

# WHY GOD WANTS US TO LOVE HIM

—by St. Nektarios—

But why, someone may ask, does God demand for man to love Him so rigorously? Saint John the Evangelist answers this very critical question in this manner: because [he says] **“God is love.”** Thus, as love, He wants us to love Him; so that by loving Him, we may in turn be loved by Him. **“For love is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 Jn. 4:7-8).** Since God is love, this is why He wants us to love Him. Confirming that God is love and that He loves mankind immensely, Saint John the Evangelist states: **“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 Jn. 4:9).** What measure of love exists greater than this love? Who can any longer remain uncertain concerning God’s love? And what is more: we never sought this love; rather, it was God Himself Who voluntarily showered us with this love. **“In this is love,”** observes the Evangelist, **“not that we loved God, but that He love us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn. 4:10).** Therefore, this is the reason God asks for love: because He loves us, He wants us to love Him so that we may **“have life, and have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).** For, **“in Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1:4).** God wants us to love Him so we can remain in Him (**vid. 1 Jn. 4:12-13**). Because whoever remains in Him remains in life, and he possesses eternal life (**vid. 1 Jn. 4:16**). God thus asks for us to love Him not because He wants to receive something from us, but in order for Him to give to us. What immeasurable love! How necessary it is indeed for man’s life, salvation, and well-being!