

## A Transformed Christmas: Part 4

# ***Do you know a love that doesn't quit?***

***John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10; Romans 8:35-39; Luke 15***

**Sunday December 18, 2011**



A Leatherman tool is a multi-function, multi-purpose tool that can be used for everything from cutting to measuring, prying to prying. It is designed to do a lot of different jobs and I know a lot of people who never leave home without one. It is handy and can do a lot of little jobs well. What is true of some tools is also true for some words. Take the word “love” for instance. Doesn’t it cover a lot of ground and get used in many different contexts? The word “love” gets used in reference to everything from our experiences to desires, longing to affinity, commitment to lust. In all of these contexts and many more, people could use the word “love” to describe their experience or desire, their commitment or relationship.

Love means a lot of different things in a lot of different situations.

So, when the Bible tells us that God loves us, what exactly does that mean? Given the incredible variety of uses of the word “love” in our culture, how do we understand what is intended when we read that God loves us? The Bible uses the word “love” over 1,000 times and there is a number of Hebrew and Greek words that can be readily and accurately translated using our word “love”. How do we then understand the Biblical idea of love, especially as it relates to Christmas?

I believe that if we want to understand what it means when we hear the phrase that God loves us, we need to look at Jesus. He came to reveal the love of God to all people for all time. John, one of his followers, wrote about this truth many decades after Jesus’ death and resurrection. He was one of those people who thought deep and long about things and here is what he had to say about it:

- ***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*** (1 John 4: 9-10).

Jesus came into the world for two reasons: (1) to show God’s love to us; and (2) that we might live through him. Furthermore, he paid the price of that life by becoming an atoning sacrifice for us. So, if we want to understand God’s love, we need to look at Jesus’ life and we need to accept the life that he has for us....that is, after all, why he was born in Bethlehem.

In this last week before Christmas, I want to encourage you to reflect on some of the Bible passages where we see the love of Jesus. Take a concordance and look up some of the many passages where we see his love. As you reflect, ask yourself two simple questions: have I experienced this love in my life? And: am I willing to pass this love on to others?

God’s love is not theoretical and it is not ethereal – it is real and is still touching lives. In fact, it is a love that doesn’t quit. If you need a passage to reflect on, here are two suggestions:

### **Read Romans 8:35-39**

- What can separate us from God's love?
- Do these verses encourage you?
- Is there ever the possibility that you are beyond God's love?
- Paul was convinced of this certainty (v 38), are you?
- What difference does it make to be certain that you are loved by God and cannot be separated from his love?

### **Read Luke 15**

One day, Jesus told three stories back-to-back in response to the religious leaders of his day who criticized him for the people he had befriended. As you read these stories, ask yourself one simple question:

- What do I learn about the love of God from these stories?

### **Read John 3:16-18**

- Why did Jesus come into the world?
- If we "believe" in Jesus what happens?
- What does "eternal life" mean?
- How important is it to believe in Jesus?
- What would it end up costing Jesus to come and make this possible?
- Did he hesitate or quit at this price tag?
- What price did Jesus pay for you?

Note: When the Bible uses the word *believe* it describes a continuing, settled attitude and choice. It does not describe a mystical experience or a feeling but rather the choice to trust and act on the trust given.

### **Our Journey of Transformation: The love of God never quits.**

Jesus came to bring the transforming power of God to our world, which becomes active in our lives when we truly experience the love of God through the grace of Jesus Christ. His love is such that he takes away our sin, gives us the Holy Spirit and begins to morph us from the inside out.

- Have you experienced this love? Then praise him this Christmas season for you know you have a gift of love that doesn't quit!
- Do you want to receive that love? Give the church office a call, we would love talk to you about it!
- Do you want to be a vehicle of that love? Then ask God to use you to show his love to the people he brings into your life!

### **Responding to the Truth:**

Jesus Christ is the love of God – a love that doesn't quit. What exactly does that mean to you and what will you do as result of engaging this truth?