

UNDERSTANDING THE LOVE OF GOD SERIES

LOVE SEEKS EXPRESSION

I Cor.13: 3 *“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”*

For anyone to give everything he or she has would be a symbol of great sacrifice and love and dedication. And to go to the extent of giving your own body to be burned will have been the highest expression of love. Yet Paul says that it is possible to do all these things without agape love, without the love of God. And as we understand the love of God this morning we will understand this phrase that you can give without loving but you can't love without giving. And Paul here is pointing to the possibility of giving without love. That is something that we may find hard to comprehend. But yet the Word of God declare onto us that giving by itself is no sign of love for a human being can give and even sacrifice for various reasons.

Lets ponder that thought for a moment. We realize that giving is essential to life and as we grow up into adults, we realize that in life there are certain things you can give in order to gain something back. All the businessmen know they can invest in something. They surrender a part of their finances. They surrender a part of their assets in order to gain something else. And this comes to personal relationship. Sometimes when people love one another or when people fall in love, they would seek to give. This is more acute when only one party love but the other doesn't love in return. Then the person tries to gain the love of the other by gifts or by sacrifices. In social or administrative circles, sometimes people give in order to gain favors. We call that bribery. So looking at aspects of human life we see that there is sometimes some inclination in the human nature to give or show love in

order to gain something. We do not want to lose. Whenever we part with our time, we part with our finances; we part with a part of ourselves, we want to gain something. And all human love is based on that. It is actually an exchange, an investment. We want to exchange our goods for something else. We want to exchange our favors for something else. We want to exchange our attention for something else.

And Paul says it's possible to go right to the limit and give everything you have and yet have no love. That would be sad. And it's even possible to give your life and not have love. So we have to differentiate between these two acts or works, one born without love and the other born of love. Yet the Bible says in John 3: 16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."* At the same time on the other side it is not possible to love without expressing it in deed. Love demands an expression. Love demands that something be surrendered to show it forth. I John 3: 16-18 *"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."* See by this we know His love. Love has to be expressed. You cannot love without giving. God loves us so much that He gave His best, His only begotten Son. He did not send an angel. Love will give the best. That's the difference between love and just liking. Love will motivate you to give the best. And God gave His only begotten Son. Roman 8 tells us if God did not spare His Son how shall He not give us all things. If God has given His best what else the rest. See we understand His love by His Son coming down and dying on the cross for us. There is no other way you can understand the love of God. There is no other way you can understand the statement that God loves you. You can put a sticker behind your car that says God loves you but people don't understand that statement. They must understand what God did. For God so loved the world that He gave. Love needs to be expressed to be understood. If God just sits in heaven and says I love you, none of us would understand. It will be just like a human being talking to an earthworm. The earthworm wouldn't understand anything. In fact the earthworm thinks that you are harming it because you have taken it from its natural habitat, the soil, the dirt and the mud where it is comfortable. Supposing you put the earthworm back down and you want to do something and express your love to the earthworm, and you just bend down where it is in a natural position and say earthworm I love you. The earthworm will run away. See you frightened the earthworm with your voice. How can you express love to the earthworm? If in some way you could bring yourself down to the size of the earthworm and be like an earthworm and communicate to the earthworm that

will be able to express it.

God is a Spirit; He dwells in the heaven above. From Genesis to Malachi God has been trying to tell us He loves us. When God made the Garden of Eden God was saying I love you. I made this garden for you. He did not make man on the first day; He made man on the sixth day because He wanted man to enjoy what He made. He didn't make man on the first day with nothing there. He made all these things and then He made man to enjoy His creation. He was trying to express His love. Man doesn't understand. Through all the ages when He pulled Abraham out, when people walk with Him, He was trying to say I love you. And through all the times when the Israelites were disobedient, God was saying I love you through the prophet Hosea. He says though you reject Me yet I love you. But human beings do not understand His love, until finally through the mystery of godliness the Word came down and live among us. And by living among us, He went about caring for the needs of people, whenever there is a need. Even the mother Mary understood that this is someone special. When in a wedding there was not enough wine, she went and tells Him because she knew that He cares for the needs. See love expresses and so there is the miracle of wine. And all through His life, He healed the sick and helped the broken hearted. He seeks to impart His life, His Spirit and His love. What did they do to Him? They took Him and turned Him over to the Roman's rulers. They crucified Him. He said, Father forgive them. What was He doing? He was saying I love you. I love you not because of what you can give back to me. I love you and I want you as you are. And that was His love reaching out. Finally when He died on the cross and He was resurrected again, the message of love goes forth throughout the entire world, the Gospel of love telling us that God has loved us to send His Son onto us. We have seen how that it was not the nails that kept Him on the cross. When they were shouting to Him and say come down from your cross if you are the Son of God, Jesus had the power to come down. Even when they captured Him and Peter thinking that he was very good at the sword, cut off somebody's ear, Jesus fixed back the ear and Jesus said, put your sword away for I could call My Father now and He could give Me twelve legions of angels. He got the power to set Himself free but He allowed Himself to be rejected. He allowed Himself to be abused. He allowed Himself to suffer because He wants us to know He loves us. See love demands expression. In John 4 it says we know love because He laid down His life for us. That's the way by which love can be known.

