

Keep Yourself In the Love of God

By

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WHAT IS THE LOVE OF GOD?

Here is a challenging word of spiritual instruction: *“But ye, beloved building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”* (Jude 20, 21).

That sentence is to be found in the one-chapter epistle written by a man named Jude. That name was quite common among the Jews in the time when the Christian Scriptures were being written. Two men among the apostles of Jesus bore that name. There was Judas Iscariot (Judas being a form of Jude) and another named Jude or Judas (John 14:22). The Jude who wrote the text I have read identifies himself simply as *“the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James”* (verse 1). And yet, we

understand him to be a brother in the flesh (actually half-brother) to Jesus (as son of Joseph and Mary after Jesus' birth), a believer in Jesus and an apostle of Jesus the Christ. In humility he does not claim earthly relationship or apostolic authority but is content to be known only as servant of Jesus Christ.

In our text, one surprising statement caught my attention: “*Keep yourselves in the love of God.*” I know the Bible speaks much about the love of God toward us. It describes the way He shows His love to us by His blessings and particularly by giving His only begotten Son to die for our sins. It tells us His love is put in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. It calls on us to show the love of God in our dealing with one another. But I had never thought of keeping myself in the love of God. I propose to investigate this subject with you and seek a biblical explanation of this strange requirement.

Let us begin by seeking an answer to this question, “What is the love of God?” If we are to keep ourselves in God's love, we must know what his love truly is.

First, a definition of the term “love” as it is used in the Bible. There were four distinct words common in the Greek language of New Testament times, each of which may be translated “love.” It is important to know which of those four terms is used when we are commanded to keep ourselves in the love of God, for each word has a different shade of meaning. We will examine the terms one by one, then see which one relates to the love of God.

Family Love

Storge is a word for “natural affection.” It is a natural response of the spirit of a person to another person or object to which one is bound. It is a love of parents for their children, whom they are to protect and provide for. It is the love of an animal for its offspring.

You see *storge* (natural affection) when a mother cow defends her calf or when a mother hen protects her chicks. You see it in the devotion of a mother to her newborn child whom she sees for the first time. It is a beautiful word which springs out of one's very nature. A person does not “fall in love” in this sense. It is already there and expresses itself in the proper circumstance.

Romans 1:31 and II Timothy 3:3 describe people who are “without natural affection.” Reference is to people who are so sold into sin and hardened as a consequence, that their very nature has been changed to an inhuman lack of affection. The heart is unfeeling and hard and incapable of affection under such conditions.

Fleshly Love

Eros is a word for “passion.” It is not found in the New Testament scriptures, though it is common in secular writings in the Greek language. The term is used to refer to sexual love. It is a passion which overwhelms a person, mastering him and absorbing his whole person. The term is usually found in a non-spiritual application.

Friendly Love

Philia is a third word for “love” in the Greek New Testament. It occurs 45 times in the New Testament scriptures. It is the love which arises as a response one takes in a person or thing. It is based on things the two have in common. It is “a love of liking,” an affection for a person or thing in which one delights in the pleasure that person or thing brings.

You may hear a person say, “I love to swim,” or, “I love to read.” It means one finds delight, pleasure and satisfaction in that activity.

So one may say, “I love you,” and mean the same thing. This is a good word for love. It is the love of human affection, the basis of most marriages. One finds a person of the opposite sex who has qualities which are pleasing. There is a sense of delight in being with that person. This deepens and matures as each finds increasing pleasure in sharing with the other. The couple declare themselves to be “in love” and is married. It is a wholesome human affection which I hope you are experiencing with another worthy person.

Fervent Love

Agape is the fourth word for “love” and is found 320 times in the New Testament. It is a love which is based on seeing the value in another person, the recognition of the worthiness of the one loved. It is the love of God manifest toward us.

While *philia* is the love of pleasure, *agape* is the love of preciousness. The former is good wholesome human affection, the latter is the elevating attitude of God’s love to us. *Agape* is commonly translated “charity” in the King James Version of the Bible. That word was chosen, I think, because it indicates a love which gives without requiring return. It gives because of the need of the person who receives. It is willing to sacrifice, whatever the beloved one may feel or do.

