

The Gift of God That's Within You

Part 6: Touched by His Love (part 3)

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

A few notes on sermons

It seems that every time I prepare a sermon, the Lord will highlight a few “side topics” to share on. The small, 5-minute asides that often result are actually very valuable in that they provide a short teaching on a topic I might not otherwise be able to touch on.

Overall, the Sunday sermons are meant to be more than you can digest in one sitting. They are meant to be like a feast. Feasts have left-overs! You should plan to bring a take-home box to the sermons at Agathos! Like Pastor Brad often taught us ... it takes repetition with a sermon to really get it! You can't finish it off in one sitting. You have to spend more time with it if you are going to eat it all!

Malachi 3 says that we bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in His house. Do you realize that when you give to a ministry, God actually blesses that minister's time in the Word and in prayer? When I sit down to prepare a sermon for our church it is like I have super-stocked kitchen! The whole tithe comes into the storehouse not only so that a pastor can be employed and not only so that you'd be blessed financially, but also so that God can OPEN THE WINDOWS of HEAVEN and pour out spiritual blessing upon His people! Tithing / giving is a spiritual act of faith and God is saying “they are sowing into this ministry and I will MAKE SURE that they are fed an abundance!”

There is no better teacher for you to listen to than your home-church pastor. It has nothing to do with your home-church pastor being the best teacher in the world. Home cooking is the right cooking for you. God works to make sure that you are fed in the context of your home church. Many people today (because of modern technology) are following multiple shepherds and find themselves confused in their walk with God. It's beautiful to learn from all the wonderful teachers in the Body of Chris (I DO TOO!) but you have to have a plumb line, a basis, a home church. God is working to make sure that you are fed through your home church.

Gulliver Prophecy from 2005

The church is founded on the apostles and prophets. Apostles have a blueprint from Heaven with the mandate to Heaven-ize earth. Prophets hear and see what God is doing. Teachers instruct to build foundation and provide mooring. Pastors gather together and protect. Evangelists reach out and gather in. All of these are supposed to equip the saints for the works of service so that the saints (not just the 5-fold ministers) actually are able to do the work of the kingdom.

Bob Jones was a very “senior” prophet who passed away a few years ago. His words had a track record of being very accurate and operating in a large sphere of authority.

(Romans 12:3 says we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought but according to the measure of faith that we have been given. In Ps. 131, David said his eyes were not lifted high. We have a tendency as people to get into a place of presumption where we don't have grace for what we are trying to do. This is why many people should not be making public political commentary. For example, I knew that abortion was wrong for years yet last October the Lord told me to start speaking out about it. What happened? A grace came upon me. When the grace came upon me, I knew I could step into it! Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought, but instead according to the measure of grace given to you. You can grow in your favor with both God and man.)

The point is, Bob Jones had a grace to speak to large issues. Different prophets have different weight on their words - and perhaps different weight on words about different topics. Authority matters. All that to say that Bob Jones was a very senior prophet. He often would see other people's dreams, call them, describe the dream, and interpret for them. He also prophesied International House of Prayer (IHOP) many years ahead of time.

1 Thes. 5:19-21 says “*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.*” One of the ways you can quench the Spirit is by despising prophecies. What does it mean to despise prophecies? We've all heard prophecies that we've not seen come to pass and we can start to despise prophecy. The Lord says “don't throw the baby out with the bathwater - don't despise prophecy.” BUT - test everything and hold fast to what's good.

1 Corinthians 14 even says that “*and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets*” and if anyone does not acknowledge that ... if you have some “super-spiritual” prophet who doesn't like for their words to be discerned by the other prophets than that “prophet” should have no “standing” in the church to speak. (Phrases in quotes are mine).

We are supposed to test prophetic words. In the OT they tested prophets. In the NT we test prophetic words. It's nice now-a-days that prophets that miss it here and there don't get stoned. So, you can discern about this prophetic word which Bob Jones gave in July of 2005:

While in a conference in Cincinnati, Ohio Bob had a vision of a great man, who in the past had fallen asleep. He was lying on his back, half-covered in dirt, and his name was Gulliver. Little people from a place of little input had completely tied him down, and he was waking up from being asleep for the past 38 years. We can also call him (Gulliver) the Body of Christ. Bob saw that the head of this very large man was in Cleveland, Ohio, in a place called "Jacob's field."

