

God Is Love (2)

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1 John 4:7 tells us that *“love is from God,”* which means that the concept of the most beautiful of all emotions has its origin from God. It flows from Him, originates from Him, springs forth from Him. Love is such a strong part of the nature of God that we cannot trace it back to any root or source but Him. Therefore, to love is to be like God. Since we are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26), every expression of sacrificial and unselfish love is tied back to God.

Not only that, but God’s love was demonstrated most profoundly by His willingness to sacrifice Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son (1 John 4:9). “Only begotten” denotes *“Single of its kind, only. Used of Christ, denotes the only Son of God or one who in the sense in which He Himself is the Son of God has no brethren”* (Thayer, p. 417). Not even Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac could be compared wholly to the death of Jesus. At least Abraham got to keep Isaac, and he had other sons too. None of us has ever had opportunity or ability to love to the same degree, though it is a goal to strive for. *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you”* (John 15:12-14). We are not required to die for our sins – Christ did it for us. All God asks in return is obedience. Fair enough?

“Not that we loved God, but that He loved us”

1 John 4:10 gives us evidence of the utter error in the theory that Jesus came to appease the wrath of a vengeful, angry God. It is not that Jesus and the Father were two different sides of the same coin, either. There is no “good cop, bad cop” with God – there is just God. In every sense of the word, God loves us, even to the point that He holds nothing back. He was prepared to give His dearest one, to make a sacrifice beyond any other, and give salvation to people who rejected His love. In this sense, 1 John 4:10 is so very true: compared to how much He loves us, we cannot even begin to say we have enough love. That is why Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to *“love still more”* (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10). We must devote ourselves entirely to the pursuit of self-improvement, increasing our love, learning more, sacrificing more, giving more. In light of all this, how can any man be stingy with God?

- How can you not devote more time to Him?
- Why complain so much when He asks so little?
- Do not consider Bible study or prayer bothersome chores.
- Why do we work so hard at finding excuses not to help others?
- We need to take the first step in being unselfish (Matthew 4:46-48, Titus 3:3-5).
- A good example of godly love is the Samaritan of Luke 10:30-37.

God’s Affection

We need to see that there is a very affectionate side of God. He will always have a soft spot for His creation, which is why He was always there for the people of Israel in

the Old Testament. There is a very soft tenderness that pervades God. *“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared...”* (Titus 3:5, John 16:27). There are some great analogies that follow this idea:

- Father and child (Psalm 103:13, Matthew 6:9, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:1-7).
- Mother and infant (Isaiah 49:15).
- Husband and wife (Hosea 2:1-20, Ephesians 5:25, 2 Corinthians 11:2).
- Shepherd and flock (Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11, John 10:11).
- A mother hen and chicks (Matthew 23:37).

When we consider these analogies, we need to remember that whatever emotions, feelings, and tender affections are associated with these relationships in a human sense are infinitely multiplied in the divine mind. How much do you love and cherish your wife? How much do you love your children? How much do you sacrifice for your family? How devoted are you to the church? Now take all of that and imagine it from God’s perspective. God is reaching out to us always with His love and tenderness. But the same God who loves also is just and righteous. He will not only welcome the sheep into His fold on the last day, but will also expel the unrighteous and ungodly (Matthew 25:31-46).