

How Badly Do You Want to Be Able to Love God, Yourself and Others?

Note: This is the second part of a two-part series. For part 1, [click here](#).

What is this love that I've been writing about? I like the definition given by pastor and messianic leader Daniel Juster in his recent article, *Justice vs Love*, where he writes:

*"**Love** is passionate identification with the other person, perceiving their worth and seeking their good, guided by the law of God." The Bible teaches that "We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) And so it comes from God and is always selfless, as illustrated in 1 John 3:16, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us." So we see from the Scriptures that love is the very substance of God that bears fruit in commitment, obedience to God (John 14:15, 21-24) and sacrifice for the good of the other.*

Remember, it is not what you believe that makes you repress or avoid love, it is what you feel about love, about others and about yourself that creates the problem. The good news is that God the Father wants to enable you to love by imparting what you lack.

In Jeremiah 29:11-14, God categorically declares that anyone who seeks Him with all his heart *will be found by Him*. So you already have a promise of direct, supernatural revelation from God *of His very Being*, which is love, (1 John 4:8,16), if you seek Him with all your heart (see also Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Hebrews 11:6).

So, how badly do you want healing? How badly do you want to be able to love others? How badly do you want to be able to love

yourself? The believing of the fact that God loves you is helpful, but it is not what brings healing. We are healed through a direct *experience* of God's love—an experience that can come in many forms, but also an experience that is repeated throughout life as the fruit of an intimate relationship with Him.

Let me take this in a personal direction for just a minute. I am one of those people, who because of experiences in life, came to believe that I was unloved and unlovable. And since I believed that I was unlovable, my emotional growth was seared and I was rendered incapable of loving others. But God!

When, in my filth, I finally turned to God for help, the very first thing that He did was to supernaturally give me an experience of His love for me. Before helping me to get all of my doctrine right, before showing me how to have victory over temptation, He responded to my pursuit of Him, and my heartfelt need for Him, by allowing me to feel that "river of living water" that Jesus spoke about (John 4:10,13-14; 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17). It was an enormous flooding of my soul with pure, unadulterated, liquid love.

That was the first thing that I needed after surrendering my life to Him. I needed to know Him as He really is, as opposed to the unloving image of Him that I had concocted over the years. I needed to see Him as Love itself before I would be willing to forsake all my idols and let Him transform me into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Yet my wound was deep and that became only the first of many revelations of His love for me—some found in the pages of Scripture, others experienced in prayer and worship, and still others through the kindness of fellow believers who loved me when I was most unlovable.

My experiences of God's love were unexpected and immensely varied. I'll never forget the day that I walked through a busy

office where I was working, ignoring a secretary who was passing by. Suddenly God's love for her poured through my heart and out to her. I was completely taken by surprised and greatly embarrassed at all the lovingly wonderful compliments that I suddenly felt compelled to give her. It was an experience so foreign to me that I kept my mouth shut and kept walking rather than speaking to her, for fear that I would only say something incredibly embarrassing.

As I walked away, God said two things to me: 1. "I (God) can love her. Just let the love that I have for people pour through you. It is not something that you need to manufacture. It is a natural fruit of intimacy with Me; and 2. "No one has ever loved her." It was a moment both devastating and frightening, as I realized that I was completely incapable of loving anyone unless I was in communion with God and operating under His unction and direction. That wreaked havoc with my inner vow to remain in control of my life in order to keep people from hurting me. God was challenging me to let go of that vow and to trust Him with the steering wheel.

Some 30 years on now, I am still learning to love. My progress creeps along during those times when I neglect intimacy with the Lord and jumps logarithmically when I'm in sync with Him. But compared to 30 years ago—there have been light years of progress!

One of the most fruitful things for me now is to remain conscious of the fact that the righteousness of Christ is in and around me. As a believer, I am clothed in it. (Isaiah 61:10; Galatians 3:27) Thus, when the old thoughts come (usually after sinning) that I am still that bad person that I used to be, I shred them with the truth that because I am united with Christ, I now share the righteousness of God Himself! (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:24) I don't have a righteousness of my own, but that which comes by faith in the Son of God (Philippians 3:9) who sacrificed His life so that I might be made righteous in God's sight. That means that the

only life that an accusation from the enemy can have is the semblance of one that I pump back into its dead body. What a ridiculous thing to do!

But with faith and understanding of what Christ has done for me, self-hatred must flee. And if that self-hatred has been replaced by a sure knowledge of God's love for me, grounded in the fact of the cross and the multiplied experiences of His immeasurable love for me, then I am enabled to love others in the way that God intends.

If you are in need of a greater capacity to love God, self and others, this is the way of escape from the old lies of self-hatred and self-condemnation that have kept you from thriving in God's love. It's always been about the One who died for you. Seek Him with all your heart and let Him reveal Himself to you!

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