The next thing Bob saw was a large, center pole of a tent coming up out of Columbus, Ohio. This was His heart. Powerful signs and wonders will come up out of Columbus, greater than we've ever seen before, that will look like a canopy over the region. Explosions of miracles and healings will be the hallmark of this city.

Cincinnati was the place where the reproduction organs were. Reproducing of the Kingdom will be evidenced here in priestly and kingly anointing.

The left hand of this large man was in Philadelphia, which had teaching and great love in it. The right hand extended west and came to rest in Indianapolis, Indiana. It began to flex, and the cords that were around it to keep it tied down, were beginning to snap off like rubber bands.

The left foot was in Charlotte, North Carolina, and there was a great television with it, so they televised the gospel all around the world. The right foot was in Nashville, Tennessee, where great faith is beginning to raise up.

This great man finally began to get up, breaking off all restraints and planting both of his feet in Atlanta, Georgia.

Bob said, "God means to take Ohio, then move over to Indianapolis and up into Illinois, crossing over into the east and finally standing completely upright in Atlanta." The Lord told Bob that to take Atlanta would mean capturing the whole south. (FROM <http://www.bobjones.org/index.cfm?zone=/Docs/Gullivers/Travels.htm>)

Do you realize that this prophecy features Columbus?!? Again, you have to decide if you have a witness on this word. I personally believe it was from a faithful prophet.

One of the things we tend to do is not to wage war with the prophetic words spoken over us. *"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare ..."* (1 Tim. 1:18) The prophecies declaring our destiny are meant to be a weapon in our warfare that we utilize in advancing into our destiny. We are supposed to declare the prophecies over that which comes against to try to hinder.

Columbus plays a central role in this prophecy which makes sense because Columbus plays a central role in Ohio and even a central role in the nation as a test market. Bob Jones' widow recently (fall of 2016) said the time for the Gulliver prophecy was now. Accordingly, Lou Engle, who has a call on his life for prayer and fasting for revival took up the word from Bob as an assignment. He held an assembly in Cleveland this summer and will hold one in Columbus and then Cincinnati in January!

THE DATE IS JANUARY 13th. 12-5:30pm and 7-10pm at The Greater Columbus Convention Center 400 N High St, Columbus, OH 43215. REGISTER: <https://thecall.ticketspice.com/revival-man-tour-columbus>

Every revival started somewhere and with someone! Could it be us? Could it be you? Could it be me? I think God is looking back and forth to see who it will be.

Agathos' Calling re: God's Love

On July 21, 2013, Mark Crawford visited Agathos and said:

"One of the hallmarks that you will have as a group of people will be a divine revelation of love. And an expression of the love of God. And it won't just be something that you know of, or heard, or said "Oh, God loves me." No, it will be a deep revelation understanding about the love of God and the extent of it. Because the Bible says that nothing can separate us from His love. Neither height, nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers, NOTHING can separate us from His love. And so it's the love of God that covers over so many things. People can hear about the love of God, but they're wanting to experience it. They're wanting to experience what that means."

This is a calling / destiny on Agathos! Daniel Nelson also shared:

This is about my Father's heart for you and for the church. The teachings these past few months have been about God's Father heart. The heart of the giant man is in Columbus. In this, God is teaching us His Father's heart for the country and for us. This church has a very big role to play in the bringing about of this revival. I encourage us all to step into it and grab hold of God's heart for you, everyone around, and for the city especially.

Love Takes Work

Do not feel bad having to work on your love relationship with God. Think of marriage! If we think that love is just an emotion, we won't work at it. We will think "how can I change the emotion any more than successfully push a wet noodle around." But, if we think that love HAS emotions associated with it - that when we do the things love does, emotions follow which are a blessing - than we will work at doing the things that love does.

Remember that the Ephesian church had departed from their first love and Christ "*you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and **do the first works.***" Notice how Christ thinks about it ... "do the first works ... do the things that love does again as it relates to your relationship with Me and you will start to experience the things that love experiences again." Again, it is actually NORMAL to have to work at love relationships.

