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The Three-Fold Love of God

Part 3 - Walking in the Love of God

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The third aspect of the three-fold love of God is the demonstration of that love toward others. Love, *agape*, from the God who is love, has been born and dwells within every one of His children. Now God commands us to dwell in and walk in that love. This – what Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille called “the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation” – is what cements together the household of God and reaches out to the people of the world.

A popular rock song from a few years back asked the question, “Is this love that I’m feeling?” When it comes to what the world calls “love,” that’s what most people are looking for. But the love of God is more than just a feeling, it is more than just a commitment, it is more than just a way of life. The love of God is *the* way of life, lived to the uttermost by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

And walk in love [*agape*], as Christ also hath loved [*agapeo*] us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Our Lord and Savior so loved us that he gave the one thing that – when it comes down to it – is the only thing any human being really owns, namely “himself.” If Christ so loved that he was willing to become an offering and sacrifice to

God on our behalf, what should we be willing to do as “living sacrifices” on behalf of others? The answer is, whatever the love of God requires.

I John 3:16

Hereby perceive we the love [*agape*] of God, because he [Jesus Christ] laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

A lot of Christian folks nowadays are zealous for spiritual things. Some even think that Jesus Christ’s disciples are known by the power that they walk in. A few are so hoodwinked that they fabricate works of power in order to boost their reputations among the ignorant. But remember John 13:35? The Lord himself said, “By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love [*agape*] one to another.” The badge of Christianity is not power, it is love. The love of God.

During the first century, the church in the city of Corinth was zealous for spiritual power too. So God had the Apostle Paul instruct them – in I Corinthians chapters twelve, thirteen and fourteen – on how to walk in His power. Smack-dab in the middle of those instructions sits the most well-known section on the love of God in all Scripture, I Corinthians 13.

We begin in the last verse of Chapter 12, so we can examine a figure of speech that the translators’ chapter break tends to mask:

I Corinthians 12:31-13:3

But covet earnestly [be zealous for] the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [*agape*], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have ... prophecy, and understand all mysteries [by word of wisdom], and all knowledge [by word of knowledge]; and though I have all faith [manifestation of believing], so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [*agape*], I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned [an Idiom, meaning to burn oneself out in service to others], and have not charity [*agape*], it profiteth me nothing.

The words “a more excellent way” in Verse 31 are put by the figure of speech Understatement (*Tapeinosis*), which is a figure of rhetoric involving change which diminishes something in order to magnify it. You see, *agape* is not “a more excellent way” than to “covet earnestly” in the same sense that a million-and-one dollars is “more money” than a million dollars.

When it comes to speaking in tongues, *agape* is “a more excellent way” in the sense of either walking in it or becoming “sounding brass” or “a tinkling cymbal.” When it comes to prophecy and the revelation and impartation manifestations, *agape* is “a more excellent way” in the sense of either operating them in it or becoming “nothing.” When it comes to giving and serving, *agape* is “a more excellent way” in the sense either profiting in it or profiting “nothing.”

So *agape*, versus being merely zealous for spiritual power, is more akin to having a million-and-one dollars versus having zero dollars. That is why calling it “a more excellent way” in Verse 31 is an Understatement (*Tapeinosis*). God uses this figure of speech so that the contrast between the two (which outwardly may look similar) stands out in bold relief. *Agape* is not just a more excellent way, it's the only way.

Verses 4-7

Charity [*agape*] suffereth long, and is kind; charity [*agape*] envieth not; charity [*agape*] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things,

hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Literally speaking, these verses are contrary to fact. *Agape*, in grammatical terms, is an abstract noun. It cannot suffer long, rejoice, believe, endure or do anything else. It is people who do these things when they walk in the love of God. God uses this variety of the figure of speech Personification (called *Parapopoeia*) here to describe *agape* so that we can understand His love in living-and-breathing terms.

Verses 8-12

Charity [*agape*] never faileth: [runs out] but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come [our new bodies at the return of the Lord Jesus

So *agape*, versus being merely zealous for spiritual power, is more akin to having a million dollars versus having zero dollars... *Agape* isn't just a more excellent way, it's the only way.

Christ], then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then [with our new bodies] face to face [with the Lord Jesus Christ]: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

The manifestations of the spirit that children of God operate are temporary, for our walk in this world. But the love of God, *agape*, will never run out. It will last for all eternity.

Colossians 3:12-14

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

And above [*epi*] all these things *put on* charity [*agape*]; which is the bond of perfectness [*teleiotes*].

The word "above" in Verse 14 is the Greek preposition *epi*. It is governed here by the dative case of the word "thing." Therefore "above" means, in its in-depth sense, that the love of God is to be the guiding principle and motive, which is set over and above the other commandments given in the context, superseding them in a way that makes them all work together harmoniously, while at the same time being itself their one great purpose and aim.

