

# Perfect Love

The phrase “*the love of God,*” when used by Christians, almost always refers to God’s love for us.

**We must remember that it can also mean our love for God!**

**Matthew 22:35-40** [King James] “*Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*”

**The first and greatest commandment is to love our Creator God with all the power of our personality.**

**1 John 4:8, 16** [King James] “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*” ... “*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*”

**Though all love originates in God and is for that reason God’s own love, yet we are permitted to reflect back that love, in such a manner that it becomes our love indeed.**

We have the example of this in God’s physical creation. The moon has **no** power to generate light, the moonlight we see is the light from the sun reflected by the surface of the moon.

A Christian’s love for God has by some religious thinkers been divided into two kinds, the love of gratitude and the love of God’s perfection.

The love that springs from out of gratitude is found in many passages of scripture.

**Psalms 116:1-4** [King James] “*I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*”

Grateful for the comfort and peace of mind that God’s love for us can bring.

**1 John 4:16-19** [King James] “*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.*”

We know that God loves us perfectly. [**Romans 8:38-39**] Because of this we can resolve all our fears and in turn allow this love from God to flow out in acts of love to other human beings.

This kind of love is quite acceptable to our Creator God even though it is among the most elementary and immature of religious emotions. Love that is the result of gratitude for favours received has within it a certain element of selfishness, because it is roused only by benefits received and does **not** exist apart from them.

A higher kind of love is the love that is awakened by the understanding of the Creator God’s glorious perfection, and has in it a strong element of admiration.

This love of divine excellencies differs from the love that springs from gratitude in that its reasons are more elevated and the element of selfishness is reduced almost to the vanishing point.

But we should note that both have one thing in common, they can give a reason for their existence.

**Love that can offer reasons is a rational thing and has not attained a state of complete purity.**

They are **not** perfect love!

**We as Christians must extend our love to God further than a love of gratitude or excellence.**

**On a mere human level it is common to find love that rises above both gratitude and admiration.**

**The mother of a handicapped child**, for instance, may love her unfortunate child with an emotional attachment altogether impossible to understand.

The child excites **no** gratitude in the mother's heart, for all the benefits have flowed the other way. The helpless infant has been nothing but a burden from the time it was born.

Neither can the mother find in such a child any excellence to admire, for there is none. **Yet her love is something wonderful to see, she has become one with the child emotionally.**

I can personally understand such emotions as my first grandchild had massive brain damage that left her unable to use her limbs. Because my daughter's marriage broke up partly because her husband's inability to accept a handicapped child, my wife and I had to part foster Rachel, for many years, as my daughter's second child made caring for Rachel impossible by herself.

Always the love union achieved by hearts is more beautiful than anything experienced on a physical human level.

Although Rachel has died she is still in our thoughts and still brings to our eyes tears when we remember the love we have for her and the love that grew within us because of that close union of hearts.

**The sum of what we are saying is that there is in the higher type of love an element that cannot and does not attempt to give reasons for its existence.**

It does **not** say "*I love because*" it only whispers "*I love*" – perfect love knows **no** "*because.*"

There is a place in religious experience where we love the Creator God for Himself alone, with never a thought of His benefits. And there is a place where the heart does **not** reason from admiration to affection, but worships in unreasoning blessedness. It only can join the heavenly host exclaiming "*holy, holy, holy,*" while scarcely knowing what it means.

If this should all seem too mystical, too unreal, I offer **no** proof and make **no** effort to defend my position.

This can be **only** understood by those who have experienced it, like the apostle John in his vision of the throne of our Creator God and God the Father.

**Revelation 4:1-11** [NIV] "*After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'* At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

*Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the centre, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and behind. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.' Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.'"*

**This is the loving God that wants to offer us eternal life to love Him in spirit and in truth.**

**John 17:3** [NIV] *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

This is in the future.

**1 John 5:11-13** [King James] *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

This loving relationship can begin now if we allow the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, to actively dwell in our lives to develop the characteristics of God, the first of them is love.

**Galatians 5:22-25** [NIV] *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

This is how we can experience this perfect love.