When married couples sadly get divorced, they may say "we fell out of love." They actually didn't "fall out of love" but more accurately, at least one of them stopped doing the things that love does!

When we do the things that love does, God rewards us with beautiful emotions. We do the things that love does in marriage and we have wonderful opportunities for intimacy. When you serve people in society, God rewards you with money. God sets up these beautiful systems that cause the right sorts of things to happen so that His will becomes a joy to do! So, in marriage when you do the things that love does, you experience beautiful intimacy ... and if we stop doing the things that love does the intimacy will eventually suffer.

If we do the things that love does in our relationship with God - and we stick at that - we will experience all the beauty that comes with it. But if we feel bad that we are not “feeling it” right now, we will actually hinder the actual process of stepping into greater expressions of His love.

Some of us need to do some love “rehab.” When you hurt your knee, you can go to rehab. They measure your range of motion that first day (perhaps 30 degrees) and they have a target range of motion (perhaps 120 degrees). They do not just crack your knee from 30 degrees to 120 degrees in one day! Rehab is bit-by-bit and they stretch you over 3 months time so that 90 days later you have full range of motion.

We are staying on this topic of being touched by His love as a theme for house church for this whole term - because for some of us it is going to take a little bit of rehab to get that range of motion back in our love walk with God. Don't despise the process - stick with it!

The key is to respond in humility. Megan recently shared at house church about how there are 3 ways we can respond to an issue in our life:

- Deny it (pride)
- Recognize it but figure YOU can fix it (sneaky pride)
- Recognize it AND praise God that He will do the work as you commit it to Him (HUMILITY!)

Quick Review about Love

Condemnation is what separates us from the love of God. We talked about laying hold of accusations - we don't let the accusation come in because an accusation received or believed or entertained becomes condemnation which turns into separation. We don't want to allow the enemy to steal our intimacy with the Father.

The second point was that is not just His words, but it is also His ways! If we have the mindset in which we just want to know the Word of God but don't know that there is meant to be an encounter with His heart as we hear His words, we will actually miss something very precious. Half of the sermon is the heart - not just the content. Some say 93% of human communication is non-verbal; could it be that much is non-verbal from the Lord? Daniel Finley mentioned at house church that

when we take His yoke upon us it is actually in His subtle movements that we feel what He's doing. So we want to know not just His Words, but also His ways! God teach us your ways!

Not Just QUANTITY, but also QUALITIES

I have been having MUCH more success meditating in the love of God over the past few months than I ever have. There have been a few reasons for that. One is that I had that encounter in Cleveland where shame was removed and love came in - in a deeper way than it ever had before. The second reason is that God gave me a very helpful strategy for meditating in His love.

I had not realized I had been doing it, but I had actually been limiting the aspects of His love that I could meditate in. I am hoping to open some doors for you with this teaching and perhaps there will be some beautiful, new aspects of His love that begin to beckon you. These things are meant as invitations for you to explore on your own with Him.

Here's the secret: we can meditate not only in the quantity of God's love, but also in the qualities of His love!

Let's first look at the more familiar - the quantity of His love:

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(Rom. 5:8)

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)

These are saying that when God gave His Son, that was a demonstration of the quantity of His love. He demonstrated His love in giving His Son. When we put these two verses together, we see that the extent of His love has been clarified and demonstrated in the giving of His Son who was the most valuable person / thing He could have ever sacrificed on our behalf. Therefore, the extent / size / magnitude of God's love includes everything up to and including the value of His very own Son! That's how GREAT a love with which He loved us!

You may have a situation in your life where you think "wow it would take a lot of love for God to get me out of this one!" You can ask yourself "is it as much love as sacrificing His Son for me? No it's not that much ... OK, that's included then ... that's included in the deal!" Everything else is easy for Him to give compared to giving His Son - "*how shall He not with Him also **freely** give us all things?*"

That's a great meditation to do - in the quantity of God's love - to think on how GREAT is His love! This is what we typically meditate on "it wasn't nails that held Him there; it was His love." While this is really a great meditation, I have personally found it limiting. I think "yep, the love of God is big,

Yep, it's really big. I have no clue how big His love for me is. It is bigger than I think ..." That's about as much as my brain can do with that.

