

God's Love is Conditional

READING John 16

Don't read verses by themselves. Always read at least a chapter to get the context before you even start to think about what it is saying.

I've always been taught that God's love is unconditional. But in John 16:27 (NIV) Yeshua says "No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."

That's quite a game changer. God only loves me because I love Yeshua?

Well,... to put it in context, Yeshua was talking to his disciples at the last supper... so it looks like this verse is saying that God only loved the disciples because they loved Yeshua.

Really?

Does that sound right to you?

It doesn't sound right to me. So let's look a bit closer.

Firstly, to really get the context we need to go back a few more verses. Yeshua is telling them that because of this love, God will give them whatever they ask for in Yeshua's name. Oh... so because we love Yeshua, and because we believe that he came from God, because of that - God loves us and will give us what we ask him for in Yeshua name... as in, he will answer our prayers.

This is my point really. Not so much about God's love, but about understanding context when we read the Bible. It can be so important and can definitely lead to false doctrine if we don't watch out.

Let's have an even closer look. What is the Greek word used for love here?

It is not agape, the word we usually associate with God's love. In fact, it is phileo, brotherly love. I prefer to translate this into English as "fond of" ... God is fond of us because we are fond of Yeshua. Because God is fond of us he will give us what we ask for (in Yeshua's name... we still don't deserve it, but he likes us enough to answer our prayer because we're fond of his son...)

In the Little Watchman Translation I translated this verse as: "For the father himself is fond of you, because you have been fond of me, and because you have trusted that I came from with God."

I really do like that better, and I think it brings out the truth more clearly.

(there is another article [Do You Love Me](#) which also points out the important difference in these two words for love, and how important it is to always be aware of which one we are talking about in the original text.)

So.

Don't read verses by themselves. Always read at least a chapter to get the context before you even start to think about what it is saying. And especially if it seems a bit off, check the originals. Check the details, word by word.

And just to be very clear. God's love is **NOT** conditional.

He loves you. Period.

He loves everyone. Period