



Part 2 – He First Loved Us

April 26, 2009

Gerald Thurman & Wes Porter

Central Point...

1 John 4:17-19 *This is how love is made perfect in us: that we can be without fear on the day God judges us, because in this world we are like him.¹⁸ Where God's love is, there is no fear, because God's perfect love drives out fear. It is punishment that makes a person fear, so love is not made perfect in the person who fears.¹⁹ We love because God first loved us.*

Most of us have difficulty doing things we've never seen or experienced before. One such experience is **unconditional** love at the deepest level.

One of the greatest challenges that we will ever face is trying to give and receive love that we've **never** experienced for ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

¹⁶ So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! ¹⁷ What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

Because we can't go where we can't see – we need to **receive** love before we can give it.

Focal Point...

First Hand Experience

John the Apostle was the youngest of Jesus' twelve disciples. He and his brother James were one of the first disciples called by Jesus. For 3 ½ years he watched Jesus, listened to Him, ate meals with Him, heard Him pray, and watched Him die.

As a result, he devoted the next 60 years of his life telling others about God's **love**:

1 John 4:7-16 *Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child and knows God.⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.⁹ This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his one and only Son into the world so that we could have life through him.¹⁰ This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God's love for us. He sent his Son to die in our place to take away our sins.¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us that much we also should love each other.¹² No one has ever seen God, but if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is made perfect in us.¹³ We know that we live in God and he lives in us, because he gave us his Spirit.¹⁴ We have seen and can testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God has God living inside, and that person lives in God.¹⁶ And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.*

Five Principles of Relationships

1. When people have profound experiences, they want to **share** them.

1 John 4:12 *No one has ever seen God, but if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is made perfect in us.*

2. An encounter with God's love is a **profound** experience.

Isaiah 6:1-8 *It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple.² Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.³ They were calling out to each other,*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies!
The whole earth is filled with his glory!”*

⁴ Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.⁵ Then I said, “It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.”⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.⁷ He touched my lips with it and said, “See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven.”⁸ Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?” I said, “Here I am. Send me.”

3. Those in a committed, personal relationship with God find that their love for others is always increasing.

Philippians 1:9-11 *This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love;¹⁰ that you will see the difference between good and bad and will choose the good; that you will be pure and without wrong for the coming of Christ;¹¹ that you will be filled with the good things produced in your life by Christ to bring glory and praise to God.*

4. Love eliminates fear.

Hebrews 13:5-6 *Since God assured us, "I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you," we can boldly quote,*

*God is there, ready to help;
I'm fearless no matter what.
Who or what can get to me?*

5. We love because He first loved us.

1 Peter 4:7-11 *Everything in the world is about to be wrapped up, so take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God's words; if help, let it be God's hearty help. That way, God's bright presence will be evident in everything through Jesus, and he'll get all the credit as the One mighty in everything—encores to the end of time. Oh, yes!*

Turning Point . . .

John the Apostle says that Jesus came to show us what real love is—**selfless** and **others**-centered, and to enable us to experience it. We cannot give what we do not have. But we can have what God is offering us. And He's offering love this morning. Love so that we can love Him and love others.

Our challenge...

Believers – simply ask God,

Father God – Is my love for others growing, or not?

Seekers – If you are one checking out the claims of Christianity, know that the future God desires for you to experience is one that includes a growing personal relationship with Him. The good news is that to receive it, you simply have to ask Him.

To invite Christ into your heart, you can simply pray,

Lord Jesus, I want to receive your love today. I believe you came and died for me, and I want to be your friend and follower, starting today. So I officially invite you into my life today. Lead me, guide me, love me, so that I can love others better each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.