We love to quote the scriptures about how our heavenly Father loves us more than we love our own children. We love to tell our little Johnny, “Jesus loves you so much that He gave His life for you on the cross of Calvary. He rose again and is now interceding for you at the right hand of the Father. He’s coming back in the clouds of heaven to take you home with Him forever and ever if you give your heart to Him and become a Christian. But, by the way, Johnny. If you don’t accept Jesus as your personal Savior, He’ll burn you alive forever and ever and ever!”

Wow! Can you imagine what Johnny must be thinking?

Actually, what we’re saying to Johnny is that God will get His vengeance by torturing him forever and ever and ever with no end to the punishment for all the eons of time! Furthermore, there’s no way out for Johnny even after a billion years of torment in hellfire!

It’s no wonder that when Johnny gets old enough to begin to think on his own, he has a distorted view of the true nature and character of our heavenly Father and of the love He has for human beings. Instead of the loving God portrayed in the Scriptures, this erroneous teaching gives Johnny a mental picture of a harsh, cruel master without grace or mercy. What happened to the love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13? What about these verses?

Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity [love] envieth not; charity [love] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

Certainly a god who would burn people forever doesn’t seem longsuffering and kind. Any god who would devise a plan to torture people in hellfire for eternity would certainly seem to be thinking evil. It doesn’t take Johnny long to rebel against this kind of god.
God says that He loves us much more than we love our own children (see Isaiah 49:15). And no earthly parent would punish his or her child by burning them in eternal fire!

God says that He loves us more than we love our own children (see Isaiah 49:15; Luke 11:11-13). I have yet to find an earthly parent who would be cruel enough to punish his or her own flesh-and-blood child by burning them in fire eternally. Yet this doctrine of eternal damnation (punishment) seems to be taught by the majority of Christian churches today. It seems to me that we should be asking, “Why?”

It’s my prayer that everyone who reads this book will find the truth about the loving character of our gracious, almighty God. As we look at what the Bible says, we will come to know without a doubt that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). God’s Word tells us, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). When we only “surface study” the Bible, the devil is pleased. For example, we have seen already that the Bible says, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Yet it is Christians themselves who are picturing God as a torturer, burning sinners in hellfire eternally. Any Christian should be ashamed to spread such a monstrous view of God. How can God be a God of love and at the same time also be a terrible tyrant who is willing to torment people forever and ever?
After hearing a Christian tell him that he would burn forever and ever if he didn't serve God, a non-Christian said, "Why would I want to serve a god who is much meaner than I am?"

I think that's a fair question.

**God so loved the world**

God has said we should study to show ourselves approved as solid workmen, so let's begin to study and lay a solid foundation from God's Word. Let's start with John 3:16, probably the most quoted scripture in the entire Bible. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Let's take a closer look. According to this verse, there is apparently a great difference between what happens to those who believe in God and to those who don't. On the one hand, Jesus promises eternal life to those who believe in Him. But on the...