The purpose and aim of mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance

and forgiveness are for the love of God to live in God's household. At the same time it is the love of God which is the guiding principle and motive which causes all these things to work together harmoniously in the body of Christ.

The bottom line is that the love of God is the standard that is to rule among God's people. The love of God is to govern all our dealings with our brothers and sisters in the family of God, without exception.

There is also another great truth in Verse 14 of Colossians Chapter 3. The Greek word for "perfectness" is *teleiotes*. The adjective form of

this word, *teleios*, is used in I Corinthians 2:6: "...we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [*teleios*]..."

These words, *teleiotes* and *teleios* were used in non-Biblical Greek litera-

ture of those who had been initiated into the innermost secrets of a Greek mystery religion.

Applied to the truth of the God's Word, the mystery which the true God has revealed in the Word of God is the great mystery of the one body of Christ, the *ekklesia*, called out of both Judean and Gentile. This is the mystery into which Christian believers are initiated.

Ephesians 3:3-6

How that by revelation he [God] made known unto me [the Apostle Paul] the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words;

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,)

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers

The purpose and aim of mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and forgiveness are for the love of God to live in God's household.

[sharing fully] of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

The knowledge of this mystery was a secret during every other age, until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul. The knowledge that the Gentiles too should become fellow heirs, of the same body, sharing fully in the promise of Christ with the Judeans, was the greatest secret of all time and all history. The riches of this mystery are spelled out in the book of Colossians.

Colossians 1:27

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Christian believers are initiated into the knowledge of this mystery by instruction from God's accurate Word. Colossians 3:14 then shows what binds together those who have been instructed in this mystery. An expanded translation of Colossians 3:14 might be rendered:

Colossians 1:27 (Literal According to Usage)

And above all these things – superseding them as their true purpose and aim and causing them to work together harmoniously – put on the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation, which is what binds together those who are initiated into the knowledge of the mystery.

The renewed-mind walk in God's household is a walk that is ruled by the love of God in manifestation. It is the love of God (which is what energizes believing according to Galatians 5:6) that defines the renewed-mind walk. Without the love of God the mind is not really renewed. Furthermore, this love of God is the only genuine and true bond among initiated believers.

With the surpassing greatness of God's love for us and with our obedience motivated by our love for Him, the harmony among Christian believers in God's household ought never to suffer for very long. When it does the cause, always and without exception, is a lack of the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation. If initiated believers are determined to put on the love of God, no matter what, the mystery will live. If initiated believers refuse to put on the love of God it will not. It is that simple.

The "glue" of the love of God has more inherent strength than anything that might try to break its "bond." But the love of God cannot "bond" if it is not "applied."

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Christians have tried, through the centuries, every which way to bind themselves together.

They have tried professing secret knowledge, claiming exclusivist dogma, following legalisms, preaching sin and threatening condemnation. They have tried keeping everyone together, they have tried splitting everyone apart. They have tried running away from society, they have tried immersing themselves in society. They have tried hierarchies, oligarchies and anarchies. And for centuries on end – Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox alike – enforced their dogma by the sword of the government.

Why not come back to God's Word?

I John 3:18

My little children, let us not love [agapeo] in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Romans 13:8

Owe no man any thing but to love [agapeo] one another: for love [agape] is of God; and every one that loveth [agapeo] another hath fulfilled the law.

We owe one another love "in deed and in truth," and we ought to obey God's Word and pay our debt. You have a right to expect me to love you, and I have a right to expect you to love me. Could the greatness of the love of God require less?

I John 4:7-8

Beloved, let us love [*agapeo*, subjunctive mood] one another: for love [*agape*] is [present tense] of God; and every one that loveth [*agapeo*, present tense] is born [perfect tense] of God, and knoweth [*ginosko*, present tense] God.

He that loveth [*agapeo*, present participle] not knoweth [*ginosko*, past tense] not God; for God is [present tense] love [*agape*].

As we saw in Part Two in I John 4:16, once again in the book of I John, both standing and state are mentioned together. Being "born of God" relates to standing, while "knowing God" relates to both standing and state. Verse 7 says that we who love one another with the love of God are both born of God and know God, actively in the present tense, by experience.

But Verse 8 does not say that "he that loveth not" is not born of God. Verse 8 says that "he that loveth not" did not know God, because he did not love. A child of God can disobey, just like a child in a natural family may. A child of God can walk outside of love. But no one, once born, can be unborn!

Why does "he" not know God when "he" walks outside of love? Because God is love. But when the "he that loveth not" is a born-again child, it is his state that is suffering, not his standing, because his standing is one of a son permanently. The distinction between standing and state throughout the book of I John is so exact and accurate that it is astounding.

