

# *Love is God in us*

True fellowship is the love of God shared with His children. We should consider how we might, by our words and deeds, encourage one another to give ourselves in self forgetfulness, to love and good deeds as we follow the example of Jesus. If we are to know the love of God, we are to die to self and then do all things for the glory of God.

Naturally we go after what we desire, and we naturally desire what is pleasing to the flesh. But the Holy Spirit desires that we build up one another in love. *"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."* 1 Cor 12:7

If we love God, we pursue holiness. In that case, we war daily with the flesh, the world, and Satan. If we are not aware of the battle with the spiritual forces of darkness seeking to relentlessly bring us down, for they never rest in pursuing God children, then we have forgotten we are a soldier of God who stands firm and never stops using the full armour of God.

Do we live with God's love or are we confused. How often we need to confess how dull we are. God is near! When we pray, do we pray to God in the heavens somewhere? Apart from us as far as the furthest universe. Or do we pray to Him who is closer to us than your own breath?

*For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.* Rom 6:5-8

He is the One who gives life to our mortal body.

The One who said He would be in us.

The One who said He would never leave us.

He is the One who lives in us because we have denied ourself and taken up our cross to follow Him.

He is the One who lives in us as our hope of glory.

He is the One who said: *"that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."* John 17:21

*"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."* John 14:16-17

This is the One who lives in us to teach us all things concerning Christ. This is the One who intercedes on our behalf when we don't know how to pray. This is the One who dwells in everyone who lives for Christ so that they can love one another as He has loved us. This is the One who gives gifts of the manifestation of His love to every believer, so that together they can assist each other to grow up into the image of Christ.

This is the Spirit of the one who said to His disciples, but also applies to us as His disciples: *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me"...."Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."* John 15:4, 9-11

Dane Ortlund. 'The life of Jonathan Edwards'

Edwards then makes the striking claim that this holy energy of love between Father and Son is the Holy Spirit. Drawing on 1 John 4, he suggests that if God dwelling in believers produces love in them (1 John 4:12), and God dwells in believers by His Spirit (1 John 4:13), then this divine love in them must, quite simply, be the Holy Spirit. The Spirit "is God's infinite love to Himself and happiness in Himself."

"To be a Christian is to love. Love is neither optional nor peripheral. It is not required of only certain personality types. A Christian is one who has been welcomed into the great dance

of mutual delight within the triune Godhead, having had the very love of this Godhead implanted in his own soul.”

“For a Christian, moreover, love is not a bonus to sound doctrine, a nice extra or add-on for some believers. No, love is the very point of sound doctrine. Sound doctrine without love is itself deeply self-contradictory "a cold and hard-hearted Christian is the greatest absurdity and contradiction. It is as if one should speak of dark brightness, or a false truth!" Accumulation of doctrinal knowledge nets out as loss, not gain, if such theological growth fails to foster benevolent, heartfelt goodwill toward others.”

“Divinely implanted love is not only the sum of all Christian living but also the "root and spring" of all Christian living. Not only does love fulfill all that a Christian is called to do. It is also true that any given virtue is, when considered carefully, a specific manifestation of love. Love is "that from which all good dispositions and behavior do arise, the stock on which all good fruit grows, and the fountain in which all that is good is contained and from whence it flows."

### **If we think God is only up there somewhere we will live by the flesh**

Surely it is the flesh that remains in us that feels isolated from the presence of God? The Bible teaches us that we have Christ in us, and that He is also in heaven as our Interceder with the Father. Rom 8:34

We must awaken the sleeper in us and live in the presence of God. God lives in us, there is no separation in the mind of Christ between Himself and all of us who now compose His body on earth.

### **Since Christ is in us His love is ours to give as His light on earth**

In Christ we are here to represent His love to one another and the world. We are not separate individuals but united in Christ to love as He loves. Because His love has been poured out into our hearts by the Spirit of God. *‘The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’* Rom 5:5

*'Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.'*

1 John 25-6

In our on-going spiritual war with our flesh, the world and the devil, we are to be strengthened by the presence of God in us, and with God in us for each other, so that we can be assured that we are never separated from the love of God. *You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*

1 John 4:4

### **God's love is healing for the flesh**

*Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails;*

1 Cor 13:4-8

One writer put it this way:

The essence of God's love is endless goodwill, abundant benevolence, and delight in the object of His love, and is always just. Because *God is love*, (1 John 4:8) He is the foundation of love. Everything God does flows from His love. God loves because that love is consistent with His nature and the nature of His being. He loves the unlovely, so it is not because we deserve to be loved, but because it is His nature to love and He must be true to His nature. The love God has for us, should to describe the quality of our love for God.

