



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. – Matthew 15:9

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God's Perfect Love

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. **But perfect love drives out fear**, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. – 1 John 4:7-21 NIV

The highlighted portion in the passage above is something I've been hearing a lot from different preachers and teachers that are affiliated in some way with the Seventh-day Adventist organization. It has really bothered me because I feel unable to love perfectly. Begging God to give me the ability to love perfectly hasn't worked. I still find myself not loving in the way that I probably should.

In the early hours of the morning I woke up and came to the computer because I couldn't get back to sleep. I listened to some Bible study classes taught by someone I enjoy listening to. When I heard her start talking about this perfect love, once again the feelings of unworthiness crept upon me as I recognized that I am unable to love others the way they deserve to be loved.

Then a thought occurred to me. Has this text been misused? What is perfect love? God alone is Perfect Love therefore only God can Love Perfectly. And if I strive to keep my focus upon Him and stop focusing on my inability to love others the way they deserve to be loved, then I will start loving others they way God wishes for me to love them. It's the law of worship. "By beholding we become changed." In other words, we start to emulate those whom we revere.

When I decided to write this little blurb I looked up the text and found that there is much more to it than just those few words. It appears to me that there is much being left out when they quote this passage by itself. So, I'm guilty of not practicing what I preach and that is to ask the question "what does this say about God?"

It's a new year out there. Hopefully yours will be better than the last and the biggest hope is that this is the year Jesus will return to get us.

Love to all,

Hannah

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