

I remember hearing of a couple who had a child whom they loved very dearly, and the child was taken sick, very sick. They prayed intensely. They Lord gave the child healing and the child recovered. They said, How wonderful that God gave us this illustration of His love, He healed our child and did not take him from us! Someone said, Yes, but would not God have loved you just as much if it had been His will to take him from you at this time. A hard thing for parents to realize. A hard thing for us to realize as we face many of the trials and situations in life, but it is very important for us to realize that if we truly belong to God the things that seem terrible to us may just be a part of His love for us.

Oh the love of God! How deep it is, how tremendous it is. How wonderful it is. How important it is we have more and more realization day by day of the meaning to us of the love of God.

That leads on quite naturally, of course to the matter of our love to God. In Mat. 22:37 we notice Jesus said, This is the first and greatest commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. How much of our heart and soul and mind is truly devoted to the love of God? How much==how big a part does this love to God really play in our lives? Do we enjoy watching TV, or reading a mystery story, or watching a sport or something else more than we do basking in the love of God? It is important for us to realize that this first and greatest of the commandments is far more important than whether we break one or other of the particular prohibitions that are contained in the Scripture. And far more important than many of the matters that church groups often quarrel about. Do we love the Lord with all our hearts and with all our soul and with all our minds?

Our love to God is expressed in 1 John 4:19 in what I think is a very important way. It says, We love Him because He first loved us. We do not love Him because if we do because if we do we will get a good life. We don't love him because then we can hope to have peace in our hearts. We don't love him as a way of improving our experiences. We love Him because He first loved us.

You do not build up love to God in your heart by trying to make yourself do it, trying to develop that emotion and that feeling. We build up love to God by thinking of what God the Father did in sending His Son to be the Saviour; in thinking of what Jesus Christ did in giving up his delights of heaven and came down to earth in order to die on the cross for our sins. God gave his only-begotten Son. That Jesus Christ gave His life in order that we might be saved. If we meditate on this and realize what it means the response that comes in our hearts is that we love him and we should be able to move toward the point where we love him with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our might.

Love to God is listed as the very first of the fruit of the Spirit. God's purpose for us is to develop in us love to God and