Agape is best seen in John 3:16. “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” The love of God was manifested in the giving of Jesus, His Son, because each

person in the human race is precious to Him. He sees how each one, though marred by sin, can be transformed into the very image of His dear Son.

That love is best described in I Corinthians 13:4-8 as being longsuffering, kind, generous, humble, proper, unselfish, even-tempered, pure, patient, trusting, expectant and unfailing. It is the greatest of the three graces of faith, hope, and love. It endures when all else fails.

That is the love God has for you. He loved you before you could ever love Him (I John 4:19). His love is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3). It is beyond our understanding (Ephesians 3:19). It is so great that it includes the whole world of mankind in its sweep (John 3:16). It is inescapable in that nothing can remove us from it (Romans 8:35-39). And it is redemptive, devoted to the saving of sinners (I John 4:10). That, I say, is the love God has for you!

Have you entered into the good of His love? In love He provided a Savior. In love He offers full forgiveness of your sin. In love He enables you to live in the joy of a holy life. In love He has prepared a place for you with Him in heaven. In love He invites you to come to Him now.

“I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.
How marvelous! how wonderful! is my Savior’s love for me!” –
Charles H. Gabriel

HOW DO YOU GET IN THE LOVE OF GOD?

The General Epistle of Jude gives us this surprising command, “*Keep yourselves in the love of God*” (verse 21). We have already seen what is the love of God: a counting us precious to Him so that He moves in grace to provide our needs and lift us to all we are designed to be in His image and likeness. Now we pass to a second part of this study: how does one get in the love of God?

To “keep yourself IN the love of God” would indicate one is already in it. The concern is to keep in it, not enter into it. Therefore, the question is the more urgent, “How does one get in the love of God?” It may be answered by a further examination of what the “love of God” is like.

Available to all

The love of God is universal. He loves the whole human race; not just the good people to the exclusion of the bad, not just the white to exclusion of the colored, not just the cultured to the exclusion of the uncultured, not just the young to the exclusion

of the old, not just the rich to the exclusion of the poor. No one is excluded, so great is the love of God toward us in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *“God so loved THE WORLD, that He gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). The “world” which God loves is the world of mankind. The apostle John wrote of Jesus, *“He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (I John 2:2). Did you catch it? “The whole world” is included in His love and in His redemptive act.

That includes you. It is not necessary for you to do something to win the love of God. He already loves you. He has always loved you. He will not turn His love away from you. Rejoice in that blessed truth! You will never meet a person whom God does not love.

Offered personally

The love of God is personal. We say He loves the “world,” and that includes all people. But His love is not just a general good will toward the human race. It is personal and specific. That is why I say you will never meet a person whom God does not love.

A friend told of this incident. “I was sitting in a café having breakfast before going to speak in a Christian meeting. A beggar came in and asked the waiter for a drink of water. I watched him and thought that God could love even a person like that. Then the realization came that it was no harder for God to love a beggar like that than to love a person like me. His love is not based on merit in us. It is based on His value of our preciousness to Him. He loves without reservation.”

Assure yourself that God loves you. Tell yourself over and over, “God loves ME!” It is not an act of self-deception. It is affirming and applying personally a great Bible truth.

Philip P. Bliss has written,
“I am so glad that our Father in heav’n,
Tells of His love in the Book He has giv’n;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see;
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.
Tho’ I forget Him and wander away,
Kindly He follows wherever I stray;
Back to His dear loving arms I flee,
I am so glad that Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me;
I am so glad that Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me.”

To that great truth we say “Glory!”

Experienced in Christ

The love of God is experienced in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, *“The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus”* (I Timothy 1:14). The Apostle John wrote, *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (I John 4:9,10). *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

The Bible says Jesus died for the sins of the whole world of mankind. That is true. But in dying for all, He died for each. You are included in His redemptive deed. He died for you, in dying for the whole world, as certainly as if He had died for you alone. That is how personal His redemption is.

