

Sandpoint church of Christ

July 24, 2016
vol. 130

1331 Cedar Street
Sandpoint, ID 83864

LOVING AND LIKING *by Darryl Cope*

Loving and Liking

Is there a difference?

I do believe this to be one of the most difficult concepts to wrap our minds around. The Lord Jesus, when asked what was the greatest commandment in the law, said, "to love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, soul and mind, and a second like it is to love your neighbor as yourself. Upon these two things depend the whole law and prophets".

Let's consider a few examples of the Lord's love. "For GOD so loved the world that HE gave HIS only begotten Son". A circumspect view of the religious world of Jesus reveals a pagan world way beyond the borders of the Roman world, and Gods own chosen people so far off the mark they bore no resemblance to what GOD wanted. This though is the fullness of time when GOD sent forth His Son born of Mary. The vast majority of people in the world were enemies and yet GOD did what was in their best interest.

Long before the giving of that human son, born of miraculous means to the Virgin Mary, human kind had come perilously close to annihilation in the days of the one man with enough redemptive qualities to find favor in the eyes of the LORD. That man, of course, was Noah. GOD liked Noah. Let's back up even farther though, back to a time, before time as we know it, to the planning phase of what we see as the world around us. "And GOD said let US make man in OUR image according to OUR likeness and let them rule over the..." (and I will abridge the rest) They were to rule over the whole of the creation within the parameters of GOD's mandate.

One can only imagine the emotions He felt when He created something so wonderful, appointed a caretaker, only to have the caretaker misuse and abuse that allotted to his charge.

The sense of betrayal and feelings of disappointment at the lack of loyalty and appreciation shown by those entrusted with this precious gift, had to be immense. If the situation were reversed is there anyway even the most tolerant of us would appreciate that type of treatment? That behavior is not what we would seek in a neighbor, friend or even a business associate. We don't LIKE those character traits. Frankly, we don't like PEOPLE with those attributes.

GOD does not expect us to behave contrary to His nature. It seems reasonable to assume then to love the ones GOD loves, like the ones GOD likes and behave toward the world the way the LORD does.

We should not feel guilty for not liking the unlikeable. We also should not feel embarrassed because our personal preferences are incompatible with someone else's (country music or classical) Besides that, I know of no commandment to like anyone. It is absolutely possible to love the world and not like most of the people in it. GOD did. Our Lord said he felt like a mother hen that wanted to gather her little ones under her wing (that's love) but the ornery little things would not come to mama. He called them a brood of vipers. That is not what I call "liking them". When all was said and done though, He offered His life for all of us; the good , bad, and the ornery. That is most assuredly LOVE. He, in His finest hour, was willing to die for people most unlikeable.

So let's try to put all this to good use. How do we treat the unlikeable? How do we treat those who treat us badly? We don't have to hang around with everyone. We don't have to be best buds with the whole world, but we certainly have the responsibility to look out for them; to love that part of them that is made in GODs image.