Verses 9-12

In this was manifested the love [*agape*] of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

Herein is love [*agape*], not that we loved [*agapeo*] God, but that He loved [*agapeo*] us, and sent His son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved [*agapeo*] us, we ought also to love [*agapeo*] one another.

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love [*agapeo*] one another God dwelleth in us, and His love [*agape*] is perfected in us.

The love of God then becomes a living reality, manifested from the heart. The love of God manifested in us then becomes the love of God perfected in us.

What a promise to claim! Just imagine, having the love of God perfected in us. As an inherent characteristic of the gift of God-in-Christ in you, the love of God

is already perfect. But when we manifest the love of God by loving one another, it is no longer just a latent spiritual characteristic. The love of God then becomes a living reality in manifestation from the heart. The love of God manifested in us then becomes the love of God perfected in us. What a reality!

I John 4:20,21

If a man say, I love [*agapeo*] God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth [*agapeo*] not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love [*agapeo*] God whom he hath not seen?

And this is the commandment [it does not say suggestion] we have from him, That he who loveth [*agapeo*] God love [*agapeo*] his brother also.

God's Word could hardly be more plain. God commands that this love of God be manifested in His household. It is not a suggestion. It is a command. The household of God can succeed by no other standard. The only question is

whether or not born-again, initiated believers are willing to make the effort – yes and even to pay the price – to obey God's command.

I Thessalonians 1:2-3

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

Remembering without ceasing your work [*ergon*, to the point of fatigue] of faith [*pistis*, believing], and labor [*kopos*, to the point of suffering] of love [*agape*], and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

Believing sometimes requires work to the point of fatigue. Hope sometimes requires patience through the most trying circumstances. But the love of God may require labor and sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty, even to the point of suffering.

* * * * *

This love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation is the standard and the guiding principle that governs the household of God. It is also what constrains us to reach out with God's Word over the world.

John 3:16

For God so loved [*agapeo*] the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Christ did not die for people who were already righteous. Christ died when all were at enmity with God, including those of us who by His mercy and grace are now a part of the family of God.

II Corinthians 5:14,15

For the love [*agape*] of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

And *that* he died for all, that they which live

[via the new birth] should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Jesus Christ died for all, without exception. He did not die for us when we were good enough to deserve it, but when we were in such poor shape that his offering and sacrifice were our only hope. Now, being born again of God's spirit and having eternal life, we no longer live unto ourselves, but unto him.

Verses 16,17

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *Him* no more.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, *he is* a new creature [a new crea-

tion]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

God rescued us out of our former, dead-end lives in which we were imprisoned, being spiritually dead. And He gave us life in Christ, enabling us to live as a new creation – body, soul and spirit. And He has made the same thing available – a new birth!– to the whole world.

Verses 18,19

And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

To wit [to know], that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Reconciliation means to bring back together that which has been severed. What had been severed was mankind's connection with God. But now God in Christ has accomplished the reconciliation. And He has given to us, the

Of all that abides in this life until the return of Christ, this love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation is the greatest of the great.

born-again believers, the ministry of that reconciliation. And He has committed unto us the Word of that reconciliation.

Men and women will never know the reconciliation that is available with God if we who have been given the ministry of that reconciliation fail to hold forth the Word of that reconciliation. The love of Christ constrains us to carry the Word of reconciliation, which God has committed unto us, to a dying world. This is our ministry.

Verses 20-21

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [the “you” supplied in the King James Version here is in error; Verse 19 says that God was reconciling “the world,” therefore it is the world that we beseech] by us: we pray [the world] in Christ’s stead, [saying] be ye reconciled to God.

For He [God] hath made him [Jesus Christ] to be sin for us [who are in the world], Who [Jesus Christ] knew no sin; that we [who out of the world believe the Word of reconciliation] might be made the righteousness of God in Him [at the new birth].

*God has no hands but our hands,
With which to give them bread.
He has no feet but our feet,*

*With which to move among the almost dead.
We say that we are His and He is ours –
Deeds are the proof of that, not words,
And these are the proving hours.*

* * * * *

The three-fold love of God, in all its greatness, is shown in the Word of God, first of all, to be love that is from God, seen most vividly in the face of Jesus Christ. Secondly, it is our love for God and the Lord Jesus Christ in response to their matchless love. Thirdly, it is the love we manifest one to another in God’s household and hold forth as ambassadors for Christ to a dying world.

Of all that abides in this life until the return of Christ, this love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation is the greatest of the great.

I Corinthians 13:13

And now abideth faith [believing], hope, charity [*agape*], these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity [*agape*].

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