We love because He first loved us so if my meditation on His love is limited to simply the size of it, by nature my love for others will mostly be focused on loving them "more" or effectively "bigger." While there can be some traction there - "oh He loved me that MUCH and therefore I have MORE love for others" - there is a lot more to the love of God than just the size of it!

If someone earnestly asked you to describe America and your response was simply "big!" ... wouldn't that be a small subset of the adjectives that you could use to accurately and thoroughly describe America? While describing America as "big" is definitely a starting place, going beyond describing only it's size would be really helpful if you wanted someone to get a really good sense of our nation!

If you want to understand and have more of a revelation of God's love, you have to go past just thinking about quantity and step into a place of also thinking about the qualities of God's love.

Nothing without God's Love ... Everything with It!

In thinking about the qualities of God's love, the obvious place to start is 1 Corinthians 13. *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing (or I am nothing)."*

If you don't have the love of God - regardless of what else you have - you have nothing. When you flip it around, you see this: if you have the love of God - regardless of what else you don't have - you have everything! Paul had learned the secret of how to abound and to be abased. I'm believing for sustained revival, but it doesn't even matter to me! It can come or not come as long as I am loved by Him!

There are things we are seeking after in our life that we think are going to provide so much fulfillment, but if we got a revelation of the love of God, our perspective on some of those things would change.

While starting with 1 Corinthians 13 makes sense for looking at the qualities of God's love, let's actually start in Galatians 5.

The Fruit of the Spirit are Actually Aspects of God's Love!

Let's look at Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."*

What does the “fruit of the Spirit” mean? If you put God’s Word into your heart, or in other words if you live by the Spirit / live by the Word (Jn. 6:63), these are the fruit that naturally come out!

We often think of the fruit of the Spirit as character-type things. The gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12) like prophecy and gifts of healing do not necessarily come with the fruit of the Spirit. Because of this you will sometimes see Spirit-filled people doing some pretty amazing, Spirit-filled things while also doing some pretty terrible / fleshly fruit of the Spirit stuff. You are thinking “the works of the flesh are self-evident, how can this be???” The enemy is trying to use them to cause you to disdain the things of the Spirit of God.

Don’t go there. Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater. Just know that they are not acting as very mature Christians that minute. In other words they are not being governed in all areas of their life by the Word of God and they are therefore not getting the fruit of the Spirit in all areas of their life. They are flowing in the gifts of the Spirit, but not the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts are simply received, but the fruit needs time and nurturing to grow!

This is why Paul needed to tell the Corinthians (who were very much flowing in the gifts of the Spirit) about the importance of LOVE! 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 were about the gifts of the Spirit but Paul interrupted that train of thought with an entire chapter on love (1 Cor. 13). These were the Spirit-filled believers who were not waiting for each other when they got together to eat. They had lots of prophetic words and tongues, but they were missing love. So we want the fruit of the Spirit to accompany the gifts of the Spirit in our life!

Now, if these are the fruit of the Spirit, that means that when you sow the seed of God (which is the Word of God) these are the things that are naturally produced in your life. That means that these characteristics are inherent to the very DNA of God! The fruit of the Spirit are actually an opportunity to meditate on who God is to you!

If these are these are the fruit that get produced when you sow God into your heart, than these are the things that are descriptive of who God is! You have to get that before we move on.

In other words, God IS love, joy, peace, patience, kindness ... these are actually describing God!

Now, watch this ... what is the first fruit of the Spirit? Love. Therefore all the other fruit of the Spirit come through the avenue of love. When you have love, it gives access to the rest. God’s love has certain qualities about it that are detailed right here in Galatians 5:

- God’s love is actually filled with **joy**. These are things you can meditate on. You can say “Father, thank You that Your love is actually filled with joy. When I had that encounter with God’s love He told me “don’t thank Me for loving you.” I was so confused and He said “it’s EASY for Me to love you. It’s not a

hard work. It's not something you have to thank Me for. It's a delight." In other words, it's a *joy* for Him to love you!

