

We Love Him, because
He first loved us.

1 John 4:19

WANTED: Stories of how God has blessed you and others through you, as you have been His faithful steward. In an upcoming issue, we want to share your testimonies of what God is doing in your life as a result. Please send your story to:

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**IDEAS ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK *LIVING GOD'S LOVE*.

“The Faithful Steward”



What is Love?

For too many of us, love is described as a warm, fuzzy feeling toward something we like. It is commonly believed that if you do not feel affectionate or compassionate toward another, you do not love that individual.

This is the common definition of human love, but not the definition of Christian love. Christian love is not merely an emotion. *“It is instead a consciously chosen attitude of a mind given over to God. A determined set of a will submitted to God.”*¹

Loving is simply using God’s given power of choice to say or do that which is in the best interest of another person, regardless of feelings.

¹ Douglas Cooper, *Living God’s Love* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assoc, 10975), 26

“AMAZING LOVE”



John reminds us, “We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). In the heart that is renewed by God’s grace, *“love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.”*⁴

We are God’s stewards, and once we allow God’s love to fill us, we demonstrate our love to Him with our time, opportunities, abilities and possessions. We are accountable to Him for their proper use. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God to nurture in love and victory over selfishness and covetousness. The love that the Lord gives us helps in choosing to act on that mental choice by putting His will first. Regardless of feelings and of what is happening around you.

This same principle applies to loving people, even those individuals to whom we may feel no affection. We may choose to love them expressing the love God wants us to express

through our words and actions. This love can only be obtained by having a close relationship with our Lord, since he gives us the ability to love.

This is how Jesus was able to continue loving those who spit at Him, those who drew His blood with the raw edge of a scourge and those who murdered Him. His actions and words clearly said, “You can do anything you wish to Me, but remember, nothing, absolutely nothing you can do will be enough to make Me stop loving you.”

When the final crisis came, Jesus did not have a longing desire to be separated from His Father and to die for undeserving sinners, but he prayed to God that if it was His will, He would go through with the ultimate sacrifice of dying on the cross for us.

When the final agonizing decision was made for Jesus to die for humanity, it was because He loved His Father and us so much that He chose to do what God desired of Him, regardless of His feel-

ings. The greatest act of love the universe has ever seen was not based on feelings, but on principle!

The decisions that we make need to be based on love, principle, and relationship. We must love God with all our heart, mind and soul. Everything we do should be based on this love relationship we have with the Father.

Would you like to have God’s love in your heart today? My prayer is that we all allow His love in our hearts and say, “Lord, please allow me to love others as you love me!”

² Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: PPA, 1911) 516.

^{3,4} *The Acts of the Apostles*, 551



Pure and holy affection is not a feeling – it’s a principle. Ellen G. White writes, “...the love of Christ is not a fitful feeling, but a living principle, which is to be made manifest as an abiding power in the heart.”² “This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power.”³

Who can produce this type of love? Our natural sinful hearts cannot love the way God loves. In order to have God’s love in our hearts, it has to come from God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. The apos-