

Love Provokes Love



The Love of God (Part 11)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

Over the Christmas season I've been sharing with you on the them of the Love of God, and now that we stand at the threshold of a New Year, I believe it's appropriate for me to continue with the same theme. If you can receive the truths that I'll be sharing with you this week and apply them in your life, they will enable you face the New Year with greater assurance and confidence than ever before.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our theme: the Love of God.

In my talks last week on this theme I focused on knowing and believing God's love. I explained that it's not sufficient to know about God's love intellectually, but that we must go beyond this by faith and believe in God's love, trust in God's love (that's an alternative translation), yield ourselves to God's love. There's a kind of giving up of self and a yielding in faith to the love of God, which is essential if we are to come into this experience of which John writes when he says, "We have known and believe the love of God."

This step of faith enables us to know a love that the Scripture says, "...surpasses knowledge." That's a deliberate paradox. How can you know something that surpasses knowledge? The answer is, you don't know it intellectually, but you know it experientially, in your spirit. And this experiential knowledge comes only through this yielding in faith, surrender of ourselves to the love of God.

Today I'm going to develop this theme more fully. The title of my talk for today is: love provokes love. I want to turn first of all to the first epistle of John chapter 4, verse 19, where John makes a very simple but profound statement. Like so many statements contained in that first epistle of John, they are

simple but tremendously profound. In fact, their truth is in a sense, unfathomable. We never can really get to the depth of it all. This is what John says is First John 4:19:

> "We love because he [that is God] first loved us." (NIV)

"We love because God first loved us." That means experientially that it takes God's love to release our love. Until we have experienced the love of God, we cannot release that same kind of love in our life. I believe this has been proved true in psychological tests and sociological studies. A child cannot really express love until it has received love. The purpose of God in divine and social order is that every child born into the world shall experience the warm outgoing love of it's parents, and through that love of the parent, begin to be able to express love in return. Unfortunately there are many, many parents in the world today who either really don't love their children or don't know how to express that love. And the result is that multitudes of people grow up unable to express or to release love because they've never experienced it.

Now that's true merely in the natural order in the family in the relationship between parents and children. But it is equally and even more true in the relationship between God and the believer. Until we have experienced God's love for ourself, we cannot others. We love because He first loves us. You see, in that fourth chapter of his first epistle, John is speaking throughout of a kind of love that comes only from God. Earlier in my talks I explained that the special New Testament word for this kind of love is agape, agape love. In First John 4, verses 7 and 8, John explains this. He says:

> "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. [Notice that it takes a decision, in any case. 'Let us love one another…' John is speaking about a decision. It's not entirely a matter of emotion, but it's a matter of decision.] …let us love one another, for love comes from God. [It comes from God, but it takes our decision to release it.] Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (NIV)

Notice that statement, "…everyone who loves [with this kind of agape love] has been born of God and knows God." How can we be so sure about that? Because there is no other source of this agape love. Everybody who manifests it has already experienced it. "We love because He first loved us."

And then John says the negative side of the truth. "Whoever does not love [in this way] does not know God, because God is love." This kind of love, as John says, can only come from God and it comes through rebirth. The Apostle Peter likewise treats of this in his first epistle, chapter 1, verses 22 and 23:

> "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. [Notice the result of obeying the truth, not just hearing, but obeying the truth of God's word is a sincere love for others. And Peter says, 'Not just love one another, but love one another deeply.' Again the implication is it depends partly on our decision to do it. And then he explains why we are able to do this…] For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God." (NIV)

So when the seed of God takes root in our heart and bring forth a new birth, out of that seed and in that new birth comes the love of God. Because the seed of God's word contains the very nature of God. And the nature of God is love. So out of being born again there comes this supernatural kind of love, this agape love which can only come from God, but it comes from God into our hearts and lives through rebirth from the imperishable seed of the Word of God.

This kind of supernatural love, this agape love, that comes from the seed of God's Word, through new birth, must be further nurtured and enforced by the Spirit of God. As in everything in redemption, it's the Spirit and the Word of God working together. For instance, in Colossians chapter 1, verses 7 and 8, Paul speaks about this and he says to the Colossian Christians:

> "You learned it [you learned the love of God] from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit [capital S, the Holy Spirit]." (NIV)

So the love that these Colossian Christians had begun to manifest as a result of hearing and receiving the Word of God, was a love in the Spirit. The Word and the Spirit working together in them produced this supernatural love.

In Romans chapter 5, verse 5, Paul uses even stronger language. Romans 5:5, Paul says:

> "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,

whom he has given us." (NIV)

First of all it's the seed of the Word, nurtured by the Spirit that produces the new birth. Then upon this new creation, God, through the Holy Spirit, pours out His love in our hearts. Notice, it's not any other kind of love. It's God's love. And it's poured out. In other words, there's no restriction, there's no restraint. As much as we will yield to, we can have. God pours out His love in its fullness, in its entirety, in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

As I was meditating on this tremendous importance of manifesting the love of God because we know God, responding to God's love by our love, a phrase occurred to me which I just want to share with you as I close. Some people are saved by a stranger. They're saved, they've been converted, they've turned away from open sin, but they don't really know the One who has saved them.

Let me take a little picture of a person that's drowning in a river. A stranger comes along, jumps in, pulls him out, saves their life, and says, "There you are. Now get dried up, you're safe," but walks away. So they've been saved but they don't know the one that's saved them. I think a whole lot of Christians are like that. Jesus has pulled them out of the river of sin and destruction, but they've got to know Him. What makes us say that they don't know Him? The answer is they don't love. And everyone that knows God loves God. But you see, I think a lot of Christians, evangelicals and others, are truly saved, but they're saved by a stranger.

So I want to suggest to you, don't let God remain a stranger if He's saved you. Come to know Him. What will be the evidence of coming to know Him? You'll be reproducing His love in your life. Because everyone who knows God, loves. But the one that does not love, does not know God.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. I'll be continuing tomorrow with this theme: The Love of God.

Radio Program

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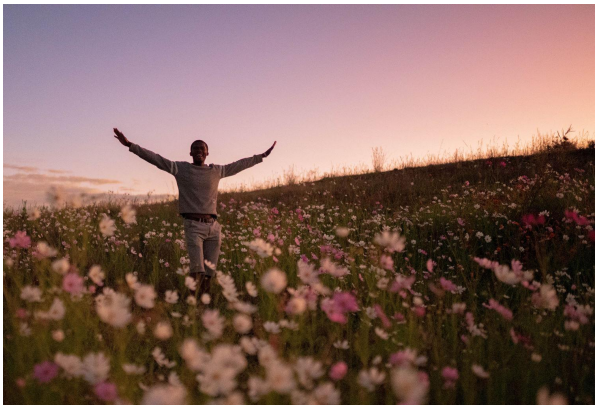

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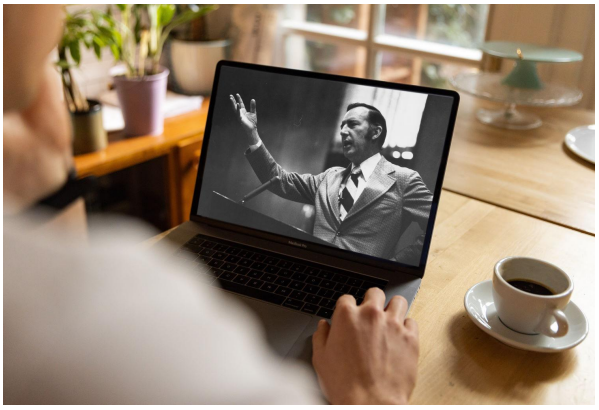

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