, knowing that most would spurn His offer of peace and continue in their prideful and misguided lives. Yet God loved them still! He was willing to pay the highest price as a demonstration of the value He placed on our lives. Such is the kind of Love commanded and expected of us by God!

Romans 5:8

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ What God demonstrates.
- ✓ When Christ died.

John 3:16

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ Who God loved.
- ✓ What God gave.
Who will not perish.
What those who believe
have.

God loves because He cannot help to do otherwise. It is His nature to love, even as it is the nature of our old selves to sin. The Christian who lives according to the sin nature cannot love as God loves for it is impossible for that nature to do so, but the Christian who lives according to the divine nature of his reborn spirit will love even as God loves for it will be God's Spirit loving through Him. The Christian who lives by his reborn spirit will super-naturally value and esteem the very things God does, and by so doing, will fulfill the very Law and Will of God!

That is why Jesus was the personification of God's Love, for He precisely and perfectly manifested God's priorities and values through His life. Even as He told His disciples hours before His arrest and execution ...

Memorize 

"but so that the world may know that I love the Father,
I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. ..."

John 14:31

To Live in Love is to Live in accordance with God's highest priorities and values. And there is nothing higher nor more valuable than God. This is the foundation of the great commandment and explains why complete reverence and devotion to God is the highest expression of divine love. But incredibly, second only to our esteem for God, we are commanded to treasure one another, testifying to the value God has placed upon each one of us. **People are important to God.** The person who does not value others knows nothing about God's Love. Jesus modeled this perfect love for God and for others in order that we might follow His example! Only by living according to our new nature, reborn in our spirit by God, can we ever hope to emulate Jesus' perfect devotion to God the Father and to all people.

John 14:31

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ What the world may know.
- ✓ How they will know it.



1 John 4:16-21

Live in Love

List key Truths and Principles you learned from this study:

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

In light of what what you learned, list what you will do.

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

**God Loved Us Sacrificially
that We Might Love Him Supremely!**