But the love of God in salvation is experienced only in Jesus Christ. *“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

That is why the blessings of salvation are always related to Jesus. To trust Jesus is to have everlasting life, to receive forgiveness of sin, to become a child of God, to have a place reserved in heaven, to receive the Holy Spirit, to have answers to prayer and multiplied blessings. It is in Jesus Christ and in Him only that the full blessings of God are given to us.

Given by the Spirit

The love of God is given by the Holy Spirit. Romans 5:5 reads, *“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* It is appropriate to ask, how does the Holy Spirit put God’s love in our hearts?

The Spirit of God enters the spirit of man at the moment of conversion. It is His presence within us which makes us saved. It is His life within us which is the eternal life we enjoy as Christians. It is His witness within us which gives us assurance that we are children of God, forgiven of every sin and delivered from its penalty. The Holy Spirit is our blessed companion who abides with us forever.

The life of God lived in us by the Holy Spirit has all the qualities of the life which God Himself lives. He is eternal, so we have eternal life. He is holy, so we are saints of God. He lives in victory over sin, so we have victory in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is love, so we have the love of God within us.

That means we can love with the love of God. We can love those who are unlovely. We can love people whom we do not like. We can love people because of the need they have, not because of a pleasure we find in them. We can even love our enemies, for God loved us when we had set ourselves His enemies (Romans 5:10). We can love people to lift them and help them and save them. We can, because we are loving with the love of God.

Now for a moment of review. Remember that God loves you. He loves the whole human race in general but He loves you in personal and specific ways. He loves you in spite of who you are or what you have done. His love for you is based on your spiritual nature, not on your personal actions. His love is experienced in Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to the Savior of those who believe. And the love which God has toward you, which He showed in Jesus Christ and which you experienced in salvation, is now broadcast in your heart by the Holy Spirit. So you can love with the love of God.

Practice loving people as God has loved you. Love is the absence of merit, even in the presence of demerit. Love for the good you can do them, not for the benefit you may receive from them. *“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”*

HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THE LOVE OF GOD?

The biblical injunction, *“Keep yourselves in the love of God,”* is both a challenge and a blessing. It means that we are in the love of God already, and it means that we can continue to experience the love of God forever. How thrilling!

What should be our response to learning of God’s love to us? How do we react to such grace as He shows to us? Consider some suggestions.

With humility

Respond to the love of God with humility. It is not a reason for pride. Though being the recipient of the love of God is an honor beyond describing, it is by no merit of our own that He loves us. So, not taking credit for His love, we can only respond humbly to it.

Why should God love us? He explained His love to ancient Israel in these words, *“The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen”* (Deuteronomy 7:7,8). That means God did not love Israel for any merit in her. There are two reasons for His love to her. (1) He chose to love her

of His own will. (2) He purposed to keep the promises He had made before concerning her. Those are the same reasons God loves us.

God loves us by an act of His will. He chooses to love us. He is not like a young man who “falls in love” with a young lady, whether he plans to or not. It is God’s own purpose in grace to love us and to serve us. Before that divine choice we can only bow in thanksgiving and humility. How wonderful to know that God chose by His own will to love me and to love you.

Humility is the proper response to the love of God toward us.

With thanksgiving

Respond to the love of God with thanksgiving. Over and again we should thank God for His blessings. We thank him for life, health, food, clothing, friends and many other good things. He provides. But we may forget to thank Him for his love. It is an appropriate prayer to offer to God, to say, “father, I thank you and praise you for loving me, for loving me before I knew you or loved you. Thank you for loving me when I was both unloving and unlovely. And thank you for loving me with a love from which nothing in heaven or earth can remove me. I rejoice with thanksgiving in your love.”

Here is a spiritual assignment which you will find quite profitable. Before you sleep tonight, spend five minutes thanking God for his grace and specific blessings He has given you. And during that period give some time to thanking Him for His love shown to you in Jesus Christ.

