

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

CHRIST LIVED AND LOVED THAT YOU MIGHT LIVE AND LOVE

1 John 3:24 "Whoever keeps His commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

Jesus is a lover, not a hater. Jesus lived and loved so that you might live and love. Filled with the faith in Christ the Holy Spirit has poured into your heart and life you are able to love, even those who are your enemies. Through His love you are able to serve others. Galatians 5:13-14 says, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus, after He washed the feet of His Disciples said to them, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." (John 13:13-17) This teaching of Jesus is so different than the way many people who have deified self, wealth, power, sex and status live in our culture.

Self-centered, self-serving, self-engrossed is an idolatry that is so subtle it actually seems to be natural and permissible. Cain, taking Umbridge that God accepted his brother Able's sacrifice was filled with hatred of him. In turn his hatred caused him to commit the sin of murder. Note well it was the lack of love on the part of Cain that expressed itself so violently. Yet, this is the way those led by their evil self, the world and the Devil live. Murder is avenged by murder and the cycle repeats itself as you witness through the daily news.

When the word of God abides in you, the love of God permeates your heart and life. Led by the Holy Spirit you are enabled to embrace life and give love and life rather than take life. Rather than hate, the Holy Spirit fills you with love to love. Rather than live for self the Holy Spirit moves you to live for righteousness' sake

loving God and His Son with all your heart, soul, mind and spirit. Christ lived and loved that you might live and love.

Prayer: Jesus, as You lived and loved so that I might live and love, daily send Your Holy Spirit into my heart to enable me to live my life in this way to Your glory and honor. In Your Holy name. Amen.

How clear is our vocation, Lord, When once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your Word And daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all And will not let us fall.

But if, forgetful, we should find Your yoke is hard to bear;
If worldly pressures fray the mind, And love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care: Our inward life repair.

We marvel how Your saints become In hindrances more sure;
Whose joyful virtues put to shame The casual way we wear Your name
And by our faults obscure Your pow'r to cleanse and cure.

In what You give us, Lord, to do, Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new, May we not cease to look to You,
The cross You hung upon— All You endeavored done.

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