



Thoughts On God's Love

It is pretty common today to hear people, preachers and Christians say "you need to love God!" They believe this is a cure all or what the gospel is all about.

They believe that if you would just "love God" everything would work out in your life and God would love you in return and you would finally have true joy, peace and happiness in your life.

While I believe most Christians want to know how to love God more, they are just not sure how. I struggled with this as a young Christian, not knowing if I loved God enough.

I remember sitting in a church and hearing the minister reading off all the things we needed to do to get God to love us. I felt pretty hopeless after his message, and am sure I wasn't the only one feeling that way.

After a lot of prayer and study, I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me a few things about God's love that somehow got ignored or overlooked by many in the church today. The Apostle John has often been referred to as "the apostle of love," and for good reason. His letters are full of insights about God's heart and character. He writes, "*We love Him (God) because He (God) first loved us.*" 1 John 4:19.

John is reminding the believers that it was

God who first loved them, not the other way around. If we lose sight of this simple and very profound truth it will affect us as believers in a very negative way. I meet many people who are doing all they know how to do to get God to love them.

The truth is, He already does and all their efforts and works are acts of futility.

In Luke chapter 15, we see the critical other brother of the prodigal son complaining to his father that he had kept all his commandments and laws but was not blessed like the prodigal who had sinned. Sadly, today, there are many Christians who are just like this fault finding brother. They know all of God's laws and commandments and work hard to keep them so they can be blessed but know nothing of the Father's heart, the real source of blessing and faith. One day a prostitute came into a room full of religious people and she knelt down and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried his feet with her hair. Some in the room grumbled and complained saying, if he is a man of God, he should know what type of women this is. I guess they expected Jesus to draw back his foot and give her a swift kick for touching him and then rebuke her for her wickedness and sin.

He didn't, he told them a story about two men that were forgiven of their debts and explained that the one with the bigger debt would love the one who forgave him the most. What angered these religious leaders is that Jesus was saying the woman, who was a prostitute, loved God more than they did because she knew what God had done for her and they didn't. The Bible says, "He that loves, knows God and he that loves not, doesn't know God!" It doesn't say, "he that lives holy knows God" or "he that keeps the commandments knows God" or "he that rebukes and corrects false doctrine knows God." It says, "He that loves, knows God" but someone who truly knows God, will out of love for Him, do what pleases Him. The believer's life and character will replicate God's presence in their life, because faith works by love and the believer's life will be a reflection of that unfailing and life transforming love. Then, the world will see what Jesus said, "they shall know you by your love." The secret to loving God is to embrace and receive the love He has for you.

We love him because He first loved us!
1 John 4:19. It is so simple!

