

LOVING THE LORD

Psalms 97:10, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil:..."

When any Bible student considers the subject of loving the Lord, it should be first noted that our love for God does not precede God's love for us. In 1 John 4:19 we read, "We love him, because he first loved us." Without God's love for us and in us, we are in the same condition as those in Psalms 10:4, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." God, without controversy, has also shown His love for us. If any Bible student would consider the Savior, the Eternal Son of God, and His precious life that He gave on the Cross of Calvary they would conclude that God loves His people. But do we, who have been loved of God, show that we love Him? Have we manifested that we love God? Truly, none of us have shown the love that we should or could. We all fail to thank God as we should for His many blessings. We all can do better in showing our love for Him. The hymn writer of old said;

Do not I love thee, oh my Lord? Behold my heart and see; And turn each cursed idol out That dares to rival thee!

Do not I love thee from my heart? Then let me nothing love; Dead be my heart to every joy which thou dost not approve.

Is not Thy name melodious still To mine attentive ear; Doth not each pulse with pleasure beat My Savior's voice to hear?

Hast Thou a lamb in all Thy flock I would disdain to feed? Hast Thou a foe before whose face I fear Thy cause to plead?

Thou know'st I love Thee, dearest Lord, But Oh! I long to soar Far from the sphere of mortal joys, That I may love Thee more.

The Bible teaches us at least seven ways we, the children of God, can show that we love God. They are:

(1) By hating evil (Psalms 97:10)! The Lord, according to Proverbs 6:16, hates "a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among the brethren." If the Lord hates such wrongs, we should hate the same; so much that we separate our lives from such things.

In Revelation 2:15, the Church at Pergamos was commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Why were they commended? Because God hated those deeds!

(2) By keeping the commandments of the Lord (John 14:21)! Jesus said those that love Him are those that keep His commandments. If we love God, we should do what He said. Is it not an exciting time for the Church to see another ask for a home in the visible Kingdom of God? The reason it thrills my heart so much, is knowing that during that time, the child of grace is telling the world that they love the One Who first loved them.

(3) By loving the Lord's House (Psalms 26:8, "LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth")! Do you get excited about going to Church on Sunday morning? Truly, each one of us should look forward to that day and be found "exhorting one another; and so much more, as ye see the day approaching." Why? Because the Church is given to us of the Lord that we may gather together with like minded children of God for fellowship and worship. Some feel they could live without the Church, but those who truly love it and understand the value of it, cannot live without it.

(4) By loving our brothers and sisters (1 John 4:20)! The Apostle John believed it would be

impossible to convince him that you loved God and have a hatred in your heart for one of your brothers/sisters in Christ. Jesus said "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

(5) By loving God's Word (Psalms 119:140, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it")!

The sweet psalmist of Israel loved the words of the Lord. The 119th Psalm is dedicated to the extolling of God's Word and its benefits to the reader and student. One reason to love God's Word is that it came from Him and it's kept by Him. The Word's of the Lord were given by inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) and are kept by preservation (Psalms 12:7).

(6) By loving God's mercy! By comparing Micah 6:8 and Deuteronomy 10:12, we learn that to "love him" is to "love mercy". By being thankful to God for His mercy toward us, we should love every opportunity to show mercy to others. Ephesians 4:32 reads, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

(7) By serving other children of God in their needs! In John 21:15-17, Jesus Christ asked Peter three times if he indeed loved Him. Peter answered to the affirmative each time. After each answer, Jesus would direct Peter to a service in which Peter could show that he indeed loved Jesus. We do, without question, show our love for the Lord by serving others in this world. Paul in Hebrews 6:10 says, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

In closing I would ask each reader if they have a desire for an increased love for God? If you do, and every child of God should, we should be committed in doing those things that show forth the love of God in our lives. And in so doing, we will find the greatest peace that can be found in this world, the peace found in denying ourselves, and serving Him.

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