And we also ought to lay down our life for the brethren in 1 John chapter 3 verse 17. *“But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”* How does the love of God abide in us? *My little children*, he says in verse 18, *let us not love in words or in tongue but in deed and in truth.* Truth is the life not just theory. If we love with God’s love, it demands that we give and impart a part of our life. Love seeks to share. It doesn’t seek so much to gain. When Jesus went to the cross He was saying I want to share My life with you. I want to share all My inheritance with you. So in Romans 8 it says we have been made heirs and joint heirs. Love seeks to share, to impart of our life. So John tells us that if we see someone in need and we are in a position to help, what does love do? Love seeks to share, to build, and to give. You cannot love without giving. Lets take for example, if a person is in love with another, do you know that the person will go all the way or do anything to make sure that the guy or that girl know that someone love him/her. Either they spend more time with each other or they give little gifts or notes. See it wants to express. That is on the human side. But on the overall sometimes when a person is rejected, the person feels hurt. Why does that person feel hurt? Very often people give love expecting something in return. Their motive in loving others is not pure enough; they don’t love unselfishly enough – they do not love just to give. When we love with agape love, we cut off the other part of wanting to gain something in return. In agape love, we only seek to impart and to give. We don’t seek to gain anything back. See the gaining part is the thing that renders all your giving to be impure. That will bring you back to I Cor. 13 where Paul says that I can give all these world goods away and I give my body to be burned and have not love. Why? Such giving was with a motive to gain something. Whether you gain fame or you gain attention or you gain something, when you seek to love to gain something, it immediately cancels out agape love. That’s a fearsome thought and that’s all that the world is based on. Must gain something even from childhood.

When we come to the Word of God, God is saying when you love, you must cut off the thought or motive of gaining something in return. Cut off the part that seeks to ask, *“What can I gain out of this?”* So when you love with the agape love of God, you are not seeking to gain anything, you are not seeking to even gain a person’s heart. But on the human level on human love, when a girl or a boy likes one another they want to express something to gain a person’s heart. No comparison with the love of God. The only part that can be brought forth as an illustration is the part where a person seeks to do something, want to express. You

have seen people who love one another; they tend to want to be together. Shake hands and hold longer. Look at each other longer. That is human affection. We are saying that we are to go forth to God's agape love. God's agape love is when you surrender the right to gain. When you surrender your right to have a response to your attention. You surrender that right to God. So the agape love flows forth because there is so much in you to give. Not because you don't have any agape love in you and you need to do something to gain some love in return. See the difference? In other types of human love, people begin by not having any love from others. A boy or a girl doesn't have a boy friend or girl friend and they seek to have one. Somebody who does not have attention wants to have attention. A child wants to have attention from the parents and they seek to do something to win their parent's favor. See all the time is because we don't have human love we use psychological tactics to win or gain to fill up what we don't have. All our human attention and love is based on an initial lack of love from others. We don't have something. We lack attention so we cry or we make a nuisance of ourselves just to get that attention. We get rejected and we get hurt and we want the world to pay attention to us. So we do something drastic and the world gives us the attention. See all the actions that's comes forth is because of a lack. There is a need. Some of us are even in need of love. We do not know the love of the father. We have not been filled with the love of God. And so psychologically we come into the Christian life and we do things to gain love. We do things to receive love. We do things to gain attention. We do things to get people to love us. This is not agape love that God wants us to have. But the agape love of God reaches a point where you are so full of God's love, you can't help giving it away.

Look at I John, it tells you the basis of love. I John 3: 14 *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death."* What is he talking about passing from death to life? We look back to verse 10 *"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother."* So he talks about the love for brethren and all those things that have been mentioned in these verses where it tells you here that you have passed from death to life if you love. Then it tells you here when you love you are practicing righteousness.

Then verse nine is the spring board, *"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in Him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."* God is

love; we have been born of love. That's the whole basis for the Christian love, that it has been given to us. Love has been imparted to us. Love is a substance that has been imparted. So love is not just an attribute but love is a substance, the substance of God. See all the other type of human attention and human love and affection is an attribute, an inclination to gain something. But the love of God is His substance that fills you. God is love; you are born out of the same Spirit of love.

