

**DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:**  
**Month of January 2010**

**THEME: Trapped by His Love**

**"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:7-8**

There are several themes which run through God's Word - several truths which are consistently woven from Genesis to Revelation. We can list themes like obedience, trust, and faith, but perhaps the one which surfaces more than any other is that of love.

In one of the last messages Moses gave to the people of Israel, he told them to obey all the commands of God and to *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength"* (Deuteronomy 6:5). About fifteen hundred years later, Jesus referred to this as the greatest of all commandments and then added: *"The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Mark 12:31).

On the evening before He was crucified, Jesus gave His disciples a final command. In John 15:12-13 we read: *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."*

We are commanded to love as Jesus first loved us. He loved us with total commitment and sacrifice. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son"* (John 3:16). He loved us with absolute compassion and forgiveness. *"God demonstrated His love in this! While we were still sinners Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8).

We're not being called to physically die for one another. Rather, Jesus is calling us to "lay down" our lives by considering the needs of others as even more important than our own (Philippians 2:3-4). And as opposed to a one time physical death, we are being called to daily lay ourselves down - even when the other person is not deserving - even when they have not earned our love.

After spending almost 60 years pondering the words of his Savior, the Apostle John concluded that love was the one characteristic that identifies us as a true believer. *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death."* (1 John 3:14).

Yes, we are to love as Jesus loved. This means we should love without consideration of economic, social, or ethnic class. We should love cross gender, cross race, and cross culture. In the new year of 2010, let us always view others through the eyes of Jesus and remove the barriers of our love. Let's truly open our heart, lay down our life, and love with a greater love.

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