

# The Power Of A Single Verse: 1 John 4:19

## **1 John 4:19**

*(KJV) We love him, because he first loved us.*

*(NIV) We love because he first loved us.*

What an awesome verse! My wife and I love these words; in fact, we had this Scripture read at our wedding. How important is it to realize that love originates from God, Who is love:

## **1John 4:8**

*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

Many years ago, I was asked by a brother in the Lord—who was new to me and I thought would be more seasoned in the faith—if I was a glass half full or a glass half empty kind of person. I didn't know how to answer the question, but I did know that he was not making any reference to Scripture. So, I just stood silent. Then he offered this statement: "Darren, you know love is a two-way street." Again, I didn't know how to respond to Him—this was just a little awkward.

I realized years later that his statement about love was incorrect: love is actually a one-way street. God's love begins with Him and flows down to us through the Holy Ghost—it is a good and perfect gift coming down from our Father of Lights, in Whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning (James 1:17). His love then lives in us and through us as we walk by the Spirit:

## **Galatians 5:16**

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

## **Galatians 2:20**

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

When, by faith we walk in this manner in the world, the pressure is off for us to work up an insincere love (Romans 12:9). The sad reality is—we do not love well in our natural selves. We need God's supernatural love to make any impact in our cold-hearted culture. A culture that only knows conditional, temporal love.

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you ever caught yourself trying to love the unloveable in your own strength? What was the result? What would it look like for you to love through the power of the Holy Ghost, according to God's Word?

\*STUDY POINT: Conduct a personal study of Apostle Paul's conversion from murderous religious zealot to loving Christ follower. Pay attention in particular to the process that God put Paul through in His mercy and grace. Study his conversion out to see if there is a pattern in Scripture to the way God draws the unredeemed.

God's love is different. His love is eternal, steadfast, and rock-solid. And He loves everyone:

**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.*

We had 1 John 4:19 read at our wedding, not just because we love that verse, but because there were non-believers at our wedding. We wanted them to know that the love my wife and I shared was unconditional—it did not depend on our individual behaviour. We loved because He first loved us! Ours was a revelation of God's love to each of us personally and then to each other, through Jesus Christ. Indeed, Jesus is a banner over our marriage—as He leads and guides us daily. Hallelujah!

And as for the prickly, the rough-around-the-edges, the disagreeable, and the unloveable—such as this brother in the Lord I mentioned earlier—God's agape, unconditional love through us is able to love those people too. Amazing. I was able to love this particular man not by trying harder but by praying harder. And God gave me a special love for this brother.

God's love through Jesus has transformed my life. Even when I cared not for God or Jesus, the Scriptures say:

**Romans 5:8**

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Now that's love!

In context, 1 John 4:19 might be referring partially to the distinct absence of love from the false prophets, who cared not for the sheep, and eventually departed (1 John 2:19). But John is definitely exhorting his fellowship to bear the fruit of sincere love (Romans 12:9) one to another. This kind of love would flow out of an intimate relationship with God—like branch to Vine (see John 15:1-17).

To bring this theme home, we can learn from 1 John that unity in love in our church families is only possible as we individually seek God daily in our prayer closets:

**Matthew 6:6**

*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

We need to let God love us. Yes, spend more and more time with God—not just talking but listening to the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost. Have your Bible handy, as God desires to speak to you through His Word.

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: What lifestyle adjustments do you think would help you go deeper with God?

We love him. Yes we do, with all we are:

**Luke 10:27**

*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

Speaking for myself, I am painfully aware that there are sections of my heart still not surrendered to God. I guess you could say I'm a work in progress!

Because He first loved us. Love was God's idea because He is love. He created us so that He could have relationship with part of His creation—in a special way. He saved us—not for mere religious activity—but knowing that His love would flow through us as His children into a world that knew nothing of unconditional love. And He would be glorified!

And He will be glorified as we guard zealously our time spent alone with Him!

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland