

Showing Divine Love

Key Verse: “We love him, because he first loved us.”
—I John 4:19

Selected Scripture:
I John 4:7-21

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

is epitomized in the word love since the Heavenly Father is the source of this quality. (John 3:16) Few, if any, New Testament passages are more familiar than this text which has

been quoted so often by Christians.

From the fall of Adam and Eve into sin and death because of their disobedience, until Jesus gave his life at Calvary to redeem mankind, the love of God was not fully evident. “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.”—I John 4:9,10)

God’s justice properly condemned the first pair back in Eden, but his love found a way to provide a ransom price through the sacrifice of Christ’s perfect human life to atone for sin. This provision will insure that in God’s due time, all who have ever lived will be raised from the sleep of death and given an opportunity for everlasting life.—I Tim 2:5,6

In view of this great love, God’s people should love the other members of this blessed family, thereby giving evidence that his Holy Spirit dwells in them. The Apostle John asserts that God sent his Son to be the Savior for the world, and believers confess this great truth, not

merely in an intellectual manner, but by their lives of devoted service to their great Creator. As the saints dwell in God, they abide in him and in his magnificent love.—I John 4:11-16

God's love is made perfect, or complete, in his children by a process of character development through adverse circumstances. In the case of the Master while he was on earth, he willingly submitted himself to the doing of his Father's will at the greatest possible cost of self-sacrifice, even to the death of the cross. He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—Phil. 2:7-9

The footstep followers of Christ may also expect difficult experiences in their lives as a test of fidelity to the Heavenly Father, but the scriptural assurance is given that they may stand approved of God as a favorable judgment is given.—I John 4:17; Rev. 3:21

The knowledge of God's loving character and wondrous plan of salvation eradicates a sense of dread and despair that engulfs the hearts and minds of those who do not reverence the Heavenly Father. (I John 4:18) Our Key Verse illustrates the response of a proper heart attitude in Christians, by loving and serving God after learning of his great love towards them in providing a Savior for their recovery from sin and death, even before they became believers.

John then reiterates the impossibility of actually loving God while at the same time hating a fellow believer. The command for Christians to love their brethren comes from the Heavenly Father and is a definitive guide as to their relationship with the Creator. Let us be obedient.—vss. 20,21

