

**From the treatise On Spiritual Perfection by
Diadochus of Photice, bishop**

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All our love must be for God

No one who is in love with himself is capable of loving God. The man who loves God is the one who mortifies his self-love for the sake of the immeasurable blessings of divine love. Such a man never seeks his own glory but only the glory of God. If a person loves himself he seeks his own glory, but the man who loves God loves the glory of his Creator. Anyone alive to the love of God can be recognized from the way he constantly strives to glorify him by fulfilling all his commandments and by delighting in his own abasement. Because of his great majesty it is fitting that God should receive glory, but if he hopes to win God's favor it becomes man to be humble. If we possess this love for God, we too will rejoice in his glory as Saint John the Baptist did, and we shall never stop repeating: *His fame must increase, but mine must diminish.*

I know a man who, though lamenting his failure to love God as much as he desires, yet loves him so much that his soul burns with ceaseless longing for God to be glorified, and for his own complete effacement. This man has no feeling of self importance even when he receives praise. So deep is his desire to humble himself that he never even thinks of his own dignity. He fulfills his priestly duty by celebrating the Liturgy, but his intense love for God is an abyss that swallows up all consciousness of his high office. His humility makes him oblivious of any honor it might bring him, so that in his own estimation he is never anything but a useless servant. Because of his desire for self abasement, he regards himself as though degraded from his office. His example is one that we ourselves should follow by fleeing from all honor

and glory for the sake of the immeasurable blessings of God's love, for he has loved us so much!

Anyone who loves God in the depths of his heart has already been loved by God. In fact, the measure of a man's love for God depends upon how deeply aware he is of God's love for him. When this awareness is keen it makes whoever possesses it long to be enlightened by the divine light, and this longing is so intense that it seems to penetrate his very bones. He loses all consciousness of himself and is entirely transformed by the love of God.

Such a man lives in this life and at the same time does not live in it, for although he still inhabits his body, he is constantly leaving it in spirit because of the love that draws him toward God. Once the love of God has released him from self-love, the flame of divine love never ceases to burn in his heart and he remains united to God by an irresistible longing. As the Apostle says: *If we are taken out of ourselves it is for the love of God; if we are brought back to our senses it is for your sake.*