

DO YOU LOVE ME?

(PART3)

This is My commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you.

(John 15:12)

God's love compels Him to mercy and kindness in order to lift us up from our sinful condition. In love, He forgives and blesses us with His precious gift: His Holy Spirit. Through Him He allows us to have a relationship with Him that will take us to heaven. He fortified His love assuring us that nothing can separate or come in between or snatch us from His love. John confirms by saying, 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 (John 4: 16b-17). Being complete in His love we will have the confidence of our salvation. This is the result of His love flowing to those who dwell in Him and do what He commanded them to do – love one another as He has loved us. He continues asking the question, to all His children, Do you love Me? The more that we love one another, the more that our love will flow to Him, answering and satisfying His question, Do you love Me?

The life of Stephen registered in Acts chapter seven well prints his love for God. His life truly radiated his love for Him through His service and love in forgiving those who were involved in his killing. He prayed as he was being stoned by those who hated YAHSHUA, Lord YAHSHUA, receive and accept and welcome my spirit, and falling on his knees, he cried out loudly, Lord, fix not this sin upon them! And when he had said this, he fell asleep [in death] (Acts 7: 59-60). Stephen here echoes the prayer of YAHSHUA, when dying on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!" That was the perfect love that sprung from the heart that truly loved God. He loved God with all his soul and with his own body when he offered it as a sacrifice unto Him. Stephen was justified in the presence of God, for he died without bitterness against those who hated him; that was an action of his love for others which radiated as love for God.

The manner in which God loves, is the manner that He wants us to love one another. That's the way we will be made complete in His love. He told His disciples, I have loved you, [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [continue in His love with Me] (John 15: 9). This is a commandment directed to all who are the Lord's. We have no choice, but to obey. It will be our link to receive His blessings of peace. For His word said, 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 (I John 4:18). Living a life voided of love for others will result in a life empty of love for God. Where there is no love, fear will find an open door to torment and destroy us. John says, But he who keeps His word, truly in him has the love of and for God been perfected. By this we may perceive that we are in Him (I John 2:5). Our love for God is demonstrated by the love for one another. Because God is love, John says that whoever loves his brother abides in the Light, and in It or in him there is no occasion for stumbling or cause for error or sin, but he who hates his brother is in darkness and walking in the dark; he is straying and does not perceive or know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes (I John 2: 10-11). Who can understand the consequences of walking out of love for others? It is like walking in spiritual darkness, away from God's love; empty of love for Him and voided of His presence and spiritual blessings. It wasn't for nothing that YASHUA asked the question, do you love Me? There is much involved in this question that we do not perceive. Obviously, love is the root of all spiritual success. God desires that we would be spiritually blessed and complete in His love.

Love is the theme of the book of first John. It seems that the apostle John was the apostle who deeply loved the Lord. Several times he defines himself to be the one whom YAHSHUA loved. I am sure YAHSHUA loved everyone equally, but John was the one who understood this love, received and wrote about it. In his first book he registered the extent of God's love toward men- to the point of giving His only Son to die for the human race (John 3:16). "Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the sons of God!" and to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the authority to become the children of God, that is, to those who believe in His name (John 1:12). We are debtors to the tremendous love of God. Loving Him, we show to have faith which pleases Him, for we are living the life of the Spirit Who dwells in us. For all who are led by the

Spirit of God are sons of God (Rom. 8: 14). The faith that pleases Him is rested on the love that comes from us to Him. God desires our love so that we will walk in the Light and in submission to His love, Who is YAHSHUA, the essence of His love.

YAHSHUA went far and beyond His way to show His love for us, but rarely do we make a sacrifice to love Him. We want to be loved, but we do not want to do what takes to love Him. Until we learn to love others we will never be able to love God the way He commands us to do – as He loves us. It is a command YAHSHUA wants us to grasp, so that we can have the completion of His love in us. Paul commands us to clothe ourselves as God's own chosen ones, by tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of ourselves, gentle ways, patience, be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference against another, readily pardon each other; even as the Lord has forgiven us, so must we also. And above all these [put on] **love and enfold ourselves with the bond of perfectness** (Col. 3: 12-14). We can only love God, when we learn to love each other. The Lord said, for I desire and delight in dutiful steadfast love and goodness, not in sacrifice and the knowledge of and acquaintance with God more than burnt sacrifice (Hose 6:6). Paul said that even if we dole out all that we have [for the poor in providing food], and if we surrender our body to be burned, but have not love we gain nothing. (I Cor. 13:3). If what we do for God is not done with love for Him and others, no matter the extent of sacrifice we make, it will never ascend to God without this main ingredient. So then, whether we eat or drink or whatever we may do, do all for the honor and glory of God (I Cor. 10:31). Let love be your guide to your relationship and service with and to God. Then you will be able to answer Him, Yes, Lord, I love (agape) You!