- God's love is totally rooted in a covenant of **peace** with you. *"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has mercy on you.*" (Isa. 54:10) God loves you from a place of peace! If you get sideways about something, God's love NEVER gets sideways with you! His love doesn't fly off as though somehow you became His enemy in a second. You are at peace with Him. It's a covenant of peace. It's not at war. It's at peace.
- Then you find out that His love is **patient** toward you. That sounds like 1 Corinthians 13, doesn't it! Notice the next two in a row here in Galatians 5: patience and kindness. Patience is actually one of the best litmus tests for love with each other. If I am finding myself impatient with someone it is a really good indicator that I have stepped out of love, and if I've stepped out of love with them it means I've lost awareness of God's love for me. So, if I find that patience is fleeting with someone, that's actually indicator to me that I actually need to step further into God's love. "God, show me how much you love me right now. What do you want to speak to me right now? I want to step back into Your love." Patience is a great litmus test. 1 Corinthians 13 lists patience as a primary characteristic of love and you cannot be kind with someone until you are patient.
- God is so kind to us and His **kindness** toward us starts with His patience toward us. These are characteristics of God's love.
- When you see how patient and kind He is with us, it becomes clear that He has only **goodness** for us! *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."* (1 Jn. 1:5) *"Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."* (James 1:16-17) He has nothing but goodness for us! His love toward us is completely good!
- I was recently asking God to show me about **faithfulness** because I believe the faithfulness revelation flows out of the goodness revelation. He said "how can I help but be faithful toward you when My intentions toward you are ONLY good?" In the world, we so often see "love" that's not faithful, but His love is completely faithful! That means it is full of faith! His love believes all things, hopes all things, and does not rejoice in evil - only delighting in the truth! His love is completely faithful!
- Marriage is the best representation of the next point, but it still falls so far short! If a near perfect husband was committed to being completely faithful to his wife, delighted to love her, kind, and patient ... then it would be easy for him to be gentle. Lack of **gentleness** comes from a desire to control. A desire to manipulate. Manipulate comes from the Latin "to put your hand" on something. Take your hand off the Ark so-to-speak. What God's saying is that His love, by nature, is gentle.
- God's love, by nature, is **self-controlled**, which means He is NOT controlling you. His love by nature puts you in control. God's gentleness leads to the revelation that He's actually putting you in control of your life. Of course then you acknowledge Him in all your ways and He helps direct your paths and gives you wisdom, but He still leaves you in control! Even Jesus had the complete right to lay down His

life - no one, not even the Father took it from Him. His salvation has brought you into a broad place so that there can be a broad expression of the kingdom on this earth.

- Jesus Himself was gentle. *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* (Mt. 11:29) God’s love is gentle. Psalms 18:35 shares an amazing revelation - it is His gentleness that makes us great! David said it. He knew that it was God’s gentleness that had made Him great. Parents let us think about how our gentleness could make our children great. Bosses let us think about how our gentleness could make our employees great. I am not saying to remove discipline - reproofs are the way of life! But let us think about how our gentleness could raise others up.

I was in prayer about a month ago and felt a amazing, soft presence by my right ear and I said “Lord what is that?” He said “you just encountered my gentleness.” All of these aspects of God’s love are not only available for revelation but they are available for encounter! The patience of His love is something that you can have not only a revelation of, but also an encounter with! The peace of His love is something you can have both a revelation of and an encounter with! God stands at the door of your heart and knocks. He wants you to encounter new dimensions of His love!

1 Corinthians 13

Now that we’ve looked at Galatians 5, you can do the same thing with 1 Corinthians 13. We know that *“love is from God, God is love, and we love because He first loved us ...”* (1 Jn 4:7,8,19) So, when we look at 1 Corinthians 13, we see that love doesn’t behave rudely and therefore you can say “God does not behave rudely toward me.” Some people give prophetic words that are rude ... that’s unfortunate because it is not properly expressing the heart of God. I’m not being critical - they just need a revelation.