Matt 22:37

God's love is always seen in what He does as the Lord of Lord's. God's love is most clearly seen in the cross of Jesus Christ. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* John 3:16

God's love is graciously available for those who walk in the darkness of rebellion. And He constantly seeks the benefit of the ones He loves.

God's love led to the sacrifice of His only Son for those He loves. *'How great a love the Father has bestowed on us.'* 1 John 3:1

Michael Horton wrote in 'Calvin and the Christian life'

"The law of love is not the path to God's favour, but the highway from it that leads out into the world.... The Word creates faith that receives justification in Christ and then produces the fruit of love and good works.... God's gifts come to us, and then through us to others."

B.B. Warfield, wrote on 'The Emotional life of our Lord'

"As His love to the Father was the source of His obedience to the Father, and the living spring of His faithfulness to the work that had been committed to Him, so He declares that the love of His followers to Him, imitating and reproducing His love to them, is to be the source of their obedience to Him, and through that, of all the good that can come to human beings, including, as the highest reach of social perfection, their love for one another. Self-sacrificing love is thus made the essence of the Christian life, and is referred for its incentive to the self-sacrificing love of Christ Himself: Christ's followers are to *"have the same mind in them which was also in Christ Jesus"*

### **We are the ones who have Christ and His love**

*to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Col 1:27

*For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.* Col 3:3-4

*"that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you." "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."* John 14:17-18, 20

## **In Christ we are bound together in love**

*"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."*

1 John 4:7-11

It is easier to do religious works than to love like God. Religious works that don't spring from true love are not from God. The work of God requires a sacrificial love that places our priority on reflecting the Spirit of love revealed in the death of Christ for sinners, and subsequently those the Father has given the Son.

Jesus Christ died to reconcile us to live in loving fellowship communion with God, and this connection with the love of God unites all His children in His love.

The quality of the fellowship we have with God's children, reflects the fellowship we have with the Father and the Son by the Spirit.

## **God's love is Christ's death for us so His love can be in us**

*"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us....so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Rom 5:8, 21

The love we have received from God is expressed through the lives of those who are in Christ; it upholds all things in the lives of the people of God. Love gives meaning to service, and love gives divine value to the family of His beloved children. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*

John 13:34

Since love is to be sacrificial in following the example of Jesus Christ, it is opposed to a life of self-seeking. Because love is the blessing given to the humble spirit, there is no room for pride and self-seeking. Therefore, the inclination to save our life for ourselves needs to be denied if we are to live with God and each other in love. Love binds

God's people to God and one another. *'That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'* Col 2:2-3

It is only possible to become a lover of God by giving ourselves as a living, and complete sacrifice to God in absolute surrender to the love of God in His Son Jesus Christ. *'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'* Rom 12:1-2

### **The Evidence of our love for others**

Evidence of God's love in us is that we love as He loves. Our responsibility to act as God's children means we do as He would do. *'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.'* Matt 22:38-39

Jesus prayed for our complete union with God's love. *"that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us."* John 17:21

In love the Son laid down His life so we can live with Him in love. Therefore, the basis for the Christian life as the community of God, is love, love from God. *'How great is God's love that we should be called children of God.'* 1 John 3:1

*'For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.'* 2 Cor 5:14-15

God's love is to have an effect on our daily living in fellowship with the children of God and even with those who resist His love to go their own way. In order for us to love as God loves we need to rely on the Spirit of God who shares His godly life with those who obey Him. *'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.'* Gal 5:22-23

*'So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.'*  
Col 3:12-14

As a way of protecting us from being unloving we are commanded to put away all evidence of the flesh. *'Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.'*  
Eph 4:31-32

**Jonathan Edwards wrote:**

“A true Christian delights to have God exalted in his abasement, because he loves God. He is willing to own that God is worthy of this; and it is with delight that he casts himself in the dust before God, because he loves God.”

“Love will dispose to walk humbly among men. Love will dispose men to honour one another. Love will dispose to contentment in the station in which God has set him. Love will dispose men to meekness and gentleness in their carriage towards their neighbours. Love will dispose men to forgive injuries. Love will dispose men to acts of mercy towards our neighbours. love will dispose to those duties which they owe one another.”

