

A Light Moment

"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET
AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH." PSALM 119:105



Love Sweet Love (Part III)

Love One Another

John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

This is one of the greatest testimonies to the world that God is real, when they see the genuine love of God that we have for others, *especially* for those in the body of Christ. It is important that this love is demonstrated not just to those in our local church or denomination, but to all believers. We need to show love to one another in word and in deed, just as Jesus did for us.



I John 3:16 "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Of course most of us won't have to literally lay down our lives for another, even though I believe it includes that; but it means to put the needs of others before my own, to prefer one another. Sometimes it will be a sacrifice on our part, but we are to be there for one another.

This verse says we know what the love of God is because of the example we see in Jesus. In the same way we are to follow this example to draw others to

Christ.

How we love as the body of Christ, through our words and actions, reflects directly back to our heavenly Father. Whatever impression we give to the world, is the impression they have of God. Do people see us quarrelling, criticizing or judging another believer? Do people see coldness or apathy? Do they hear a lot of legalism instead of grace and freedom? If they do they can only assume that's what God's love is like. We can turn people on to God, or turn them off.

Over in Galatians 6:10 it says, "Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

We are exhorted to make use of every opportunity we have to build up or encourage someone else, *especially* those of the household of faith; it builds up the kingdom of God and draws the lost to Christ. You see, the lost are observing us. Yes, it seems that they are just waiting or hoping to see us fall so they can say, "See, I told you none of that Christianity stuff is real." I tend to believe that most of the lost are hungry, dissatisfied and long for something that's real. I think deep down inside many of the lost are watching us and *hoping to see that it works* because they are searching for answers. If they don't see love at work among the believers, why would they desire to have what we have?

If we, as the body of Christ, can demonstrate unity and love to all of our own first, it's like the litmus test for the world that God's love is real and that he loves them so much.

We have all heard comments through the years from people who make excuses not to attend church. They may say something like, "I gave up on religion or church because all those people are just a bunch of hypocrites!" or "Those people act so 'holier than thou' and I feel they look down on me."

I am so thankful to God that He surrounded me with Christians, who just oozed with His love when I was first born again. I am not saying they were perfect, but they loved me into the kingdom. Their love also helped me to continue to grow and mature in the Lord.

When I first gave my heart to the Lord Jesus I was a little rough around the

edges (just like most of you were!). The whole Christian lifestyle was foreign to me. I was only 18 years old and in many ways still talked and acted like the world. I dressed like the world because it's all I ever knew. Now some things in my life fell off right away; but others were pruned away as I grew. But all the while, even at the start, I had such a love and a passion for God. I had such a hunger to please him and to obey Him. Those precious folks taught me through word and deed. They didn't judge me or avoid me because I wasn't like them. They didn't try to be the Holy Spirit in my life but introduced me to Him and He cleaned me up. They just loved me, plain and simple.

I realize now that I need to practice the same love and patience with new Christians and with the ones who have been a Christian for many years. People will always be people. They are going to challenge your love walk, but remember our example, Jesus.

I John 4:20: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen."