

What Effect Does God's Love Have on Us?

05/20/2018

Scripture Reading: I John 3:1-3

I John 3:16 tells us that we can perceive or know God's love "*because He [Christ] laid down His life for us.*" What good is love if it is not communicated? How important it is that love be understood? "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). We are also told, in I John 3:16, that, because of God's love, "*we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*" So, love is a powerful force that affects the world and changes things...changes us (cp. I John 4:7-19). Our Scripture reading provides us three effects of God's love.

God's Love Separates Us from the World. (I John 3:1)

God's love changes us so much, that the world will label us. From the world it is not a term of endearment, when they call us "sons / children of God." The label "Christian" came from unbelievers of the Roman empire in Acts 11:12 (About A.D. 43). The word means, "*Belonging to the party of Christ.*" A search of Acts 11:19-26 will give us clues as to how to earn the title "Christian."

- Preaching the Word (Acts 11:19)
- Preaching the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:20)
- Believing in Christ and turning from sin to the Lord (Acts 11:21)
- Clinging to the Lord (Acts 11:22-23)
- Good works, spirituality, faith (Acts 11:24)
- Time invested in teaching and learning. As "disciples" they were committed to obedience to that teaching, (Acts 11:25-26)

God's love called us out of the world (Ephesians 2:1-6; Matthew 16:24-26; Galatians 1:4). The world seconds that motion by pushing us away (I John 3:13; Matthew 10:24-25; John 15:18-21; 16:1-3, 33; I Peter 4:12-19). God's love exposes us to His grace and, at the same time, the world's wrath. God's love will preserve us through all the persecutions of this world (Romans 8:35-39).

God's Love Blesses Us Now and Forever. (I John 3:2)

Through faith in Christ we can know that we belong to Him now (John 1:12-13; Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:14-16). We also have the joy and assurance that we will belong to Him forever (Ephesians 2:4-7; John 10:27-30; 14:1-6; 17:20-26 cp. I John 1:1-4). We look forward to a glorious future filled with God's love (Philippians 3:20-21; I Corinthians 15:51-58; Jeremiah 31:3).

God's Love Gives Us a Purifying Hope. (I John 3:3)

This hope of a glorious future – of being with Christ and of being like Christ, not only encourages us, but it sanctifies us. If our future is holiness, should we not, then, start now and strive to be like Him – here in this life? Let us encourage each other to look forward to a glorious future and to work towards the goal of glorifying Christ now – in our lives, in our worship, in our church!

See Ephesians 1:12; 2:10; 3:21; Matthew 5:13-16; I Peter 2:9-12; I Thessalonians 5:1-11.