

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

Number: 09

Verses: 1 John 4:7-9

Topic: Love Is A Spiritual State of Being

Date: 28th July 2011

1 John 4:7-9 *Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; and everyone that loves has been born of God and knows God. (8) He that does not love does not know God, because God is love. (9) By this the love of God is manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, in order that we might live through Him.*

Love is of God and God is love and the love that existed in God was manifested in Christ. God's very deepest inner being is love and so love is a state of inner being. Love is who God is and love is who we are when we are in Christ. Because God is Spirit, love is therefore a *spiritual* state of being.

Love is eternal because love is of God and God is eternal. Love is spiritual because love is of God and God is spiritual. Love is patient because love is of God and God is patient.

When we think about love, we should first think about who God is, because God is love. Even God's wrath is an expression of His love, particularly His holy jealousy for His people. God hates sin because sin tears people apart. If God loves you then God must hate the sin that destroys you!

Yesterday I wrote that: "Love is an abiding, holy, interior spiritual state of the conscience, that listens to God, and which produces practical benevolent action as the Holy Spirit directs."

Love flows from having God within you. Love begins with being born of God and knowing God. As you relate to God (know Him) His love flows from His inner being, to your inner being. You become one spirit with God.

1 Corinthians 6:17 *But he that is joined with the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

The place where God's Spirit joins with our spirit is the place where we are taught of God and hear from God and "know with" God and that place has traditionally been known as the conscience ("con" = with / "science" = know so conscience = know with).

1 Timothy 1:5 *Now the goal of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,*

A good conscience is one that allows God to teach us how to love others, and works hand-in-hand with a pure heart and sincere faith to produce the goal of the commandment, which is love!

Love exists prior to any loving thought or loving action. However sometimes Christians get the impression that love is merely a personality trait, like extroversion, or a social trait such as affability. Perhaps this is because love is listed as a "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22,23) and this list sounds a little bit like a list of personality traits and social traits. We are also told to "put on" love (Colossians 3:14) as the bond of perfection, thus love seems to be exterior and not interior. But this is a misreading of the text.

The verse about "putting on love" is plural and refers to the church at Colossae loving one another. The Colossians as a community are to put on love, but its not "fake it until you make it", rather the love is already there, resident in their hearts through Christ, and they just need to take it out and put it on. Similarly the fruit of the Spirit are the outward manifestations of the inwardly resident Holy Spirit, who is God, who is love.

Love and hatred, light and darkness, are states of the human spirit. They are the shapes the soul takes, the very framework and fabric in which we live our lives. This is even deeper than the human will! If your human spirit is filled with the Spirit you will love people whether you want to or not! We see this in Jesus who, out of compassion, ministers to people, even when his human will just wanted to go aside and rest! People who are full of love, love others, "almost despite themselves".

True agape love controls us, shapes us and orders our days.

2 Corinthians 5:14 *For the love of Christ constrains us, judging this, that if one died for all, then all died;*

The love of Christ within us constrains us from doing evil, saying unkind things, being selfish, committing adultery or scheming against another person. When we are filled with the Spirit love takes over the reins of our life and even takes hold of our tongue which is then filled with praise to God:

Ephesians 5:18-21 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (20) always giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.*

Acts 4:31-32 *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. (32) And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. And not one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own. But they had all things common.*

So we see that love is a spiritual state of our being, when it has become one spirit with God, and that this love then manifests itself in gracious words and selfless deeds.

God's love is intensely personal. God loves people not "causes". Causes can become cruel, manipulative, over-riding and all-demanding. Causes can burn people out but love builds people up!

Love is a person offering themselves to another person, just as God offered up His only begotten Son on our behalf! And just as God the Holy Spirit has come to dwell among us and be in us.

Because love is an abiding and eternal state of being God does not stop loving just because He is sometimes rejected. Love bears all things. Love endures all things. Love keeps on loving. Love is eternal and abiding and all the rejection and rudeness in the world cannot make it shrivel up, wilt and die.

However while love does not die love certainly may change its object. An abusive husband may find that his continual rejection of his wife causes her love to go elsewhere. She is still a loving person, she just now loves someone else! Similarly God may have a great plan and destiny for someone, but if they reject it then His love and blessing will go somewhere else! But God remains loving and righteous and just.

So how do we arrive at a loving state of being, that is so joyously powerful it takes over our tongue, our thoughts, our actions and our attitudes and even our finances so that we are selfless and godly in all that we do? Are we at that point where nothing is too much trouble for us when it is done for those whom God has given us to love?

1. We can pray to be filled with God's love. (Ephesians 3:14-21)
2. We can pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18, Acts 4:31,32)
3. We can start doing small, simple, loving things, one at a time, and opening our hearts to love's manifestation in our lives. Dorcas did this! (Acts 9:36)
4. We can pray for those who persecute us and do good to even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48) and thus grow in love for difficult people.
5. We can meet the obvious physical needs of others (1 John 3;16-18)
6. We can shrink back from evil and do good (Romans 12:9)
7. We can honor one another in love (Romans 12:10)

Fundamental to all of the above is being "born of God". Love will not dwell in us, until God truly dwells in us. We become born of God by believing in Jesus Christ, and this then leads us into that place where we abide in God and in God's love:

1 John 4:15-16 *Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God. (16) And we have known and believed the love that God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

Faith in Jesus Christ establishes the connection with God through which flows the abundant love of God. We need to confess Christ, to live out Christ, to believe in Jesus Christ and in the power of His Name.

Blessings,

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