

certainly never had before. And the word love in this NT sense is at the very heart of Christianity. There is perhaps no verse better known to Christians than John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. God so love the world. The very center and heart of Christianity.

So let's look for a few minutes at the love of God. We hear much about the justice of God. We hear much about his great attributes, much about his sovereignty--all these matters are important, but the love of God deserves tremendous emphasis. It is emphasized in the Bible. God created the world for a loving purpose. God so loved the world that He has created. But this world God created fell into sin. As a result God had to lay a curse upon the world. The world was under this curse of sin. Then we find the greatest expression of God's love. God so love the World that he gave his only-begotten Son. What a tremendous expression of His love!

It is of course a comparison which it is easy for us who are parents to understand. The love of a parent for his child is a very strong emotion--one of the strongest in human life. But the love of God for His people far surpasses any earthly human feeling. God wants us to realize the love of God. God wants us to rest in the love of God. God wants us to realize that everything that He is worthwhile. It is the result of the love of God.

Let's look at 1 John 4:15-16. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. So we know and the love God has for us. God is love. It doesn't say God's charity! God is love. The noun AGAPE as we noticed, occurs only once or twice in the LXX. It is rare that it ever occurs elsewhere in Greek literature, prior to the NT. In the NT it occurs dozens of times. A great many of these are the expression of God's wonderful love for those who he created and particularly for those whom he has redeemed through the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not a wishy-washy love. It is not a mere emotion. It is not a mere feeling. It is a love that does all for our good. It's important we come to realize that. We cannot truly love Christian lives as we should if we do not realize that God's love is a love that is not a mere expression of emotion. It is a love that is interested in our welfare. He makes all things work together for our good to those that love the Lord.

Heb. 12:5-7 bring out this very clearly. "My son do not make light of the Lord's discipline. Do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines those whom he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as disciplined. God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father. God wants us to realize that in all that happens (to us) how tremendous is the Love of God. He wants us to worship God. He wants us to bow adore and worship before Him. But he also wants us to rest in His love and to realize how much it should mean at every step of our lives. He wants us to realize that if we truly belong to Him, that the things that do not seem to us to go right is just as much an expression of His love as if they had gone the way we wanted.