

The following letter was written by Charlie Williams, Ministry to Men Director. After many requests for him to write a book about *Ministry to Men* and after several attempts to do just that, someone suggested he simply write letters sharing some of the truths God has been teaching him during the years.

We will be posting his letters on the Ministry to Men Web site. This letter was posted on October 18, 2010

14th letter Four stages of love I John 4: 17

I remember reading John Claypool's book "The Light Within" where he shared how his teacher in seminary told them about the four stages of love that most of us go through in our walk with Christ.

1. The love of self for self's sake.

We are like little children; we live like everything revolves around us. He mentions that for most of us we don't stay there long as we begin to progress into stage number two.

2. The love of God for self sake.

When we find God and our lives become the love of God for self sake; we treat God like He is our bellhop in the sky – give me this, help me here, help me there. Claypool shares that many of us never get beyond this stage but those that do go to stage number three and this is where he and I both thought should be the top stage...

3. That is the love of God for God's sake.

That is where we look to God and worship Him and love Him. But he shared number four, which I really had to ponder to catch the wisdom in it...

4. The love of self for self sake.

He gave several examples; one was from the book of John where John identifies himself as he writes and he calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. The author again and I both have always thought that John had too high an opinion of himself but in reality John had it right – Jesus loves him just as he is, just where he is, just who he is. God made him and God loves him and if I'm ever going to trust God and let Him have His way in me I must love myself. Many times in the bible when God tells me how to love one another; how to love my neighbor; how to love my wife, etc. it is always that we love them as we love ourselves. I must see God in me and let His love flow through me.