Roman 5: 5 *"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* Love is a substance that can be poured forth. It is not just an attribute in life. The love of God is a substance that God placed into our hearts and life when we were justified, when we were born again. The Old King James said that the love of God has been *shed* but the Greek word is *poured*. You know the difference between *shed* and *poured*. *Shed* could be a trickle but *poured* talks about a waterfall, pouring into our hearts. When did that took place? Romans 5: 1 when we were justified by faith. And then he came to verse 5 where he says that the love of God has been poured out into our hearts. Now look at the context, it says *love in our hearts will cause us not to be disappointed*. It says hope does not disappoint because the love of God is in us. Do you know some human beings get disappointed when they seek to love one another? It is because their type of love is a love hoping to gain something in return. So when there is no gain, they get disappointed.

Look at the things Paul talks about. Tribulations. What is the thing that he is talking about, going through difficulties, all these seeking to bless will not disappoint you. In Christ there is no disappointment, there is no discouragement because being in Christ is being in the love of God. God never got disappointed. Jesus never got discouraged. But hope does not disappoint because the love of God, the substance of love has been poured into our hearts. So that now you love because of this substance moving in you.

God is a Spirit. Love is a Spirit too. II Timothy 1: 7 *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* See God has put the Spirit of love into our hearts. And love not to gain. We love because of the Spirit of love. We love not to receive. We love because we are moved by the Spirit of love. We love not because we have a need. We love because we have been filled. The love of

God, the substance has been poured into our hearts. Every single one of you whether you have been loving or you have not been loving, you sit potentially in the love of God. And what God is saying the love is a Spirit, love is a substance. It has been placed in your spirit. If you try to love in the flesh or you try to love in the mind, you will be limited. You will not find love in the body. You will not find love in the mind. Love resides in your spirit. Love flows from your spirit. That is why when you have the love of God, you do not just love one or two. See the difference. Human affection will just love one or two and usually those whom we can gain something. But God's love seeks to be the same to all. We all know that God is no respecter of persons, that He loves you and me the same way. He shows not respect as to status. As to whatever level of human achievement a person has, He shows the same attention and love to all. What causes God to be no respecter of person? His love. Do you know that human being respect people but that is not the nature of God? That is a nature of original sin. When you get born again all those old things are supposed to be passed away. Being a respecter of person, all these things are what II Cor. 5: 17 says "*behold, all things have become new.*" The old has passed away. These are the things that should have passed away. It's human affection that causes us to be a respecter of person. We are exalted in the Bible to have no respect for person but to respect all equally and to love all equally. How do we do that? The agape love of God that flows out. Whether you can gain something out of the person or not, whether the person has to do with your work or your family or not, you would still let the love of God flows to that person. That's the agape love of God.

James tells us in chapter 2: 15-18 "*If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food and one of you says to them, depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have work, is dead. But someone will say, you have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*" See how James emphasizes on the practical aspect of a Christian life. The action part is the proof of your Christianity. In chapter 5 of James in verse one onwards "*Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury;*

you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have murdered the just, he does not resist you." Here is an aspect where God speaks about the life principle of the rich. It may not be for you. If you are the Christian rich, you can be rich in Christ. But don't take the life principle. What do we mean by life principle? A life principle is something that you live by. It is a principle that guides your whole life. But for some people their life principle is, "I live for pleasure." That is what James is saying. Some people's life principle is this, "I live for power and that principle directs every decision in their life. And Jesus Christ when He was in the wilderness was tempted by the devil. The devil said turn this stone into bread. What was the devil saying? Live for food and pleasure. Jesus says man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceed from the mouth of God. And the devil showed Him all the riches of the kingdom of this world. The devil was saying live for the things of this world. Live for power. Jesus says He will live for God. See a life principle guides a person. And James was doing some correction in the church. In James chapter 2: 2-4 He says *"For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, you sit here in a good place, and say to the poor man, you stand there, or, sit here at my footstool, have you not shown partially among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"* What is James saying here? Any sign of being a respecter of one above the other is not a part of God's love.

Some of the things that II Cor. said in chapter 5: 17 that have passed away. I supposed to be the human quality of being a respecter of person. Do you know that is ingrained in all human nature? But you are not human. You are spirit being. So that nature should have died, the nature of respecting one above the other. We are not saying that we don't respect anybody but we are saying respect all equally. Give attention to all equally. That nature of being a respecter of person is born of original sin, not born of agape love. In fact one of the things when people say about Jesus when He was on this earth was you are no respecter of person. John 3 Nicodemus said that to Jesus. In John 3 when he came to Jesus, this was his first word that impresses his life. It shows the impression that Jesus has made upon his life. In verse 2 *"This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.'*" What is Nicodemus saying here? That he recognized Jesus as a teacher. And he gives a sense of Jesus having no respect to anyone great or small. *Jesus answered him; Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see*

the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to Him. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered; Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Now Nicodemus didn't understand and in verse 9 he says, "How can these things be?" That's when Jesus Christ went on to explaining about the love of God. Verse 11-16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what we know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." When do you have everlasting life? Is it in the future? Eternal life does not begin when we go to heaven. Whoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life. Everlasting life and eternal life does not begin in heaven. The word everlasting life or eternal *zoe* begins now in you when you believe in Him. *Zoe* is the life of God. And the life of God comes in spirit form. And that spirit is the Spirit of love. Because it says the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart. I have everlasting life now. I have the quality of God's life in my heart now.

