



God's Resources for Life and Healing

Part 7B: Love

As we continue our examination of the resource of God's love, I fully realize that the greatest demonstration of it through the work of the Cross can become so familiar to us that it gets trivialized in our minds. However, it is the act that gives us a foundation for understanding His love in many other ways. God specifically created us to be the recipients and reciprocators of His love. We are His highest creation, the apple of His eye (Zech. 2:8), but we became separated from Him when Satan gained dominion over mankind through Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. That God was willing to submit His own Son, part of His own Being, to a tortuous death, bearing the sins of the whole world, in order to redeem us from the dominion of Satan demonstrates both the enormity and the deeply sacrificial nature of His love (Rom. 8:32). Even more remarkable is the fact that He did this while we were sinners and knowing that many would reject this extremely costly gift of love and salvation that He offers to anyone who will receive it (John 1:11-12; 3:16; 15:13; Rom. 5:6-8; 1 John 3:16).

Jesus Himself, as the appointed time for His ultimate sacrifice came, fully understood what lay ahead for Him, sweating great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane as He agonized with His Father over it. Even so, His heart united with His Father's and He willingly endured the epitome of anguish and shame that the Cross meant for Him in order to experience the *joy* of restoring God's highest creation to a love relationship with Him (Luke 22:41-44; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 1:5). That the *joy* of this reconciliation surpassed the excruciating price He had to pay is amazing! This same level of exuberance with which God anticipates His full reunion with you and me is expressed in Ephesians 1:18, which speaks of the "riches of the glory of *His* inheritance in the saints" (NASB). How much He cherishes and longs to be in relationship with us!

What He desires, however, is not a superficial relationship but a deep intimacy with mutual understanding and delight in fellowship with each other, the kind that is expressed in whole-hearted worship, an unquenchable thirst for His Word, and full submission to Him as Shepherd in all aspects of our lives (Ps. 23, 37:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:2). Growing to this point is a process that takes a mature faith, a deep understanding of His love, and a genuine desire to reciprocate it. We must also discipline our minds to operate more and more under the auspices of our spirit rather than our flesh and to keep our focus on God throughout our daily activities (Rom. 8:6; Gal. 5:16; Col. 3:1; 1 Thes. 5:17). The more we do this, the more the world will pale in importance compared to the reality of our eternal connection to God's love and all that it means (1 John 2:15-17).

The union with God we experience in this life through the Holy Spirit is only a foretaste of what lies ahead when we see Him face-to-face (1 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 3:2). Nevertheless, it opens to us a transcendent quality of life right now that is impossible for the unredeemed to experience (John 10:10).

As God prepares us through our earthly sojourn for the beyond imaginable future He has in store for us, He takes the role of a loving Father (Mat. 25:34; Rom. 8:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:9; Heb. 4:15-16; 1 John 3:1). Since His Son experienced what it is like to live in human form, He understands our weaknesses and responds to them with tenderness and compassion. As with any Father, our sins do grieve Him, but He is willing to wipe them off the record as soon as we confess them to Him (Col. 2:13-14; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 1:9). His goal is never to shame us but to help us live in victory over them. Even when He has to discipline us, it comes out of His love, as His heart desires to bring us into a state of obedience and submission that will enable His supernatural resources and benefits to flow more fully and freely to us (Heb. 12:5-11).