Let’s just highlight a few parts of 1 Corinthians 13:

- **Love does not envy.** We are talking about the characteristics of God’s love. In my opinion there is some power in saying “I want to be loving so I will not envy” but the real power is in saying “God is love and HIS LOVE does not envy ... so I am going to experience how His love doesn’t envy so that then when I love people I naturally do not have a love that’s envious!” We love because He first loved us! This is a secret key! His love doesn’t envy. I’ve been mediating on these things and here and there the lightbulb goes off! So what does it mean that His love does not envy? When He spends time with you He’s not envying spending time with anybody else. If you meet someone who is envious, they want to one-up everything that they are doing (I’m sure many of us have been there before). Remember that envy is like what 1 John 2:15-16 calls the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ... the LOVE OF GOD takes care of them all! When you have a revelation that God’s love doesn’t envy, when we go to love people, naturally there isn’t envy in it! God’s love doesn’t envy. He’s not looking forward to spending time with someone else when He spends time with you. You are the apple of His eye! His face shines upon you ... in other words His face “lights up” when He sees you!

- Love is not puffed up.*** His love is not proud or haughty. Do you realize that when you meet with God that He's actually the more humble of the two of you? Jesus said He is gentle and lowly of heart. The yoke of Christ is humility. If you want to yoke up with Christ, you are going to put a yoke of humility on. His yoke is humility and that's what brings rest to our souls. You will find rest to your souls when you come into a place of humility. This is just like Psalm 131 said - you will have a heart that is calmed and quieted when your eyes are not lifted high - when you come into humility. Pride is what brings destruction into our hearts. We have issues with emotions because of pride. Andrew Wommack once said that some people are depressed all the time and they don't realize that they are functioning in pride. Of course you don't want to have to say that. The root of the depression is self-centeredness and self-centeredness is rooted in pride. Again we think "how could I say that to someone -they're depressed after all!" But if you want them to be free ... Think about how many of us have experienced the delight of not making ourselves the center of our world and instead making our King who loves us so well the center of our world. What peace enters our souls! What delight enters our life! What negative emotions fall away! Depression and anxiety flake off when you come into the place of humility - that is proper relationship with God. God is not puffed up when He meets with us. This is a characteristic of His love toward us. He's more meek when He meets with us than we are! He said that Moses was the meekest man on earth. He keeps tabs of humility. I believe humility is the beauty of heaven. Naza helped me out and gave me Ps. 149:4 "He beautifies the humble with salvation!"
- Love does not parade itself.*** Another translation says "love vaunts not" or effectively "love flaunts not." You have to get one point here and then you can get the revelation. So first, see this: God is NOT flaunting you about. He is in relationship with you. He's not trying to flaunt you in front of other people. But how does that knowledge help me? Watch this ... He's not trying to make Himself look good with you in front of other people. (Now, I know we are supposed to be oaks of righteousness for the display of His splendor and I know that answered prayer in our life is a beacon to the world that confirms the goodness of His covenant with us and invites them to experience the same. That's good. But's that a by-product though ... He's not using you to bring glory to Him). He's flaunting you not. His love is a type of love that doesn't vaunt - it doesn't flaunt. That means that He can never be embarrassed with you! His is the sort of love that it is impossible for Him to be embarrassed by you because He was never trying to get His identity or fulfillment from how you were or how you looked in front of other people. He was never trying to get you to look a certain way in front of other people so that you could look a certain way in front of other people. He's NOT playing for the audience of man - He's no respecter of man. If God's not trying to get you to look good in front of people, how much does it cost Him when you don't look good? Nothing! He's NEVER embarrassed with you. Do you know that embarrassment is not a word in the New Testament? I have heard someone say "so and so is an embarrassment to Christianity." That is not from God. God is NOT embarrassed by any of His children. You may think "well some of them are a little bit tough ..." He might think some are a little bit tough too, but He is NOT embarrassed by them. If you are embarrassed by someone else, you are not operating in love. If you are embarrassed FOR someone else, you MIGHT be operating in love. If my children act up in a public place and I am embarrassed by them, I was not loving them. What was going on is I was hoping they'd make me look good - that's taking not giving. Instead, I might be embarrassed FOR someone one thinking "oh, that just doesn't represent them well, out of love for them maybe I could help them present themselves so much better." That's love - it's all about giving benefit to

them, nothing about receiving a benefit from them and it would of course be motivated equally by patience and kindness! We should never be embarrassed because of. God is not trying to flaunt you about, which gives you that wonderful revelation that He is never embarrassed by you!

