

### 'Love One Another'

'Love is not an optional extra for Christians. It is to become the very essence of who we are and what we are about'; so says Tom Wright in his commentary on the passage we are considering.

#### Read 1 John 4:7-21

Everything hangs on love (Matthew 22:37); love is that important. God's love for us, our love for God, our duty is to reflect that love in everything we do and say. So easy to write, so hard to do!

Let us first consider God's love for us. *What do you think might limit God's love for you or anyone else? Which Bible passages would you turn to for confirmation of your answer?* Can you recall a time when you struggled to accept that God loved you. *For those outside the church who are searching, why do they find the concept of God loving them so difficult to accept?*

The enormity of God's love, given simply by His grace, means we are indebted to Him, but God does not consider us to be in his debt. *Why would that be? What is He hoping we will feel?*

*Spend a little time listing the benefits we have received by grace and love of God.*

Love for God begins, for many, as we realise and accept our own unworthiness to receive the love God richly pours upon us. The picture of the father running to greet his lost son (Luke 15:11ff) so vividly captures God's response to our 'awakening.' Further, that God in Christ Jesus would sacrifice himself to provide the opportunity for us to run into His waiting arms should forever seal our love for Him.

Jesus revealed to an unready world exactly what God was like. But many in our community say they don't know who God is. *Why is this?*

Now reread verses 11&12 then 19-21. *What is it that makes God's love complete? Where do I fit in, to complete God's love circle?*

This enabling to love unreservedly can only come about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, our good intentions and strength alone will not be sufficient. As followers of Jesus this means we must 'abide' in the love of God if our words and deeds are to witness to the love that is God. We in God and God in us. It will be God's love operating through us. To again paraphrase Tom Wright *'With God within us, can we expect an easy-going, half-hearted, hobby-religion? God has taken us utterly seriously. How can we not do the same for Him?*

**Prayer:** Help me Lord to see afresh the cross and stand in awe of the power and force of your love. Fill us afresh with that force that changed the world that day, and with it within me Lord, may I impact all those I meet, for the glory of the Lord Jesus and the expansion of His Kingdom.