



Biblical Perspectives in Everyday Life

GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONAL

Today I saw two wildly differing views of God's involvement in our lives. One man, in a local newspaper, referred to God as "the guy that lives a bazillion miles away up in the sky." The other viewpoint was displayed in a poem on a website that was sent to me (because of an upcoming surgery). The poem was titled, "The Operation." It wasn't the poem that grabbed me, however. Prominently displayed near the poem was a beautiful drawing of a surgeon working, and Jesus was standing beside the surgeon with one hand guiding the surgeon's hand as he worked. What a loving, personal picture compared to just some "guy" way out in the sky.

If God were just "that guy who lives a bazillion miles away in the sky," I'd have given up a long time ago. In fact, because God is NOT "that guy" and is not a bazillion miles away, I actually HAVE given up everything—to Him. Because God cares for us, we are called to cast our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7). We are told He loves us (John 3:16 and 1 John 4:10)... in fact, He is described as "love" in His written Word: "God is love" (1 John 4:8 and 16).

I know, deep in my heart, that God loves me, but sometimes when "life happens" I seem to forget. Theologically, I "get it" that, on the cross, the wrath of God was poured out on Christ, who was our substitute. God's wrath was satisfied there, on Jesus, instead of being poured out on me, the one who more than deserved it. But, if He didn't *love* us, why would He bother to satisfy His wrath on anyone other than us?

Sometimes I live like I need to earn His love, as if my being able to do something to earn His love is even a remote possibility! There is nothing we have done, or could do, that would cause Him to love us. God calls us to a relationship with Him through Jesus, initiating a relationship when it was the furthest thing from our minds (Romans 5:8 and 10). And, He did that because He loves us. Why does He love us? Because we are so lovable? No! Because *He is love!*

Most things change over time, especially as we age. There is, however, a truth that many of us learned as children that will never change:

*Yes! Jesus loves me! Yes! Jesus loves me!
Yes! Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

This article could be thousands of pages long, written by millions of authors, and the subject of the love of God could not be extolled enough. Not one of us could write eloquently enough to do His love justice. All of us together could never adequately proclaim the height and length and depth of His love.

An old song, "The Love of God," declares:

*Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky!*

We can't understand His love. We'd never in a million years earn it. We just have to learn to trust that He does love us and that He tends to even the smallest details of our lives. He is NOT the "guy in the sky a bazillion miles away." He is The God who knows each of us by name...The God who loves us.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:9-11).

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1 Peter 5:7, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

1 John 4:10, In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:8, Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:16, So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Romans 5:8, but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:10, For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

And **1 John 4:9-11** (quoted within text)