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Love of God

Love of God - Has it captured your heart?



I could paint with a broad stroke and speak of His love for all humanity. I could talk about the affection of God as it relates to the Church. Those aspects of God's love form an important framework, but what we all long to know – or perhaps to know increasingly -is the **love of God** for each of us individually.

And lest you think that is selfish, let me assure you that that is precisely what God wants for you! God has moved from the beginning of time to insure that any who wanted, could have a very personal relationship with Him and receive the affections of His heart.

As a child, when I first committed my life to God through Christ, I was looking to escape judgment. I came to the foot of the cross in fear. I was motivated more by the fear of God than the love of God. Yet the longer I walk with God, the more my understanding of Him becomes relational. The more I have come to know Him, the more I understand that our relationship is anchored in love and the less I am motivated in immature ways by my fear of God.

As the disciples of Jesus grew in their understanding of God, Jesus challenged their thinking. “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant doesn't know what his master is doing; but I call you friends...” John 15:15 Jesus gave us picture of a friendship that flows from love in John 15:13. “Greater love has no one than this, than one lay down his life for his friends.” On the cross, Jesus became a literal offering for us, laying down his life so that we could be personally related to God. He took care of everything that could separate us from God. This sacrificial unconditional giving is at the heart of understanding the love of God. Truly, no one loves us like God loves us.

The Love of God Motive

Although fear can bring us to God, God wants us to move so far beyond that! He passionately desires that we know His love.

If I am afraid of you, I won't feel safe in your presence. I won't be able to share my heart with you freely. It is the same with God. Yes, we are to reverence Him but when our obedience and worship flow from a place of love instead of a place of fear, we are free to truly offer all we are to God. The safety we find in this unconditional love of God transforms our hearts, purifies our motives of service.

1 John 4: 17-19 tells us that the love of God will bring us to completion, maturity, and we will be able to be confident in the day of judgment. There is NO fear in love; but perfect, mature love casts out fear. Fear involves torment and judgment. Understanding God's love will remove fear from our hearts as we are made mature in His love. The reason we love Him is because He loved us first! His unending passionate and patient compassion for us is amazing.

Relating from the Love of God

I've heard it said that fear and love are opposites and that they are the two primary emotions from which all other emotions flow. If we can operate from that thought for a moment and evaluate your relationship with God in terms of how much you relate to God from a basis of love or how much you relate to God through fear, where would you find yourself on such a continuum?

LOVE-----FEAR

Of course, our relationships aren't linear but using this illustration as a point of examination, can you ask yourself the following?

Do I understand my relationship with God more from a view of His love or my fear of Him?

Do I approach God intimately or through a system of rules?

Do I know more of God's love than I did a year ago, two years ago, ten years ago?

Do I feel secure in God's love for me or am I afraid He is just waiting to judge me?

I think of the words from an old hymn, The Love of God, that Lehman wrote in 1917:

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
The saints' and angels' song.

The love of God! It frees us from fear and leads us into deeper levels of intimacy with God. May we all live experientially in the **love of God** today and in all the days to come.

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