Conclusion

I am trying to invite you. There are opportunities to meditate not just in the quantity of God's love, but also the qualities of God's love. You are invited to explore His love. There is so much more to discover and experience!

“God what does it mean that Your love is never rude? What does it mean that You always hope all things about me? What does it mean that Your love never speaks evil about me?” These are really wonderful things to meditate in and you can pick one to meditate on at night and meditate on just that one before you fall asleep. Just ask Him “what is that ...” Just ask Him! You will know when you get it because it will explode inside of you!

By meditating on the qualities of His love it is allowing me to spend months meditating on the love of God instead of just minutes meditating on His love. His love is big, yes, but the qualities of His love are worth fathoming.

There is a nearness with God that is available to you in meditating in His love and coming to know His love in greater measure. There is an intimacy with Him that is totally available to you! May you have greater revelations and encounters with the qualities of God's love than ever before!

God is not calling you to represent His heart. He's calling you to allow HIM to represent His heart to you! That's where the work is. You are doing the work of letting Him represent His love to you. How wonderful would it be if 3 months from now people met with you and they remarked “there is something about ... I've never felt this way before ... I look into your eyes and they are piercing with love ... I've never met someone who is so gentle ... there is a kindness about you that's unmistakable.” That's what He has for each of us. This is not a hard work. We simply say “God show me Your love.” Because as Ephesians 3 says, when we have a revelation of His love, we get filled with all the fullness of God! Joy, peace, patience, kindness ...

The door is opened for you. It is going to take meditation. As Paul once told Timothy, think on these things and they will make sense to you. Meditate on these things and the revelation and encounters will come to you! You're invited!

Short Summary

Do not feel bad having to work on your love relationship with God. If we think that love is just an emotion, we won't work at it. But, if we think that love HAS emotions associated with it - that when we do the things love does, emotions follow which are a blessing - than we will work at doing the things that love does. Remember that the Ephesian church had departed from their first love and Christ instructed them to "***do the first works.***" If we do the things that love does in our relationship with God - and we stick at that - we will experience all the beauty that comes with it.

We can meditate not only in the quantity of God's love, but also in the qualities of His love! The magnitude of God's love includes everything up to and including the value of His very own Son! That's how GREAT a love with which He loved us! While that's a great meditation, if you want to understand and have more of a revelation of God's love, you have to go past just thinking about quantity and step into a place of also thinking about the qualities of God's love.

Let's look at Galatians 5:22-23 "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*" Now, if these are the fruit of the Spirit, that means that when you sow the seed of God (which is the Word of God) these are the things that are naturally produced in your life. That means that these characteristics are inherent to the very DNA of God! The fruit of the Spirit are actually an opportunity to meditate on who God is to you! In other words, God IS love, joy, peace, patience, kindness ... these are actually describing God! Now, watch this ... what is the first fruit of the Spirit? Love. Therefore all the other fruit of the Spirit come through the avenue of love. When you have love, it gives access to the rest. God's love has certain qualities about it that are detailed right here in Galatians 5:

God's love is actually filled with ***joy***. God's love is totally rooted in a covenant of ***peace*** with you. Then you find out that His love is ***patient*** toward you. God's ***kindness*** toward us starts with His patience toward us. When you see how patient and kind He is with us, it becomes clear that He has only ***goodness*** for us! And how can He help but be faithful toward you when His intentions toward you are ONLY good?" His love lacks no gentleness. Lack of ***gentleness*** comes from a desire to control. God's love, by nature, is ***self-controlled***, which means He is NOT controlling you.

You can do the same thing with 1 Corinthians 13. We know that "*love is from God, God is love, and we love because He first loved us ...*" (1 Jn 4:7,8,19) So, when we look at 1 Corinthians 13, we see that love doesn't behave rudely and therefore you can say "God does not behave rudely toward me." We also see that His ***Love does not envy, is not puffed up, and does not parade itself.***

There are opportunities to meditate not just in the quantity of God's love, but also the qualities of God's love. You are invited to explore His love. There is so much more to discover and experience!