

The energy of God's Love in us as believers affects others around us - both the saved and the unsaved. Here is a partial list:

1. Love fosters unity among believers (Phil 2:1-4; Col 3:14).
2. Love creates genuine bonds of friendships (John 15:11-15; Phil 4:1).
3. Love never hurts it's neighbor (Rom 13:8, 10; 14:15).
4. Love produces a desire to pray for others (Rom 15:30).
5. Love affirms and builds up (Rom 12:10).
6. Love produces the following characteristics in a believer (1 Cor 13):
 - A. Patience.
 - B. Kindness (pleasant to be with).
 - C. Not envious, boastful nor proud.
 - D. Doesn't draw attention to itself.
 - E. Doesn't try to get its own way.
 - F. Doesn't blow up.
 - G. Doesn't look for gossip.
 - H. Delights in the truth.
 - I. Love is always there.
7. Love produces a gracious affirmation in receiving one who has sinned but has repented, this is true forgiveness (2 Cor 2:7, 8).
8. Love produces a compelling burden for the lost (2 Cor 5:14).
9. Love produces a burden for the saved who are needy (2 Cor 8).
10. Love produces the following virtues from the indwelling Holy Spirit: Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control (Gal 5:22, 23).
11. Love causes ministry to be inoffensive and to produce maximum results (Eph 4:2-15).
12. *God's* Love maintains the Christian marriage (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19; Tit 2:4)¹.
13. Love produces Biblical knowledge and discernment on how to use it (Phil 1:9).
14. Love begets Love - it increases and overflows (Phil 1:9; 1 Thes 3:12; Heb 10:24).
15. Unrelenting² Love covers (hides) a multitude of sins - an important facet of forgiveness (1 Peter 4:8).
16. Love motivates generosity to the extreme (1 John 3:16-18).
17. Love tosses out fear like it was garbage (1 John 4:18).

This is the energy of Love. If we are in His Love the possibilities of spiritual energy are endless. Lenski makes what I consider a concise point about the energetic nature of the Love of

¹ *Gk - philandrous einai philoteknous* - Lit. husband-lovers - children-lovers.

² The literal meaning of "fervent" in KJV and NAS and "deeply" is to Love without relenting - never allow any person or their acts get in the way of loving that person.

God: **“in the man there is no activity, in God the greatest activity.”** I think it is safe to assert that unless our Christian walk is motivated from God's Love, it is powerless and fruitless.

The evidence that one has been born of God is that he does the Loving³ unconditionally. He does not depend on being treated fairly by others in order to Love them in return. Another feature of this Love is that the object of It does not have to *appear* to deserve It. To do otherwise would cheapen Love by reducing it to the same sort of love that the unsaved have for each other⁴. John goes on to say that the evidence of an unsaved person is that he does not have this capacity to Love the brethren as God does. John uses as evidence that the unsaved are so by the fact that they are not Loving the brethren. John states the true nature of God's Love by saying without the initiative in the regeneration of the sinner from His Loving provision there would be no Love of God pouring into and coming out of the believer - we love Him because He first loved us.

“...God is Love.” This is a statement of God's absolute attributes. See “God is Light” (**The First Circle, Centering on Fellowship with God** - comments on 1:5), “God is spirit” (Gos John 4:24). More on this later in verse 16.

The Expression of God's Love - (9, 10)

1 John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. (NAS)

The ultimate expression of God's Love is that we as believers are made alive through Christ. Paul wrote this:

Eph 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. (NIV)

The Magnitude of His Love - vs 9. Superlatives of any language fail to define the Love of God in It's magnitude and intensity. “God so loved...”⁵ “...His great Love...” All these fail miserably to communicate the Love that God has for mankind. Solomon wrote of this intensity: ***Prov 8:30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; [31] Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.*** (NIV). This is a most thrilling passage. The first person is the pre-existent Christ. Second person is the Father. The relationship between the two (and the third, Holy Spirit, in his processive role is not mentioned) was that of delight. That is found in verse 30. Verse 31, however, is quite exciting to me. It seems to me that the intensity of the Father's

³ Can you tell that I like the emphasis that Lenski puts on the continuous action of this Loving? Indeed, the true badge of a genuine Christian is the consistency of Loving others despite their actions or attitude toward him.

⁴ Matthew 5:46 **For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?**

⁵ John 3:16.

