

God's Unconditional Love

by Leon King

This preacher has heard Christian psychologists talk a lot about God's unconditional love toward people. I think they were trying to boost up people's self-esteem. He has also heard preachers using the same terminology which he believes they have learned from the psychologists. God's everlasting love is unconditional. We need to view this subject from a scriptural perspective. To whom does God extend his unconditional love? Let us consider Ephesians 2:1-7.

Eph 2:1-7 (KJV) And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, **for his great love wherewith he loved us,** **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

To whom are these words addressed? This passage was written to the saints which were at Ephesus - a church composed of baptized believers. If we take it in that context, we see that God's love is set on those people. From this passage only, we cannot say that God's love is exclusively for believers, but we can say it is extended to them. As we search the

scriptures, we find the love of God is especially and unconditionally toward his people. This preacher believes God's love is especially extended to his elect. Let's see if he can prove his statement from Scripture. Let's look at Hebrews 12:5-8.

Heb 12:5-8 (KJV) *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: **6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. **7** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? **8** But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

This passage teaches us that God chastens every single person that he loves. It also teaches us that he does not chasten those who are not his. Since God has an elect people, it follows that he chastens his elect - those He loves with an unconditional love. Do we have scriptural proof that God doesn't chasten the wicked? Yes, we do. Turn to Job 21:7-19.

Job 21:7-19 (KJV) *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? **8** Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. **9** Their houses are safe from fear, **neither is the rod of God upon them. **10** Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. **11** They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. **12** They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. **13** They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. **14** Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. **15** What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray***

unto him? **16** Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me. **17** How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger. **18** They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. **19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.**

Yes, God's love is unconditional, but his love is directed to his children. Those who are not God's children; those who are dead in trespasses and in sins who have not experienced the new birth, have no legitimate scriptural claim to the love of God. Only those who experience the regenerating power of God's Holy Spirit can have assurance that they are the recipients of the unconditional love of God. Does not God draw us with his everlasting love?

Jer 31:3 (KJV) *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

As this preacher has often told the church, he can never again tell an unregenerate sinner that God loves him. He will witness to him of the glorious gospel which is his duty. Will God still love the unbelieving sinner who is assigned to hell and the lake of fire or is it that His love is restricted to the elect? Please consider these words from chapter 5 of *God is Love* by W. E. Best:

“God is the discriminator in the plan of the ages, in prophecy, and in Old Testament history. The Bible represents God as omnipotent, but the Scriptures also state that there are some things God cannot do. Omnipotence does not mean God can do everything but that He can do everything He purposed to do. The Bible says God is love, but it also states that He pours out His wrath upon some from among mankind. Sentence against crime is not cruel. What would a righteous God be without His punishment? There can be no forgiveness without satisfaction.

Love in its very nature is particular rather than indiscriminate. God's love is not a public spectacle. One must have grace to know and see God's love. Many saw the cross, but they saw no manifestation of love. The Father's love is manifested in Christ's death, the Son's love is revealed in His work of redemption, and the Spirit's love is seen in His coming into the hearts of the elect, regenerating, convicting, converting, and shedding forth God's love. Apart from the work of the Spirit, like the many who witnessed Calvary, men see no manifestation of love. Telling persons who reject Christ that God loves them only gives them a sense of security in their sins. There is no love outside of Jesus Christ. Even the elect, although loved eternally by God, cannot know it until regenerated.

God is the God of distinction. Discriminating distinctions between men are given in the Scriptures, and God is the discriminator. He loves some and hates others. He chooses some and passes by others (Rom. 9:13). He appoints some to salvation and others to wrath (I Thess. 5:9). God has mercy on some and hardens others (Rom 9:18). He ordained some to eternal life (Acts 13:48), and He ordained others to condemnation (Jude 4). God knows some and does not know others (John 10:14; Matt. 20:28). God elected some and reprobated others (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 11). There are those who are not of this world, and there are those who are of this world (John 17:14, 16; 15:18, 19). God effectually calls some and passes by others (II Tim. 1:9). There are those to whom things are revealed, and there are those from whom things are concealed (Matt. 11:25, 26). God reveals spiritual things to the elect and conceals them from the nonelect (I Cor. 2:9-11).

The truth of restricted love is opposed and rejected by most religionists today. The principle of contempt prior to examination is a bar against all information and keeps man in ignorance. Truth always involves more than appears on the surface. There is nothing in the

circle of doctrine which does not surpass the capacity of man. The tendency in our day is to despise laborious research and substitute human reason for Divine revelation. Divine revelation and not man's opinion will be the standard for judgment. Foolish men raise many quarrels with God, as though God were captive to their accusations. It is a serious sin for men to seek to subject that which has no bounds to the little measure of man's reason. God's wisdom is unlimited. God's knowledge is infinite (Ps. 147:5). Man's finite mind is not the standard by which God's infinite mind is to be measured. We all rejoice in the absolute power of God. Would man have God's power so limited that He would be unable to do more than his mind could comprehend? Would man limit the characteristics of God to his own limited understanding of them? The very thing that some men quarrel with God about is the thing they love in themselves. They feel they have a right to do with their own as they please. The sovereign God of the universe has a right to do what He pleases with His own."

Let us hasten to say that we believe in a general love which is extended to all of God's creatures. Indeed, He sends his rain on the just and the unjust. As his children, we are commanded to love our neighbor as our self - and to love our enemies! We love our neighbors in the same sense that God does. We are expected to do the good and treat them as men created in the image of God. We would help them out of the ditch - help to heal their ills - feed and clothe those when we have opportunity to do so - to spend and be spent for them.