

LESSON SEVEN

THE LOVE OF GOD

A. GOD IS LOVE.

Scriptural References:

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8).

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I John 4:16).

There are other Scriptures that state what God is. God is Spirit (John 4:24). God is light (I John 1:5). These Scriptures speak of the very essence of His being. It is not correct to think of "Spirit" and "light" as attributes of God. God is Spirit.

To illustrate this truth let us think of water. Water is H₂O. Water is hydrogen and oxygen but water is also wet. Wetness is an attribute of water but H₂O is not.

God is Spirit and Light but God is also Love. Love is one of the greatest attributes of God. Love cannot be separated from God. The very nature of the personality of God is to love. This love of God is as constant and eternal as God Himself. There is no such thing as finding where the love of God ends.

B. THE WHOLE WORLD.

Scriptural Reference:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God loves the whole world. This is not an expression of love for the physical universe but love for the entire human race. God is not exclusive in His love. God loves not the Jew only, but also the Gentile. God's love reaches out to all men regardless of their color, nationality, race, culture, customs or religion.

The little word "so" is very expressive in John 3:16. One cannot ever fully understand the depth and extent of love expressed by this only little adverb.

C. GOD LOVES THE SINNER.

Scriptural References:

"But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

God does not love sin; but God loves the sinner. This is the marvelous truth that brought about God's plan of Salvation. This is the truth that had dawned upon the heart of countless sinners and brought them to repentance.

The greatest force upon earth is love. Human love is more effective than anything else that man can do. When it's understood just how much higher God's love is to human love, one can begin to appreciate in a measure at least the power of God's love for the lost. If it were not for this, there would not have been a Calvary.

D. DOES GOD HATE?

Scriptural References:

"These six things doth the Lord hate: yea...soweth discord among the brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

"Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth" (Isaiah 1:14).

This has been dealt with in a former lesson but is necessary to repeat here as the truth of God's love is dealt with.

The nature of love demands a hatred for that which would destroy the object of that love. God would not love the sinner if he did not at the same time hate sin.

To illustrate this fact, we might consider parents who love a daughter. If they love the daughter, they will hate drugs or anything else, which might destroy that daughter.

A true love for the sinner will demand a true hatred for sin.

E. CALVARY IS THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE:

Scriptural Reference:

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:9-10).

There is no greater evidence of God's love than that revealed on the Cross of Calvary. Greater love hath no man than that a man lay down his life for his friends. At Calvary Jesus Christ laid down his life for the lost. There can be no greater revelation of God's love than this.

Sacrifice is the measure of love. The sacrifice is the measure of God's love for sinners.

The gospel message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is centered on God's love for the lost. The message that can reach the lost and dying sinner like no other message can, is still the message of God's love expressed at Calvary.

F. CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF FOR THE CHURCH.

Scriptural Reference:

"...Even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

Man is the highest object of God's infinite love. It was mankind that He loved and planned redemption for. No other of His creatures has been the object of such love.

The devil and angels also transgressed and fell but God never planned redemption for them. Jesus Christ never died on Calvary's Cross for the devil and his angels. There is no salvation for them, but on the contrary there is a lake of fire prepared for them.

However, the human race has been such an object of God's love that He planned Salvation for them even before the transgression took place.

The church was ordained and predestined from the very beginning and has been the eternal object of God's love. Because of this, the atonement for the sins of all mankind was accomplished on Calvary's Cross.

LESSON SEVEN

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Explain how God can hate when "God is love."
- B. Write a paragraph on this statement: "God loves the whole world."
- C. Explain how Calvary is the highest expression of God's love.