

God is Love By Paul R. Blake

1John 4:16 - "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him." Jesus Christ became the living manifestation of the love of God. David, Paul, and John illuminate the love of God in Holy Writ. Humankind has offered thanksgiving to God in prayer since the beginning. We praise the love of God in song. We rise up in the morning and lie down at night immersed in the love of God. We could not know love for anyone or anything without the love of God.

So, where did love begin? It began with the One who is the original cause of all things. Like the air we breathe, the earth we walk on, and the sun that lights our day, without thought we take for granted so many of the blessings God gives us. "Because it's always been there" is a close to thinking about the origins of blessings some people ever engage. "God loves me" is all some believers know about the love of God. While that may be sufficient for the babe in Christ, it is too simplistic for those who have been Christians for many years.

Love began with God. He is the original cause, the first One to love another. God's love for humankind is spontaneous or self-generated; no one told him to love, no one showed Him how to love, and since all things came from God, no one ever loved before God.

Love did not originate with human beings. All human love is secondary, taught, and reciprocal.

Our love is derivative. Only God can claim to love first and without cause. In fact, the objects of God's love were unlovable by reasonable standards. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16ff). What did God see in this world to love? All that was in the earth was beset with sin. Adam and Eve sinned in spite of their idyllic existence in the Garden of Eden wherein they had a personal, conversational relationship with God (Gen. 3:1-19). By Noah's day, with the exception of eight people, the entire world was engulfed in sin (Gen. 6:5-6). Everyone at some point in life chooses to commit sin (Rom. 3:23). Humankind had nothing to offer God in return for His love for them (Rom. 5:6-8). In short, there was no reason for God to love us. Therefore, any love we offer to God or anyone else is secondary; it came after God's love for us.

All human love is taught. We could not know love in the absence of God's love for us. God has demonstrated His love for us from the beginning. Before this world was made, God planned for humankind to dwell with Him in heaven. Ephesians 1:3-4 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Children learn love from human interaction: from parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, peers, etc. The scriptures abound with texts that command us to love God, to love our families, to love our brethren, and to love our neighbors. If love comes naturally and without cause, is it necessary to instruct someone to love others? Original love comes from God; our love is learned. (1Thes. 4:9; Eph. 5:25; Titus 2:4)

Our love is reciprocal, that is, it is in response to the love we have received. The love of God moves believers to respond in love (2Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20). Among human beings, when one loves another and that love is not reciprocated, the love becomes warped and does harm. David loved unworthy Absalom to his own great sorrow and at the risk of civil war in the nation of Israel. A man who loves a woman (or a woman who loves a man) experiences great pain when that love is not returned, and in some cases is moved by unrequited love to act in an unnatural manner. For the most part, we seldom love when are not loved in return. But because God first loved us proving His love with sending His Son to pay for our sins, we love Him. 1John 4:19 - "We love Him because He first loved us."

One could spend a lifetime studying God's love and not understand all that could be known of it. God is God, and we are men. His mind is boundless, and ours is limited (Isa. 55:8-9). Nevertheless, it is a worthy lifetime pursuit to "...be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge" (Eph. 3:18-19ff).

Where "U" Are Needed

"U" are needed in Bible St_dy,
not in ignorance.

"U" are needed in S_pport,
not in neglect.

"U" are needed in _nity,
not in party spirit.

"U" are needed in D_ty,
not in irresponsibility.

"U" are needed in B_ilding _p,
not in tearing down.

"U" are needed in the Ch_rch,
not in the world.

The Church needs "U", but more than that YOU need the Church. (Author Unknown)

A Moments Wisdom

Where there is no thirst for righteousness, the sermon is "dry."

Lying covers a multitude of sins--temporarily.

The world is too small a place to afford safety to the man who disobeys God.

Conviction, not convenience, determines human destiny.

People who want to be amused have lost the art of living.

Doing an injury puts you below your enemy; revenging one makes you even with him; forgiving him sets you above him.

A good leader is someone who takes more than his share of the blame and a little less than his share of the credit.

Having problems is not so bad. There is a special place reserved for people who are problem-free. It is called the cemetery.

He who neglects to drink of the spring of experience is apt to die of thirst in the desert of ignorance.

Unless we are willing to help a person overcome his faults, there is little value in pointing them out.

No one on his own deathbed ever repents of having been a Christian.

The Good Samaritan didn't wait for the media to arrive before he did his thing.

There is a difference between charity and giving away what you no longer want.

The big jobs of tomorrow are for the man who is doing today's small jobs as best as he can.

Mother's write on the hearts of their children what the world's rough hand cannot erase.