

## Love: The High Calling of God

<sup>16</sup> *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* <sup>29</sup> *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*  
<sup>30</sup> *For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” – Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV)*

**G**od is love. One of the most dramatic manifestations of His great love for us is revealed in that He gave us His only begotten Son in order to make a way for us to be restored from our fallen place to a position of life, freedom and authority in Him. His love for us is further demonstrated in that while we were yet lost, Christ died to pay for the penalty of our sin.

As we consider the love of God however, it is almost unfathomable! The depth and degree to which God loves us is virtually beyond our ability to understand. But through the study of God’s written Word, we find consistent characteristics of God’s love revealed in the pages of scripture. From the Word of God we know at least five things concerning the love of God:

**The love of God is unconditional.** John 3:16 declares, “God so loved the world...” Notice that it didn’t say “God so loved the church” or “God so loved those who were worthy of receiving His love”. The only qualification that needs to be met in order to benefit from God’s amazing love is being in this world.

**The love of God is sacrificial.** Real love is going to cost you. Real love requires that we give-up precious things in order for us to love others. Abram was called to this kind of Love when God instructed him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac.

**The love of God is selfless.** We see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, grappling with the magnitude of the sacrifice that lay before Him. But after pondering but for a moment, whether or not it was necessary for Him to go to the cross, in a beautiful display of selflessness He declared, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” (Matt. 26:39 NKJV) The love of God compels us to give without regard for what it may cost for us to give, nor what we might gain in return for our giving.

**The love of God always manifests by demonstrating His commitment toward us.** In Matthew 28, Jesus assured His disciples of His love for them in what we now call the Great Commission as He reminded them that no matter where they went or what they encountered, He was committed to always being with them. Real love says that I am with you; no matter what, I love you and I am with you!

**The love of God love is demonstrated by His investment in us.** When we read John 3:16, we not only read that “God so loved the world...” but it goes on to tell us that out of His great love for mankind, He was compelled to give. He so believed in our destiny as a people who would fulfill His call upon us that He made the ultimate investment in our future.

God’s love is not like the watered-down version of love most of us offer others and have experienced ourselves. We say, “I love my job”; that is until we’re ready for a new one. We say, “I love my new car”, until we’ve had it for a few years longer than we’d have wanted and start griping about “that piece of junk.”

God's love is pure! God's love is the kind described in I Corinthians 13 - a love that is patient, kind, slow to anger, and quick to forgive. God's love is ever protective, trusting, hopeful and persevering. And it is this love that God calls us to experience, carry and eventually share with others in the name of the Lord.

In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus taught His disciples what we now call the Great Commandment: "to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself." In this one commandment are three critical realities that hinge on our relationship with the pure love of God.

The first reality is me loving God with all of my being. As I open my heart, giving myself completely to Him, it conversely opens me up to receive from God His love in the same measure. As I open up in this way, God fills me with His unconditional, sacrificial, selfless, ever-committed and always-investing love. His love changes me. His love fills the holes in my soul. His love completes me and brings me true security.

I am now a step closer to being able to live out the last two realities of His commandment: to love others with the same love I have for myself. The only thing standing in my way is me transferring the love I have received from God into life decisions wherein I bestow this same love upon myself. As I am transformed under the deluge of God's amazing love, the way I feel about and treat myself changes. I begin, perhaps for the first time in my life, to love me.

When I then love others with the same love I have for myself, I close the loop and end up, without any special effort on my part, showering upon others the unconditional, sacrificial, selfless, ever-committed and always-investing love of God.

In 1965, Hal David and Burt Bacharach collaborated on a hit song entitled, "What the World Needs Now is Love". They may have intended to reference the romantic love commonly shared between a man and a woman. Perhaps they were referencing the brotherly love for which the city of Philadelphia is named. Regardless of what they meant, the title of the song is only accurate if it applies to the boundless love of God! This is the love we each need to experience, carry and share with the world around us. It is the high calling of God: to be filled, transformed and possessed by the almost unfathomable love of the Father. The world around us is in desperate need...won't you answer the call today and become the love the world is thirsting for?