“Love would dispose to all suitable carriage between husbands and wives; and it would dispose children to obey their parents; parents not to provoke their children unto wrath; servants to be obedient to their masters, not with eye service, but in singleness of heart; and masters to exercise gentleness and goodness towards their servants.”

“Love would dispose men to do to others as they would that others should do to them, if they were in their neighbours' circumstances, and their neighbour in theirs. Thus love would dispose to all duties, both towards God and towards men. And if love will dispose to all duties, then it follows that love is a root and spring, and, as it were, a comprehension of all virtues. It is a principle which, if implanted in the heart, is alone sufficient to produce all good dispositions; and every right



disposition towards God and men is, as it were, summed up in it."

### **God's love is revealed in our love for the lost world**

*"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 13:35

*"I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."* Matt 5:44

God didn't just love those who are respectable; He loved those who were behaving as His enemies; us. Therefore we shall love our enemies as we imitate His love. *"I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."* (Matt 5:44) This is a command for us to make sure our love is God's kind of love.

As the children of God's sacrificial love, we are to reflect the character of our Father, which flows from His love. We are saved for love and loving the unlovable, in the same way we were loved while sinners who knew nothing about love.

God's love is about our devotion and tenderness from Him that doesn't expect love from the unloving, but always prays for and seeks out a loving response, so that all men would be able to reflect His devoted love in all things.

The God of all love and light is devoted to drawings people out of the darkness of the unloving world and into the light of His great Love. Once we are infected with the love of God, we are then motivated by that love to act in the same way as God because we are provoked with the same motivation, His love. See 2 Cor 5:14-15

### **Love opens the way to service**

*"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."* (Matt 10:39) *"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."* John 13:15

Jesus insisted that sacrificial love of service is to be the distinguishing feature of the followers of Christ. *"Will you lay down your life for Me?"* (John 13:38) Christ' life of self-denial is to be the outstanding characteristic of His disciples. Therefore Jesus repeats the command to love one another. *"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."*

John 15:12-13

The command from Jesus is for us to live up to the love we share from Him. If we have tasted His love, we are required to share what we have received. *'Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.'*

Phil 2:4-7

### **Our security is in His love**

*'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.'*

Rom 8:35, 37

*'For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Rom 8:38-39

In the beginning God made man in His image and likeness, so that we might remain in His love by trusting in Him and obeying all He commanded. Jesus Christ came into the world to restore that relationship, so that we might abide in Him, by believing in Him as we trust in Him and obey all He has commanded; so that His life of love might live through us who remain in His word, as we are set free from self will to live His life in fellowship with the Father of love.

### **Is His love on our minds?**

*For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.*

Rom 8:5-7

*for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

Phil 2:13

What is God's love working in us to please Him?

*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

Rom 8:28-30

*for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

Rom 8:13-14

*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.*

Col 3:2-10

### **When the flesh is active love is not present**

The reverse of love is the flesh. The flesh is impatient, the flesh is unkind, the flesh is jealous, the flesh brags, the flesh is arrogant, the flesh acts unbecomingly, the flesh seeks its own, the flesh is easily provoked, the flesh takes all things into account as a wrong suffered, the flesh rejoiced in unrighteousness, the flesh does not bear all things,

the flesh does not believe all things, the flesh does not hope in all things, the flesh never endures all things.

But the Love God brings to His children is for giving the quality of the holiness of God. *“Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*  
1 Cor 13:4-7

*‘The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.’*

1 John 4:8

*‘We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.’*

1 John 4:16

We can only love with Christ because we have Christ in us for His Victory over sin and for His glory. Our final victory will only be realized when Jesus comes to take us home to live with Him. Until then we fight against sin and for holiness.

Consider David Brainerd who fought the good fight. (April 20, 1718 – October 9, 1747) He was an American Presbyterian minister and missionary to the Native Americans among the Delaware Indians of New Jersey. Brainerd, a great spiritual friend of Jonathan Edwards who published Brainerd's diary after he died. David Brainerd wrote:

"Oh, the pride, selfishness, hypocrisy, ignorance, bitterness, party zeal, and the want [lack] of love, candor, meekness, and gentleness, that have attended my attempts to promote religion, and virtue."

The great saints of the past were probably more conscious of the sin of their flesh than all of us who go around smiling because we think we have overcome. If we have overcome, we have put all the flesh to death and have nothing more to do in our sanctification. Are we kidding?

Has our love for God and man being made perfect in us? Not while we live on earth.

Yes, we give thanks for the grace of God we have received, but we should also know that our battle against sin has not finished.

