

- Order of Service -

Call to Worship

Welcoming Prayer

- 1 Holy, Holy, Holy
- God the Uncreated One
- Congregational reading
- I Exalt Thee
- Oh, Great is our God

Announcements and Prayer requests

Greeting

Message in the Word -

John's call to Grow in Fellowship with God - #8

Behold, what exotic love the Father has lavished on us!

1 John 3:1-3

Sending prayer

You may notice we don't pass an offering plate

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -

Grace Bible Fellowship

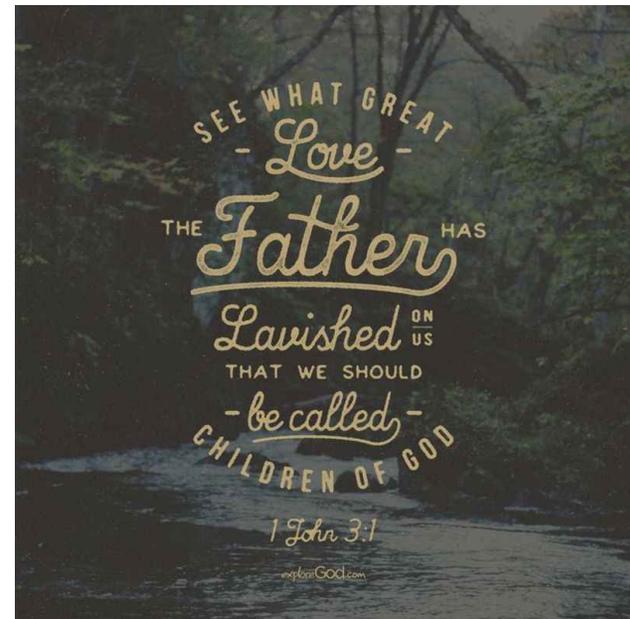
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- Teaching -

Eric Peterman

John's call to Grow in Fellowship with God - #8

Behold, what exotic love the Father has lavished on us!

1 John 3:1-3

- September 25th, 2022 -

John's call to Grow in Fellowship with God - #8

Behold, what exotic love the Father has lavished on us!

1 John 3:1-3

Have you ever pondered how different, how unusual, how strange, how...exotic it is that we would be loved by God? It is natural for human parents to love their own human children. And animals take care of their own offspring. But God is spirit, invisible, immaterial, eternal, and we are made of dirt, visible, physical and like the flowers we blossom and fade. What have we mortals in common with the ever Living God? How can the **natural** become **a dear child of the Supernatural**?

V1, Your Bibles say, *See, what great love the Father...* But the word translated as "great" here is *potapos* and is unusual! It is a question word! Oddly, it asks, "*What kind of? What species of? What manner of?*" And it expresses curiosity and even shock at what it sees! Like, "*What in the world is this!?*" Wuest translates it, "*exotic*".



The Father, when we believe in the Son, when we are born from above, issues an **extraordinary summons**: We are **called out** of our own natural mortal/temporal species and world with its attendant sin-steeped culture, orientation and behaviors. We are *called into* the Supernatural Spirit of Truth sphere.



And we are called there as supernaturally translated, enabled-to and expected-to grow, children of God. We now are His divine spiritual offspring. With capabilities and an orientation that does not spring from our natural species or earthly parentage. This is why John refers to it as, "*What on earth is THAT!?*" or *exotic and never-before-seen, love. It is a foreign and undeserved love.*



And because it is a love that is foreign to us and undeserved it is bestowed, graced, gifted freely, "lavished" permanently and irrevocably on us from the Father! (Perfect tense).



For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

When we think, feel, act out of our new identity as the growing children of our Father in Heaven, we behave like our brother, Jesus Christ. When that happens, our thinking and behaving become **unnatural to this world** and **quite natural to His world**. And in that sense we become undecipherable and in a real sense, alien and strangers to the people of this world! And we're in excellent company when that happens! **See John 1:11-13**. It's not that we're weird or wrong. The world is!



*Christians should feel slightly out-of-place,
because ultimately, this place as it is, is not our place!*

V2, Even though we are presently God's children in our spiritual standing, and we are growing, we do not yet fully reflect His image in our souls, and our bodies are not even close to what we will yet be! **John here places us fully in the tension between the two worlds we occupy.** And every believer who understands and appreciates anything at all of the glory of the resurrected Jesus Christ yearns with an aching heart for us to be able to release the binders and be launched into the joy, glory and perfection of what we will be, in both body and soul, when we see Him face-to-face at our home-coming.. the Rapture of the church saints to be with our Savior, body and soul - whole!



V3, This expectation is the Blessed Hope (See Titus 2:12-13). And when it is rightly grasped (really it's when its reality grips us, as the blessed, growing children of the Father), its excitement and anticipation further grows and changes us, our affections and our dreams. We hope and long for much greater and more satisfying things than the corroded satisfactions and broken promises of this present age.

And that **hope** begins to transform and fuel our desires to set our hearts and minds on Jesus, the Holy One. The One who is true to us, Who is in the Father, and Whose Spirit never lies to us. We long to abide and enjoy the sweet fruit of His Spirit instead of the rotten fruit of our flesh. Abiding in Him then flows naturally from where our affections are set and our best thoughts rest. *See 1 Peter 1:3-9*