

God's Unconditional Love

by Leon King

I've heard Christian psychologists talk a lot about God's unconditional love toward people. I think they were trying to boost up people's self-esteem. I've also heard preachers using the same terminology which I believe they have learned from the psychologists. God does have unconditional love. We need to view it from a scriptural perspective. To whom does God extend his unconditional love?

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for **his great love wherewith he loved us**, 5* Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6* And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7* That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. -- Ephesians 2:1-7.*

This passage was written to the saints which were at Ephesus - a church composed of baptized believers. If we take it in that context, we see that God's love is set on those people. From this passage only, we cannot say that God's love is exclusively for believers, but we can say it is extended to them. As we search the scriptures, we find the love of God is especially and unconditionally toward his people. I believe his love is especially extended to

his elect. Let me see if I can prove my statement from Scripture. Let's look at Hebrews 12:5-8.

*And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: **For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? **But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.** -- Hebrews 12:5-8.*

This passage teaches us that God chastens every single person that he loves. It also teaches us that he does not chasten those who are not his. Since God has an elect people, it follows that he chastens his elect - those He loves with an unconditional love. Do we have scriptural proof that God doesn't chasten the wicked? Yes, we do. Turn to Job 21:7-19.

*Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, **neither is the rod of God upon them.** Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me. How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon*

*them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. **God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.**" -- Job 21:7-19.*

Yes, God's love is unconditional, but his love is directed to his children. The unregenerate have no legitimate scriptural claim on the love of God. Only those who experience the regenerating power of God's Holy Spirit can have assurance that they are the beneficiaries of the unconditional love of God.

As I have often told the church, I can never again tell an unregenerate sinner that God loves him. I will witness to him of the glorious gospel which is my duty. Will God still love the unbelieving sinner who is assigned to hell and the lake of fire or is it that His love is restricted to the elect?

Let us hasten to say that we believe in a general love which is extended to all of God's creatures. Indeed, He sends his rain on the just and the unjust. As his children, we are commanded to love our neighbor as our self - and to love our enemies! It is in the same sense that God does. We are expected to do the good and treat them as men created in the image of God. We would help them out of the ditch - help to heal their ills - spend and be spent for them.