With devotion

Respond to the love of God with devotion. That is to say, give yourself to Him. Do not act independent of His will or contrary to His will. Seek His glory in everything you do and say. Show your appreciation for His love by being a loving person toward Him and toward people who are made in His image.

“Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:11). “For whether we live ...or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 17:8).

Notice two people who love each other sincerely. The husband says of the wife, “She belongs to me.” The wife says of the husband, “He is mine.” Love has an element of possessiveness about it. Even God says He is jealous with a holy jealousy. He will not share the affection of His dear children with any other. Two people who are in love have that sense of belonging.

A person who loves another desires to please the other. He shows love by acts, words and attitudes. No less does the Christian desire to please God and share His fellowship. So he continually exercises discipline on his life that both his attitudes and actions will reflect God's love in him.

A lover counts no sacrifice too great or a price too large to pay for the delight of the beloved. So the Christian puts to death the desires of the flesh in order to please Him who first loved us and keeps on loving us in spite of ourselves.

With faith

Respond to the love of God with faith. You can trust one who loves you sincerely. A young bride puts her life in the hands of the groom whom she marries. She does it gladly and without fear, for she is sure of his love.

The Bible commands the wife to submit to her husband and obey him. That is a dangerous thing for the woman if the husband does not love her. But there is no fear or danger where there is a perfect love.

I remember when I was a young man considering the will of God for my life. I hesitated for fear that if God did with me what He pleased, He might send me to a place or a ministry where I would be miserable. The only reason one would think that way is that he does not trust God to deal in love with Him. When I remembered the love of God toward me, I knew the best and happiest thing that could happen to me would be for the will of God to be done fully in my life. I yielded my will to God's will concerning my life's vocation and found it to be a delight to love and serve under His loving supervision.

Do you doubt the love of God toward you? He has expressed it in words and deeds. You have every needed proof. But the greatest proof of all is in the person and work of Jesus Christ as He taught us of God and died to pay the penalty for our sins.

You are included in the scope of God's love.

“There 's a wideness in God's mercy,

Like the wideness of the sea;

There's a kindness in His justice,

Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader

Than the measure of man's mind;

And the heart of the Eternal

Is most wonderfully kind.”

Faber

--Frederick W.

With a witness

Respond to the love of God with a witness. Tell His love abroad. Let each person in the whole world know that God loves him personally and purely. God has given us a ministry of reconciling sinners to Christ. *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”* (II Corinthians 5:20).

Many Christians are hesitant to speak to an unbeliever about trusting Jesus. But there is no reason to hesitate when you are telling him of God’s love. It should be a joy to say to someone, “God loves you. He loves you so much He gave His only Son to save you from the penalty of sin. He loved you before you ever knew Him, and planned our salvation before you ever needed it. He loves you so much now that He will receive you just as you are, if you will ask Him to. He loves you so much He will live His life in you here on earth and take you to be with Him forever in heaven when you die. You can trust Him because He loves you.”

Do you know someone with whom you can share the love of God today?

HOW DO YOU SHARE THE LOVE OF GOD?

There is a wonderful quality about love: the more you give it away, the more you have to give. Be loving, and your capacity to love will grow. Serve others in love, and your capacity to show love by serving will increase. Speak often of love, and speaking of God’s love will become as natural to you as breathing. Love, and you will be loved. Show love to others, and they will show it to you for the more love you give away, the more you will have to give.

Personally

Love personally. Learn to love individual people. Show your love one by one. To speak of loving without personal involvement with people is need of love is hypocrisy.

The fourth chapter of the First Epistle of John is one of the “love chapters” of the Bible. It sets forth most beautifully the loving God whom we call “Father” by faith in Jesus Christ. It tells us *“God is love”* (verse 8), then shows how God has manifested His love toward us in giving His only begotten Son to die for our sins and redeem us to God. It is so evident that *“we have seen and do testify”* to the reality of His love (verse 14). *“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us...We love him, because he first loved us”* (verses 16, 19).

The practical application to that is expressed in these words, “*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*” (verse 11). We should love because God loved us, and we should love as God loved us.

