

How Do I Love God?

by Wayne Goff

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" ~ John 14:21

Nobody Has Seen God

The apostle John is called "the apostle of love," I suppose, because he had so much to say about it in his Gospel account and in his epistles. But keep in mind that he and his brother James were first called by the Lord "*Sons of Thunder!*" (Mark 3:17). So they had to learn to channel their feelings and emotions in the proper way.

It is John who records Jesus' statement that defines whether or not we truly love God. "*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.*" **So to simplify the concept, we love God when we love what He loves and hate what He hates!** So let's consider that proposition from the Scriptures:

Jesus said to the Jews who opposed Him: "*But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you*" (Jn. 5:42). They opposed Jesus for healing a lame man on the Sabbath rather than appreciating the compassion of Jesus. They were greatly offended by Jesus' assessment of them, but it was absolutely true.

"*Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me'*" (Jn. 8:42). **You see here that we love God when we love those whom God loves.** Jesus repeatedly stated in the Gospel of John that if we truly love Him then we will obey Him (Jn. 13:34; 14:15, 21, 23-24, 28; 15:9-10, 12-13, 17; 16:27; 17:26).

So **how** can we love God Whom we have **not** seen (1 Jn. 4:20? Peter wrote to disciples in the first century and declared to them: "*whom having not seen you love*" (1 Pet. 1:8). The **only way** we could possibly love God today is by *learning* of His Word, His revelation to us of Himself, and *learning* to love it and therefore, Him. This is why Jesus said over and over to us — if you love Me, you will keep My word. So the next step is to read the Bible, especially the New Testament, and see what God loves and hates.

What Does God Love & Hate?

This brief article cannot exhaust the question of what God loves and hates, but we can give you a few examples and you can take it from there:

- God loves the souls of mankind, John 3:16
- God loves Jesus, His only begotten Son, John 3:35
- God loves His *spiritual* children, John 11:3, 5, 36
- God loves those who keep His commandments, John 14:23-24
- Jesus loves His Father, John 14:31
- God loves those for whom He providentially provides, 1 John 3:17; Matt. 5:44-45
- God loves righteousness and hates wickedness, Psalm 45:7 (Heb. 1:9); Proverbs 15:9
- God hates pride, lies, murder, evil doing, scheming, false testimony, and sowing discord among brethren, Proverbs 6:16-19
- God hates idolatrous worship, Deuteronomy 12:31; 16:22
- God hates unscriptural divorce, Malachi 2:16

It is interesting to note that the Scriptures list *few things* which God hates, but the word "hate" is used in reference to men and their attitude toward others. Hatred is truly a vice typical of sinful people. Selfishness, greed, covetousness, cause men to hate other men. Disciples of God must rid themselves of this.

Learning To Love God

The more we know of God, the more we will love Him because (1) God **is** love, 1 Jn. 4:8; (2) God is good, Matt. 19:17; (3) God has lovingkindness, Jer. 32:18; (4) God is gracious and merciful, Jonah 4:2; (5) God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift, James 1:17. The descriptions of God are beyond our comprehension, but these are enough to help you *begin* your journey on **learning** to love the God you cannot see except by revelation and faith.

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