

The Love of God and the Successful Christian Life

Introduction

- A. The most important product in all the world is not that which can be bought. It can only be given and received. It is love.
- B. No one can be a whole person and succeed in life without love. We have been made and life has been arranged so that love cannot be an option in the life of anyone. The Christian is one who has been assured that he is loved by God.
- C. The Bible states this truth very simply: God is love, (I John 4:8). What does it mean for God to love me? What should be my response to the love of God?

I. The Biblical Statement of God's Love, Malachi 1:2.

I have loved you, saith the Lord

Observation: In these few bold words God affirms His love to us. One conclusion we quickly draw about love, is that it is highly personal. The Infinite God loves us as individuals. There is no "humanity" for God to love, only persons, individuals. He loves us as persons.

II. The Biblical Illustration of God's Love, Romans 5:8.

But God commendeth (revealed, proved) His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Observation: The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ was and still is the evidence of God's love. God has done more than state this great message in His Word – He has proven His compassion for us in history.

III. The Biblical Interpretation of God's Love, I John 4:9,10.

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 the propitiation for our sins.

Observation: Now we see one of the most important facets of God's love – it is an action. "God so loved. . . that He gave" (John 3:16) This divine giving which resulted in the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is important for us to understand the meaning of God's love. In God, love and action are inseparable.

What is the meaning of this action of love in my own life? How am I to understand love?

1. Love means that we recognize another person as a person.
2. Love means that we give that person rightful place in our life.
3. Love means that we do what is right toward that person.

This is how God loves us. He recognizes us as persons

IV. The Biblical Exhortation Regarding God's Love, Ephesians 5:1,2.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour

Observation: This is the basic pattern for our daily lives – we are to live in and according to love. If we are to succeed in the Christian life this is where we must begin – bowing before God and accepting his pattern of operation.

V. The Biblical Explanation for living in Love.

A. It means to love God preeminently, Matthew 22:37-40.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself . On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Observation: To love God is to make a decision to recognize Him as the preeminence in all areas.

B. It means to obey God, I John 2:5; 5:3.

But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected, hereby know we that we are in Him For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.

Observation: Love and obedience are inseparably related in the Bible. It is God's love which has made it possible to live free from sin and walk in fellowship with God. Love provides the motivation for such a walk with God.

C. It means to seek the Biblical priority of virtues, I Cor. 13:13.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Observation: One's priority is the indication of one's character. The believer who will give Jesus Christ the place of preeminence and seek above all to initiate the relationships of faith, hope and love will not only become increasingly sanctified but will experience spiritual fulfillment.

D. It means to love other believers, John 13:34,35.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Observation: To love other believers is the test and evidence of genuine sonship. As God's love is an action – so must our love be for one another.

Conclusion: How we must ask as to the meaning of love in our lives. Is it only a word written on a page – or is it an action based on a decision?