How did God love us? Personally, graciously, forgivingly, helpfully, unceasingly does God love us. And that is how we should love one another. Let your love be personal, directed to individuals who need a ministry of love.

Graciously

Love graciously. That is to say, let grace be mixed with your love. Do not love only those who love you; love your enemies, also. Do not love your brethren only; love the stranger, too. Do not love only those who are good; love the bad as God loves them. Jesus said, “*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you...For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? ..Be ye therefore perfect, even as you Father which is in heaven is perfect*” (Matthew 5:44-48).

God loved you when you were a sinner, weak and wrong and wicked (Romans 5:6, 8, 10). He loved you so much as to make a supreme sacrifice for you, giving His only Son to die in your stead. That set an example for our love toward the guilty and undeserving. We love to lift those who are in need, even when we do not find pleasure in their company or their conduct. That is love and grace.

Unselfishly

Love unselfishly. Some people love those who love them because there is a personal benefit from being loved. But that may become a selfish form of love, a love of self rather than a love of others. God will not approve that.

Christian love seeks to serve, not to be served; to give rather than to receive. It is not concerned with its own affairs, “What can I get out of this?” It is concerned with the affairs of others, “How may I meet your needs in a way that will strengthen you?”

Unselfish love is serving love. Therefore commit yourself to serve. Be willing to do any task, however lowly it may be. If our Lord Jesus would wash the feet of His disciples, there is no reason why we should feel too important to serve one another in any way.

The biblical command is, “*Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another*” (Galatians 5:13). Did you catch the thrust of that passage? The Christian is not to use his liberty

in Christ for personal advantage but to be free to serve others in the exercise of that liberty. It is a call to unselfish service in love.

Obediently

Love obediently. Does it surprise you that we are commanded to show a Christian love toward one another? Jesus said, “ *This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*” (John 15:12-14). We have no option, therefore, if we would be an obedient Christian. We are taught of God to love one another.

I do not speak of a casual sense of good will which one calls Christian love. On the contrary, the Bible says, “*See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*” (I Peter 1:22).

To love one another with a “pure heart” means our motives are honorable and our effort is to serve the best interests of the other person. To love one another “fervently” means our love is affectionate, tender, sincere and strong. It stirs us up to act in helpful ways toward the object of our concern.

Is that how you love? That is Christian love. Perhaps it would be an excellent spiritual prescription if we would discipline our lives to exercise that kind of love on a day to day basis.

Benevolently

Love benevolently. Let your love be expressed in practical and helpful ways. First John 3:17-19 reads, “*Whosoever hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And thereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*”

Christian love is more than an emotion, more than mere affection. It is a motivation which stirs up a person to help and remedy a need. Christian love “does” as well as “feels.” The feeling which does not inspire doing is not Christian love at all. Exercise your love in ways of practical service. Help somebody today, just because the love of God is in you.

Here is how you can show forth the love of god today to someone who does not know Him: Find a need and fill it. I do not speak of doing some great deed. I speak of giving a cup of cold water, as it were. Mow the lawn of a neighbor who is ill or away on vacation or behind in his work. Take food or clothing to one who is in

need. Share your sympathy with one who is sorrowing. Give your precious time to one who is lonely. Speak hopefully to one who is discouraged. That list could be continued on and on. But that is enough. You see how in practical ways you can show the love of God to people in regular day to day events. Be ready, and God will give you opportunities.

What have we said about showing the love of God? I have suggested that we love persons individually, that we love people who are undeserving of it, that we love for the sake of others and not for personal benefit, that we love as Jesus commanded us to love and that we express love in practical ways. Can you take those suggestions and move fully into the life of love? If so, the purpose for this study is realized.

HOW DO YOU KEEP YOURSELF IN THE LOVE OF GOD?

Jude 20, 21 reads, *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”* Our investigation of the love of God, as presented in the Christian scriptures, has brought us to this question, “How do you keep yourself in the love of God?”

