

The Keys to the Kingdom

By Jim Golden

Recently Dianna a pastor at our church read from 1 Corinthians chapter 13 about the one thing in the Christian life that is of paramount importance—love. It is one of my favorite chapters and hearing it again awakened a memory of a time when the Holy Spirit led me to change a word in the text that revolutionized my perception of God. He told me to exchange the word love for the word God and to read the chapter again. I will render it below for your convenience.

4 GOD is patient, GOD is kind. GOD does not envy, GOD does not boast, GOD is not proud. 5 GOD is not rude, GOD is not self-seeking, GOD is not easily angered, GOD keeps no record of wrongs. 6 GOD does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 GOD always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 GOD never fails.

As I read the word this way the reality of God actually being love really hit me. It moved love out of the arena of being an emotion demonstrated by God toward me into the realm of being a constant ever-present person. When we read the chapter to the end it summarizes with the statement, 13And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. It wasn't until just recently as I lie in bed thinking about this I let my mind follow through with the thought the Holy Spirit gave me so many years ago.

Since God IS love then could it be in this context that Jesus is FAITH and the Holy Spirit is HOPE? The more I thought about it the more it made since. God has always been interested in an extremely intimate and personal relationship with His children and everything in Scripture is designed in one way or another to reveal our God and Savior to us. Then wouldn't it follow that this application could be plausible.

You notice the Scripture states that love is the greatest and Jesus said the same thing about his Father in John 14 verse 28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Also in Romans Chapter fifteen this inference is made, 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is the Kingdom and as we embrace Him we find that we truly hold the living keys to that kingdom.

We enter into God's salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and are made righteous. As we obey Jesus and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit we are empowered to live the "Christian" life, which eventually brings us into the fullness of all our instruction—God the Father—who is LOVE! How marvelous and great a salvation we have been blessed with. It is not a commodity, but an all powerful, all knowing God who has made a way for us to actually partake of His divine nature, HALALUJAH!