John 2 in the beginning part it says in verse 24-25 "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men." What was Jesus doing? Jesus loved everyone equally. For God so loved the world that He gave. Do you know what God is seeking to do? God is seeking to give His life. He was seeking to impart His life into each one of us. If God is love, He is love and the substance of His life is love. It comes from the same mould. God seeks to impart His life into us and He imparts His love into us when we are born again. I have the love of God. The moment I was born again, I have eternal life. I have everlasting life. I have the love of God. I have the life of God. In Christ I can love all. Now you began to see that you love because you have received love. You love not because you need others to love you. You love not because you want to gain. For love is a spirit. Love is the substance and that substance is imparted by the Spirit of God in our hearts. Sometimes your body does not feel the love because love is not a feeling in the body. Sometimes your mind does not choose and want to love because love does not dwell in the soul or in the mind. Love dwells in the spirit. And if you want to know what the love is like and have it flowed out from you, you look into the

spirit. And in your spirit you will find nothing but love, love, and love. That is why in Galatians 5 says that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc. Give forth your love, release your love and if love is a substance and love is a spirit that means it can be increased. We can grow in measures of love.

Jude verse 20 the reservoir and resources of your love are in your spirit, *“but you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping yourself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”* Keep yourselves in the borders of God’s love. Keep yourselves within the limits of the love of God. How, praying in the Holy Spirit, tapping into the resources of love in your heart. All of you, the moment you are born again, you have the potential to love. It is against your nature not to love or to have hatred, jealousy or strife. In fact the moment you do that you lose your peace that tells you something is lost. When you get back into the love of God, you live in God’s love. With all these we go back to I John and we see the understanding there. I John 3: 14 *“We know that we have passed from death to life.”* Now is that a future tense or a past tense? You find that is a past perfect tense. We have passed. That is why it says in John 3 that you already have eternal life and everlasting life now. It does not happen when you die. Right now you have passed from death to life. Right now eternal life is working. Right now the life of God is working. And if the life of God is working, John says the love of God is also working. Love and life are the same. Because we love the brethren, he who does not love his brother abides in death. That means if a person is not walking in love, he/she is walking in death. If you walk in love, you will not walk in the flesh. That is why last week we talk about how love is important to discern the gifts of the Spirit.

How do I know whether someone is moving in the flesh or moving in the Spirit? By love, if you move in the Spirit love is proceeded and quicken the people’s life. If you move in the flesh it turns people off. There is something that causes love not to be manifested. See love resides in your spirit. Love is a substance. Love is a spirit. I have received a Spirit of love. I have not received a spirit of fear. But I have received a Spirit of love, the Spirit of power, the Spirit of a sound mind. Which confirm with I John 4: 18 there is no fear in love. How can the spirit of fear and the Spirit of love be in the same place? The Spirit of love abides in your spirit and it causes you to flow. If somebody rejects you, you are not disappointed because you are not dependant on the external. You are dependant on the internal. So

whenever you get disappointed, whenever you get discouraged, whenever you are rejected and you feel it, it is your soul or your flesh. It has nothing to do with the spirit. The purpose of love is just to give. We never ever consider the anguish of rejection because it pours forth from you. You are like a fountain, a fountain of love that flows forth onto others. There is no fear. When love comes, fear leaves. Fear and love cannot exist in the same body. There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out all fear. If there is fear that means there is imperfect love for perfect love cast out fear. Imperfect love partly removes fear. When love is perfected in your life, all you want to do is to love, because God loves. You love people because God loves them and you look at everyone with the eyes of love irrespective of who they are, irrespective of what they are, irrespective of what they do. Even your enemy, Jesus said love your enemy.

Now you began to understand why this love is so different from human affection. See there is nothing you can gain from your enemy. Jesus says love your enemy because He has placed His love in your heart. Examine why you love somebody. Is it because you need to gain something? If it is, you need to correct yourself today. You need to cut off the motive of self-gain and say I will love not because I want to gain. In many Christians' lives that are not taught the Word of God or love, their love is only based on self-gain, on human affection. When you are renewed by God's Word to understand His love, the quality of His love, the standard of His love, the substance of His love, the spirit of His love, the life that is in you by praying in the Spirit drawing from your spirit. Keep yourself in the love of God all the time for God lives in the atmosphere of love. Heaven is an atmosphere of love. To be in the kingdom of God, you walk in the atmosphere of love.