The text does not mean it is possible for us to get in a condition where God no longer loves us. It is impossible to go beyond the limits of His love. I remind you of the teachings of Romans 8:35-39 where an answer is given to the question, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* The answer is that nothing which happens to the body can separate us. In tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword, *“we are more than conquerors through him that love us.”* On the other hand, there are no spiritual powers which can take us beyond the love of God. *“Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Therefore, to keep yourself in the love of God does not mean you must behave in such a way as to keep God loving you.

The meaning is this: To keep yourself in the love of God is to stay always in the area where the love of God will be evident to you and the blessings of His love will be recognized as coming upon you. How is that possible? Our text gives several suggestions. Let us review them one by one.

Grow spiritually

You keep in the way of God’s blessings in love when you are growing spiritually, *“building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”*

The Christian life is somewhat like the physical life. It begins with birth, which is conversion to Christ. It continues with growth in which we “*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (II Peter 3:18). It must have food, the spiritual food being “*the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*” (I Peter 2:2). It involves an increasing likeness to Christ in our inmost being, “*We are all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*” (II Corinthians 3:18).

Spiritual growth is limitless in its possibilities. God’s design is to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is possible for an entire lifetime to be spent growing in His likeness, and yet there is room for more. So as a Christian is challenged to make his most holy faith the foundation upon which he builds a character which reflects Jesus.

As one grows in greater knowledge of the things of God, the more he understands and appreciates the love God has toward us. The more one becomes like Jesus, the more he can reflect the love of God in his own attitudes and actions. So by spiritual growth he keeps himself in the love of God.

Practice devotion

You keep in the way of God’s blessings in love when you practice devotion, “*praying in the Holy Spirit.*” But what does it mean to pray in the Holy Spirit?

One prays in the Holy Spirit when he offers prayers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For instance, the Bible says God answers prayer when it is in agreement with His will. We can know the will of God as the Holy Spirit teaches us the Word of God and impresses us with the leading of God. Trust the Spirit to direct your praises and petitions when you pray, and you will pray in the Holy Spirit as God requires you.

One prays in the Holy Spirit when He depends on the power of the Spirit to make his prayers effective. The Bible says, *The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*” (Romans 8:26). It is dependence on the help of the Holy Spirit in our prayer life which makes us pray in the Holy Spirit.

To pray in the Holy Spirit is to pray effectively. It is to receive answer to prayer. It is to know the provisions God has made for us in love. Praying in the Holy Spirit is a way to keep yourselves in the love of God.

Demonstrate expectance

You keep in the way of God's blessings in love when you practice expectance: "*Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*" That means you keep your attention on the Lord Jesus.

The return of Jesus from heaven is "*the blessed hope*" of the saints of God (Titus 2:13). It is the next grand event on God's prophetic calendar. Looking for His return reminds one of the purpose of His first coming (to offer atonement for our sins) plus a reminder of the purpose of His second coming (to take us to be with Him forever in heaven). That is enough to make our hearts overflow in love to God. That is enough for us to understand more clearly the great love God has toward us. His is "love divine, all loves excelling"—Charles Wesley.

Think of the great Christian hymns which speak of the Love of God:

"O Love of God most full, O Love of God most free,
Thou warm'st my heart, Thou fill'st my soul,
With might thou strength'nest me"—Oscar Clute.

"I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more,
But the Master of the sea, Heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I.
Love lifted me! Love lifted me!

When nothing else would help, Love lifted me"—James Rowe.

What a delightful demand for us to keep ourselves in the love of God. To experience His love is the greatest blessing we could ever experience.

Obey God

You keep in the way of God's blessings in love when you obey His commands. First John 2:5 reads, "*Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.*" Yes, the love of God finds its perfect expression and accomplishes God's will in you when you respond in loving obedience to what He requires of you. When John wrote, "*This is the love of God, what we keep his commandments,*" he was saying, "Loving God means obeying his commands" (I John 5:3). Jesus himself said, "*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*" (John 14:23). Obedience is the proof that we love God, and the reward for obedience is the personal presence of God as proof that He loves us.

"*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God*" (I John 3:1). "*For God so loved the world, that he gave*

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“Beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20,21).