

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## “I Love Jesus”

(Jerry Fite)

Oh, to hear these three words from the lips of our small children; how sweet the sound! But what about those teenage years, and beyond? The toddler may be simply mimicking words which brighten the godly parent’s face. How do I instill a Scriptural impetus for my child to not only obey Jesus, but truly love Him throughout life?

One of the first lessons our children learn is the importance of “obedience.” We rightly teach our children that they must “obey their parents” for it is “right,” and “well-pleasing” to the Lord (Eph. 6:1, Col. 3:20). So, it is natural for us to emphasize to our children that if you “love Jesus,” you will manifest it by doing what He says: “keep My commandments,” “keep My word” (Jn. 14:15, 23).

Loving the Lord must manifest itself in reverential fear and obedience to His revealed will. But what is the nature of this love? It runs deeper than outward compliance to God’s law.

Love begins in the heart with valuing Jesus above all. Is this not why we put His commandments above all other de-

mands on our life? Is it not natural for children to value Jesus above all, when their parents, the most valuable people in their early lives, are pointing their young hearts to Jesus?

Jesus dying for us, so we could live, is a great value attraction for the heart. *“Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him” (1 Jn. 4:9).* Paul’s devotion for the Lord is centered in the sacrificial death of Jesus: *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).* Valuing Jesus, even above himself, is centered in Paul’s heart because Jesus gave Himself up in death on the cross for Him.

Living for Jesus in life is centered in our hearts valuing Him for His sacrifice. Paul writes, *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but*

*unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14-15).*

Love begets love. Teaching children that God so loved us that He sent His son to die for us will set forth an unprecedented fact to value. Such value in the heart will create the love of Jesus in word and deed.

Love also has an emotional component. It issues from the sense of “belonging.” We have “love” for family members because we “belong” uniquely to them. Unlike other relationships, close familial love certainly touches the emotions. Jesus relates this love for him by saying, *“...he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37).* True parents are emotionally connected with their children. A child feels the sense of belonging in a healthy family relationship. Such love for Jesus is demanded, and should be nourished in the young child’s heart (*cf. 1 Cor. 16:22*).

Fathoming God’s grace helps the heart feel deeper for Jesus than mere outward compliance to His commands. The heart that values Jesus above all, and feels a sense of belonging to Him will continue to love Him.