Love for the Son is also shared with the Son (and likewise with the Father and the Holy Spirit) and the sons of men! Think of it! Our Lord *before the salvation of mankind* took great delight in all us - even in our wretched condition!

Vs 9 cont.). It is this intense, energetic and enormous Love of God that could not be confined nor be contained within the boundary of the Trinity. No! It overflowed with great torrents to all of us when our Lord became incarnate and dwelt among us. The choice of the Greek *en* to relate His Love with mankind is no accident. Some theologians want to translate it "...in us..." while others wish to translate "...among us..." - the KJV uses "...toward us..." The fact is that language fails to communicate the *manifestation* of God's Love. It was with unimaginable delight that Jesus Christ "tabernacled"⁶ with us. The writer of Hebrews expressed it this way;

Hebrews 2:11 **Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. [12] He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."**
(NIV)

Some Bible students think this passage is referring to worship in the synagogue where the name of the Lord is extolled and where Jesus, Himself sang psalms of worship of His Father. The exciting point we derive from this passage is that when Jesus is sharing in the worship of the Father especially in His intercessory role, part of His participation is the delight with which He includes the child of God in this worship as His brothers. Not only that but He declares with great delight to those who are worshipping that we are His family members. Jesus' great delight is that He can be our brother - we can be members of His family! What great love! And this Love is among us in the most intimate way by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit⁷! Is it no wonder that the Angelic Host rejoices greatly when *one* sinner comes to Christ⁸ - they share in His delight with just one more sinner being added to God's family.

This enormous Love that God has - the great intensity, energy is further expressed by the Father's regard He has for His Son. **Only Begotten**. Actually the NIV has the best rendition "**one and only Son**." Literally in the original, *monogenés*, - means unique, one-of-a-kind begotten. Isaac was so described (Heb 11:17). Abraham *did* have another son - Isaac was unique in that he was the son of promise. We are all God's children - **Jesus is the unique one-of-a-kind Son**. He *is* the unique God-Man of the universe and as such enjoys such an intimate unique relationship with the Father⁹. This intense, enormous, energetic Love that the Father has for His Son is the same Love that was manifested, shown in and among us so that we

⁶ John 1:14.

⁷ Rom 5:5.

⁸ Luke 15:7-10.

⁹ Other passages = John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18.

might live through Him - Jesus Christ. *We are the objects of this great Love!*

1 John 4:10 **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

Finally, John sets up a stark contrast to show us the Love of God. “...not that we loved God...” is a gross understatement. Indeed, not only did we not love God but we *hated* Him. We were, in reality, His enemies. Oh yes, the tongue could phrase such wonderful litanies of praise to Him. But the heart contained quite a different picture. The heart was full of sin - Romans 3:13 **Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: [15] Their feet are swift to shed blood: [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways: [17] And the way of peace have they not known: [18] There is no fear of God before their eyes.** (NIV)

The contrast is indeed stark. Whereas we hated Him, He Loved us with a great Love. This Love is wonderfully illustrated in the Old Testament in the book of Hosea. The story goes like this. God wanted to illustrate His Love for Judah so he told Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute. Now Gomer did not love Hosea, in fact, it wasn't long before she was unfaithful and went back to her former lovers and returned to her former life of sin. But that wasn't the end of the story. Gomer because of her life of sin eventually became destitute and ended up on the slave market, a picture of our sinful condition. God then told Hosea to take some money and go to the local slave market and look for his wife Gomer. He found her and purchased her and then said to her:

Hosea 3:1 **The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes." [2] So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. [3] Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you."**

And so, we have the wonderful illustration for the great Love that God had for Judah and for that matter all of mankind. This is an illustration of the redemption of man. But there's another side to this wonderful truth - **that of expiation.**

We think frequently of our redemption but we must never forget that a price had to be paid for this redemption. Jesus paid that price with His blood - that truth is called expiation - our word “propitiation” in 1 John 4:10. *Hosea paid the price* to redeem Gomer and then freed her to be his loving wife. Paying the price for her deliverance from the slave market of her sin illustrates the doctrine of expiation.

You see, we like Gomer never loved in the first place. It was the wooing of the husband who initiated everything. This is the Love of God. We did not love God, but He did Love us to the awful point of giving His Son as expiation - paying the price to redeem us with His precious blood¹⁰.

¹⁰ 1 John 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.