If we want to live in happiness, as if we have achieved victory over sin, then we are absent without a leave pass from the army of God. We have gone absent from the army of God, and we have neglected our task to put our flesh to death.

### **Consider the Spirit of God**

Would the Spirit who lives in us be impatient, unkind, short tempered, and lack Mercy? Would He make unfounded assumptions about people? Would He refuse to co-operate with the gifting of those in whom He lives? Would He remain private by isolating Himself from the emotional lives of His people? Would He fail to love the brethren as Christ has loved us? Would He be indifferent to worldliness that places value on things are the wisdom of men? Would He ignore unholiness in the people in whom He dwells? Would He fail to hate sin and unrighteousness? Would He go about grumbling about short comings in the world?

Therefore, since these things of the flesh are our constant companions, we who claim to be indwelt by the Spirit mostly don't walk with God because we wink at the fleshliness in us.

We go on behaving as if we have already overcome sin and have nothing to fight against that is used by the devil to make us look like hypocrites.

We need to acknowledge our desire to walk by the flesh and undertake to put it to death by walking in submission to the Spirit of God so that we can be transformed into the image of Christ.

*"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

1 John 1:8-9

Have we been regularly fighting against our flesh and the world this week?

If the answer is no, then we have not been aware of the Father's love at work in us for our good as we are being transformed into the image of Christ.

It means we have taken the way of least resistance, and accommodated the flesh, and abandoned our post in the spiritual war of God.

What is not according to the law of love in the Holy Spirit is according to the flesh and sin. Those who are in Christ have received the Spirit of love from God so they can fulfil the law from the heart.

If we don't walk with the Spirit we walk with the flesh.

*"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want."* Gal 5:16-17

God is love. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love. If we don't cherish our daily walk with the Spirit of love and seek the glory of God, we will walk alone. And walking alone means we won't cherish our time with the children God loves and seek their highest good, and we won't be interested in what He is doing in their lives.

And we won't be concerned with telling the world about the love of God who gave His only Son to die for the sin of the world, so that sinners can find salvation through the faith that compels repentance.

Those who call themselves Christian who don't walk with the Spirit of love, don't need Him anymore because they have claimed the victory that belongs to Christ alone in this world, so they think as if they have arrived in their Quest for heaven, not understanding that a Quest is a struggle for something elusive and just out of reach.

All of life is a test for His love in us as ordained by God to show us what we have according to the flesh that falls short of the life of the Spirit of Christ, so that we can die to self and be transformed into the image of Christ.

Loving God means we do all things for His glory. Which means we love His children and we reveal His love to the world as demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

We haven't finished with the flesh on our earthly Quest for heaven, so there will be times when we please the flesh and don't glorify God. But we must stand firm in the faith as God completes in us all that He has begun in Christ.

Writing on John 13:34 Edwards wrote:

"Our love to others will not depend on their love to us; but we shall do as Christ did to us, love them, though enemies. We shall not only seek our own things, but we shall be in our hearts so united to others that we shall look on their things as our own. We shall look on ourselves interested in their good, as it was in Christ towards us. We shall be ready to forego and part with our own things in many cases for the things of others, as Christ expended and was spent for us. And these things we shall do without any expectation of being requited by them, as Christ did such great things for us without expectation of any requital from us."

And we can do this because the Spirit of love dwells in us.

*'Always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.'*  
Phil 1:4-6

All that is in us that is not like Jesus Christ is our flesh, and we are called to put it to death. *if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.*  
Rom 8:13

If we walk by the enabling of the Spirit of love, we will not carry out the desires of the flesh.  
Gal 5:16

We have to be able to say "thou art with me" and believe it. Otherwise, we are on our own. With God in us, we can give thanks in all things, because He is more valuable than all the world. When we are

grumbling and complaining we are ignoring the Spirit of God who lives in us, so we get our just deserves.

If we are serious about having fellowship with God in us, we should welcome our trials and tribulation because they are tailored to increase our holiness as we overcome the flesh by faith in God. We overcome the flesh when we don't give it room to breathe unbelief into us, because we trust in God regardless of the many situations He provides for our faiths proving in His righteousness.

If the life of our flesh doesn't cause us to grieve over our incomplete sanctification so that we are poor in spirit and mourn over our weakness, then we need to reassess our reason for living.

*"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognise this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail the test?"* 2 Cor 13:5

Anxiety is a struggle in unbelief.

*"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love."* John 15:9

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