# God loves…

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son..." 1 John 3:16. Wow. The gift of the ages! We had sold ourselves to Satan through sin, and He bought us back, not with gold or silver, but with the blood of His only Son (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Agape love ***cannot*** be expressed without some type of sacrifice. Time, money, things, patience… all are sacrifices that express love. Notice that "God so loved the world that he ***gave***…."

Love gives. Love gives not to get, but to bless, not to attain, but to sustain, not to acquire but to inspire. Love, above all, gives! You give love to that newborn, not because he or she can make a house payment or do the dishes. You love because that little princess is your child. Eventually, if maturing properly, that child will give back… not to get college tuition, but to express the same love that has been modeled by the parents.

And so it is with God's children. As we mature, we begin to recognize what God has done for us, both in daily provision and eternal salvation. We see the love of the Father and the Son conspire to bring Jesus to the cross, then bring Him from an empty tomb.

We see the love of Paul as he imitates Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1) in evangelistic zeal that is not quenched by stripes of the whip or storms of the sea. He loves Jesus too much to shut up and he loves the lost too much to stand still. He goes from city to city in spite of stonings and beatings and imprisonments (2 Corinthians 11). His words reach pauper and prince, Gentile and Jew.

Why did he ***give*** his life in such sacrificial service? Love… the real reason true givers give! I am elated that I have not been called to be beaten, stoned and shipwrecked. But I have been called to give.

There is an interesting and sublime reality expressed by Jesus in John 15:10,11.

**"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."**

Did you catch it? Jesus abides in the Father's love because He keeps the Father's commandments. And if we do the same, we shall have "joy… made full." One of those commandments often ignored is giving… yes, the Sunday morning contribution to give as you have been prospered (1Corinthians 16:2).

There are some types of love that I may not be able to fully explain. I know God loves the world… the whole sinful lot of us. But in 2 Corinthians 9:7 He ups the ante, "God loves a cheerful giver." Yes, He loves all, but in some special way He points out the "cheerful giver." Perhaps we are never more like Jesus than when we sacrifice willingly and cheerfully. Pray about it!

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