

DO YOU LOVE ME?

(PART 2)

Do you love Me with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion as one love the Father?

This question is not only directed to Peter; its echoes remained throughout the ages after him. This is the agape love. It is the glue that keeps all Christians together in harmony working to further the gospel of our Lord YAHSHUA. With this love many have died; the agape love has nothing to do with sentiment of feelings. It will not exist in this frame, for it is unconditional. It is the love that YAHSHUA expressed while being crucified: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they are doing." It is the foundation of our faith and the compelling reason to serve Him. The New Testament opens our eyes to that love in several passages: the prodigal found in Luke 15:11-32, the love of God in John 3:16, in the death of YAHSHUA in all the books of the gospel, the story of the Samaritan who saved the life of a stranger and several others. YAHSHUA lived to show Who He was in the expression of agape love, for that is what and Who He is. It is hard to understand the unconditional love found in agape love. The worldly person, although practicing good deeds, does not comprehend the true meaning of this love. The agape love abides only in God and in those whom He has shared with through the Holy Spirit, because this love originates from God, and is the love that is God. The deepest demonstration of this love was displayed on the cross. The apostle John describes agape love as God Himself. He says, God is love and he who dwells and continues in love dwells and continues in God and God dwells and continues in him. In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world (I John 4).

Love is the absence of fear. Where love exists, fear cannot co-exist. Perfection in this love is seen in one's life when fear has had no room in his/ her lives. The apostle John says in I John 4:18: There is no fear in love, but full-grown love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love; we love Him, because He first loved us (vs. 19). We do not have the capability to love with agape love without God in us. It is impossible. Our human

flesh requires conditions to love someone. When YAHSHUA challenged Peter with agape love, he could not love the Lord so, because Peter had yet not had the experience of the new birth. The description of love of I Corinthians 13 is a pure description of agape love. No one has reached the perfection found in this love. It is so important to have and act in this love that Paul says that whatever is done without it, it is considered of no value in God's eyes, no matter the intensity and sacrifice applied to the actions. Paul said, if I speak the **tongues** of men and [even] of angels, but have not love (agape love), I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal; if I have **prophetic powers, knowledge and faith** that removes mountains without the agape love, I am nothing; even if I dole out all that I have, if **I surrender my body to be burned**, without love, I gain nothing (I Corinthians 13). We can only understand these actions not to be ingrained in God's love, when it derives from self, for personal reasons. We can only truly love God with agape love when it comes directly from Him. We are not able to love Him, as Peter couldn't, as long as we are out of His love.

But the question remains registered in God's Word: Do You Love Me? When do we love God with the agape love? The answer is clear: When we love the unlovable, forgive the unforgiving, when we forsake our desires and aspirations to take hold of our cross to follow YAHSHUA. This way we are loving God with His perfect love. God has loved us even when we were in our trespasses. He loved us when we were His enemies. He showed and clearly proved His love for us by the fact that while we were sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). His unconditional love surpasses every love expressed in the world. When someone wrongs me, I cannot love him outside of God's love, because this love is not existent in the sphere of my feeling. This love is a matter of determination of my will. My determination to love someone with God's love is a decision I make to obey Him. It is important that we love God horizontally for this love to be accepted vertically. YAHSHUA said, I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another, **just as I have loved you**, so you too should love one another (John 13:34). How has He loved us? With the agape love. When this love is transferred to us, we must pass to others, for it to go back to Him. That's the way He wants us to love Him; by loving others. After He asked Peter the question, then He challenged him to feed, to tend His sheep. God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit ... (Rom. 5:5).

When the soul comprised of the will, emotion and intellect submits to the knowledge of God's love it takes the will, not the emotion, to make the decision to love God through loving others. It is a spiritual determination one will make under the control of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote to the Romans that if we are not living the life of the flesh, we are living the life of the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells within us (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit of God takes full control of the one who loves Him and empowers him to obedience. YAHSHUA revealed the ministry of the Holy Spirit, among many others, to be to guide those who love God into all truth. He said that the greatest expression of affection springing from love is the laying down one's life for a friend. Love can only be expressed through the act of obedience. Love for a friend is demonstrated by the willingness to please that friend. YAHSHUA told the disciples: You are my friends if you keep on doing the things which I command you to do; you have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you, that you might go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit may be lasting... this is what I command you: that you love one another... love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12-13,16,17).

John asked the question, how can we love God, Whom we have not seen and not love one another whom we have seen? Loving others is loving God; for the true love of God is summarized in that we do His commands. And this is His order: that we should believe in the name of His Son YAHSHUA the Messiah and that we should love one another, just as He commanded us; all who keep His commandments abide in Him, and He in them. **And by this we know and understand and have the proof that He lives and makes His home in us; by the [Holy] Spirit Whom He has given us** (I John 3,4).

Loving one another as He loved us, loving one another as He commanded us, is the true expression of our love for God! Do you love Him?