

## Chapter Six

### Loving others

As I mentioned in the last chapter, there are seven vital life signs that give evidence or proof that you are saved and born again. One of those vital signs is love. When we are born again we will love God and other people, especially other believers.<sup>1</sup> There are three great Christian virtues that we experience and show forth as believers. These are faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love.<sup>2</sup>

In the new birth God's nature is infused into the core of who we are and we become children of God. Therefore our selfish, sinful heart can now be overcome by God's righteous and loving heart, which is now a part of who we are. So let's go to the Word of God to understand what it means to love others with the love of God.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.  
(1 John 4:7, 8)

Verse 7 tells us that love is of God. And verse 8 tells us that God is love. It is His very essence. We've explored this word "of" before. It is translated from the Greek word *ek*. When we are born of God we receive life from the very center of God. Our Father's life and nature is now in us, it is a part of who we are. The passion of God's love, the compassion of His love, the tenderness and sweetness of God's love is in you.

When you are born again the unselfishness of God's love, the firm resolve of God's love and the faithfulness of His love that promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" is in you!<sup>3</sup> God's love can now be shared with others through you.

In this the love of God was manifested

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 6:10

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:13

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 13:5

toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.  
(1 John 4:9-11)

The apostle John declares that the great demonstration of God's love is that He gave His Son as a sacrifice to save us from the power and penalty of sin. Jesus Christ absorbed the wrath of God against sin due us. And the apostle Paul said the same thing.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
(Romans 5:6-8)

God demonstrates His love for us by giving His Son for us as a sacrifice for sin when we were morally powerless to overcome sin. This supreme act of God's love was not based on any merit of ours. It was given to us when we were at our most undesirable condition. Let's read 1 John 4:9, 10 again.

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.  
(1 John 4:9, 10)

The great point here is that God did not love us because we first loved Him. He poured out His love to us first. Let's read verse 11.

Beloved, if God so loved us,  
we also ought to love one another.  
(1 John 4:11)

Someone has said, "Don't cross oceans for someone who wouldn't cross a puddle for you." In other words don't put yourself out there in caring service for someone who wouldn't really care for and serve you. But the love of God tells us, "Yes, cross the ocean for people. It doesn't matter if they are worthy or not. Be like God, love, give, serve, be compassionate. Life and the love you share isn't about you gain, it is about what you give.

Beloved, if God so loved us,  
we also ought to love one another.  
(1 John 4:11)

What does John mean by the word "ought"? He means that we ought to love one another in the same way that dogs ought to bark and birds ought to fly. If a dog opened its mouth and you heard "moo" you would realize that something is wrong. If you saw a bird slithering in the grass like a snake, you would know that's not normal. We ought to love one another in the same way that dogs bark and birds fly. This is who we are. When you love others the way that God loves you are experiencing and expressing the real you. You are manifesting the love of God in Christ in you.

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor,  
and evil speaking be put away from  
you, with all malice. <sup>32</sup> And be kind to  
one another, tenderhearted, forgiving  
one another, even as God in Christ  
forgave you.

Therefore be imitators of God as dear  
children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ  
also has loved us and given Himself for  
us, an offering and a sacrifice to God  
for a sweet-smelling aroma.  
(Ephesians 4:31, 32; 5:1, 2)

God's deep and gracious love and Christ's sacrificial love is the kind of love we now have as born again children of God. Romans 5:5 tells us that "the love of God has been poured out into our hearts" by the Holy Spirit that was given to us.. And the Greek word translated "poured out" means to gush out, to

overflow.<sup>4</sup> This overflowing love defines who we are and proves that we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord said,

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.  
(John 13:34, 35)

Now, what does this love look like? We have a description in 1 Corinthians 13.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;  
(1 Corinthians 13:1-4)

Here is what love looks like. It suffers long and is kind. Longsuffering could be translated as patient. But it really means to endure the faults of others, to not be aggravated with them, give them time to grow and change. Kindness is love in little things, taking time to bless someone. The love of God does not envy or parade itself. Love does not want to deprive people of what they have. You don't boast about yourself, you put other people on parade. When you love you are not arrogant or rude.

does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all

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<sup>4</sup> *ekchuno*

things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails.

(1 Corinthians 13:5-8)

When you love you do not behave rudely. You treat all people with respect. You do not seek your own, but you are concerned about others. You don't allow people's wrong actions provoke you. You are even tempered and you don't nurse a grudge. To think no evil means to not keep a record of someone's sins. When you are living in the love of God you delight in what is good and true. And the love of God in you never fails in that it works. You are always there to help. We always do the work God calls us to do, because the love of God is the power of God. The apostle John shows us what love looks like too, but in a different manner.

For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, <sup>12</sup> not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

<sup>13</sup> Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. <sup>14</sup> 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.

(1 John 3:11-14)

John says, "Here is what love looks like. Don't be like Cain who murdered his brother." Now, John isn't worried that we will kill each other. But he is concerned with the attitude of our heart. Cain was evil. He wasn't patient or kind. He was boastful and behaved rudely. He harbored jealousy and evil in his heart. He did not rejoice in the truth. He did not believe. He had no hope. We are not to be like Cain. We are to be like righteous Able. We want to believe God and be patient and kind and serve others.

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. <sup>17</sup> 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?

<sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup> And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.  
)1 John 3:16-19)

How do we lay down our lives for one another? We don't necessarily have to die for one another. But we can pray for one another. We can think about how to be kind to one another. We can treat one another with honor and respect. We can think of others before ourselves. Let's rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Let's meet needs. Realize that laying down your life for others is about how you value people.

Being born again, our new heart throbs to die to self and to live for others. The love that is in us is never too busy to meet a need, to share our money and our material goods. We can live like this without fear of losing because God has said, "I will never leave you; I will meet your needs."<sup>5</sup> Love knows that all that we are and all that we have belongs to God. We are to be good stewards of His resources. God's love in our hearts must govern how we think and feel and behave. The apostle Peter wrote,

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever  
(1 Peter 1:22, 23)

The Greek word translated "fervently" means to stretch to the limits. Take the love of God in you to the breaking point. It will not break! We are born again with the Spirit and love of God within us. Let the love of God be perfected among us that we may have boldness on the day of judgement.

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<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:19; 1 Peter 5:6, 7

