

Lesson 19

# GOD'S LOVE

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If there is one attribute that people love to embrace, it is the fact that God is love. Unfortunately, the world doesn't really understand God's love and tries to characterize God according to natural man's misconception of love. "A loving God wouldn't send people to hell, A loving God just wants me to be a good person. A loving God will allow me to live my life my way so long as I attend church weekly, etc ... But if this is not love from God's perspective than what is God's love.

This word encapsulates for Christians, God's mercy, grace and loving-kindness. God is not like the deities of other religions who are thought of as angry and hateful and man must prove himself worthy of that deity's attention, respect, guidance and affection. Thankfully, these 'deities' do not exist. God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible is loving towards His creatures. He wants to share a personal relationship with us. 1 John 4 talks extensively about God's love. Not just that God *has* love, but that God *is* love.

- *1 John 4:7-21 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. [8] The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. [9] By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. [10] In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. [11] Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. [12] No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. [13] By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. [14] We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. [15] Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. [16] We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. **God is love**, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. [17] By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. [18] There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. [19] We love, because He first loved us. [20] If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21] And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.*
- *John 3:16 "For **God so loved the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

Dictionaries' definition of love gives us a solid solution, an affection, a romance, and a stability that comes from another person. The Biblical definition of love is totally different. God's love is sacrificial, a love that gives first and expects nothing in return.

When the Bible says, "God is love," the Bible isn't telling us that God is some warm and fuzzy feeling of love. The Bible says that God is love which means that **God defines love**. And when we say that God defines love, we mean that **God is the very definition of love itself**. There is no such thing as love without God. As hard as we might try, we cannot define love outside of knowing God. God in His immensity is all love. There is no love existing anywhere in the universe that God does not contain. God is love. This means that our human definition of love which depends upon our feelings of gratification is false, God's love is unconditional and man's love is conditional. To know God is to love like God, unconditionally.

God is the Creator of all things, and by His very nature, He is love. God says love is unconditional and sacrificial, and it's not based on feelings; therefore, love is not an "intense affection... based on family or personal ties". To understand what true love is and to be able to truly love others, we must know God, and we can only do this through a close personal relationship with Him. We can have that close relationship with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ, who was God's sacrifice of love for us.

- *1 John 4:7-11 God is Love! As such, true love -- us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. [8] The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. [9] By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. [10] In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. [11] Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. "*

A relationship with God is like no other relationship you may have ever experienced. God has a unique kind of love for you. It is unconditional (not based upon meeting certain conditions). God loves you because He loves you.

God does not love you based upon your performance. There is nothing you can do to cause God to love you any more than He already does—and there is nothing that will cause God to love you any less. He loves you, even more than you love yourself.

Until now you have probably only experienced conditional love. Conditional love is based upon what you do. Perform well on the job, on the team, in the marriage or any relationship, and you are “loved.”

God’s love is not just a feeling. It is initiative and action. Jesus Christ loved the world so much that He gave everything for it, from His rights and privileges as the unique eternal Son of God, to His very life! If you want to see the love of God, look to the cross.

- *1 John 4:9-10 "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. [10] In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
- *Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

God's love towards us is dramatically seen in the sacrifice He made on our behalf. *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. " [John 15:13].*

In Jesus Christ, you will find total love and acceptance. This may be hard to comprehend if you’ve never felt totally loved and accepted by anyone before. But it’s true! Unfortunately, you won’t always feel that God loves you. There will be times when you find yourself doubting not only His love, but also His existence. You’ll feel like giving up. Don’t. When God gave you a new life, it didn’t come trimmed in lace and smelling of perfume. Jesus began His earthly life in a stable. He tasted real life, and that will be the flavor of your journey with Christ—real life but not with the promise of His presence with you.

- *Jeremiah 31:3 God says, "The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. "*
- *Romans 8:38,39 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- *John 3:16-17 This is God's love! "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."*