

Rooted in God's love

To receive salvation, we all have had to accept the unconditional love of God, and we understood that it was by God's grace. We approached God with all our sins and weaknesses, knowing that salvation could not be earned by our own self efforts and that we did not need to be perfect for God to accept us. This In short was His UNCONDITIONAL love !

Until then no problem... but what happened? Through the years that UNCONDITIONAL love became in our head, little by little a CONDITIONAL love. What do I mean by that? We think that when we sin, God can no longer fellowship with us because after all He is holy. We must always walk right for God to want to bless us and God will only use us for His glory if we walk holy and perfect before Him.

The problem is that this kind of conditional love can only produce insecurity, a constant feeling of guilt, an unhealthy fear that keeps us from growing and fellowshiping with God. To be powerful, God's love must remain unconditional... God loving us, God blessing us and God wanting to use us for His kingdom regardless of our conduct (see *Rom. 11:6*). This kind of love is called GRACE ... all that God is and has -his love, His favor, His generosity, His acceptance and His divine ability, given to us in Christ unconditionally. God loves us, not because we are nice and beautiful and deserve his love, but because God is love. God blessed us, not because we behave well, but because He is generous, God uses us, not because we are so great, but because He is good, kind and far from being selfish. His love is boundless, it is radical and extravagant.

I agree, and no doubt about it, we must learn to walk straight and live holy, but the way to achieve this is where most Christians differ. Someone might say that this is irresponsible and it will free people to live in sin. Far from it! Do you know that love is a much greater motivating force than fear. *John 4:19 "We love Him because He first loved us."* God knows that if He can touch our hearts, then He will have our life and our devotion.

Of course, there is what the Bible calls the fear of the Lord, but it is not a fear that torments, No! It is a reverence and an awe of God when we discover that He doesn't have to love and bless us, yet He chooses to.

Jer. 33:9 "Then it shall be Mean name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it."

This kind of love will cause us to become loyal toward God and hate evil, sin and anything that displeases God. It will motivate us to walk straight, to keep ourselves pure, to give our life for others, It will inspire us to run two kilometers if God asks us to run one. This is what Paul talks about in *Titus 2:11-12* "*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.*"

It is not the fear of punishment that motivates to change but according to *Romans 2:4*, *it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance*. And repentance simply means to change our way of thinking in order to change our way of living.

God doesn't want us to walk on eggshells around Him like we would around a perfectionist, compulsive and excessive, because It is in this kind of atmosphere of fear and insecurity that Badaboom... someone will spill the milk and break the vase. No! God is not like that... on the contrary, He wants to build around us an atmosphere of love and security where we can feel loved, because this is when we will truly become free and powerful. When we learn to live **IN** His grace, which is His love and favor, then we end up living **BY** His grace which is also His divine ability, the force and power to do what we could not on our own.

We discover this principle in *Ephesians 3:17-20* "*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded In love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*"

God can only do abundantly above all we ask and think, according to the power (His grace His divine ability) that works in us, but this power (His grace and divine ability) will only work in those who are grounded and rooted in His love (His grace, His unconditional love and favor). God is love and those who are rooted and grounded in His love will bear good fruit, godly fruit, the fruit of love.

The same unconditional love we received at the new birth is the same unconditional love in which we must learn to live in. We are called to live by faith, but faith works out by love. My faith will work when I know that I know that I am loved by God... even and especially when I do not deserve it.