

## Lesson 12

### God's Love

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Opening Verse: **1 John 4:16**

*<sup>16</sup>And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

#### Introduction:

**GOD IS LOVE**, is one of the most profound statements! And the love of God is **LIMITLESS!** God has authority, power, righteousness, holiness and many other qualities but He **IS** love! We can't separate love from God. In this lesson, we are going to learn about the biblical definition of God's love, the process involved to receive His love and how we should continue to respond to God's love.

#### What is God's Love?

The love of God is more than a feeling. It is the essence of God's nature that involved the selfless giving of Himself to benefit others.

#### 3 Primary Greek Words for Love:

1. **Eros** – a SELFISH type of love that is only based on what one can receive from it.
2. **Philia** – HUMAN LOVE; emotional
3. **Agape**- God's PERFECT love and He's the only Source of

#### How do we get God's love?

His love dwells in us through His Spirit dwelling in us.

***Romans 5:5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

And God expects His love in us to **GROW!**

***1 John 4:12b** If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is **perfected** in us.*

**PERFECTED** = to come to maturity and fruitfulness.

#### NOTES

The **proof of our maturity** in God's love is **IF we love one another**. Thus, God's love needs to be active in us, since it is our source of power to be fruitful.

## Does God love the whole world?

God offers His love to all of us BUT only those who consciously receive His love can experience His love in its entirety, including the salvation of their soul.

For there is a PROCESS involved in love. It can't just be one-way (one person giving and the other not receiving and reciprocating).

For example, here's the most quoted verse in the Bible by the Christian community:

### **John 3:16**

*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.*

- God's love was EXPRESSED when He robed Himself in flesh to have a body to sacrifice so that His perfect and sinless blood can cleanse the sins of man and save us from eternal judgment.
- However, that process of His love is not automatic to every single soul on earth.
- It has a CONDITION: It's only for whosoever **BELIEVETH** in Him.

### What does it mean to **BELIEVETH** in Him?

*Is that just a mental thing? Or a confession of faith?*

From it's original Greek translation:

**BELIEVETH** = clings to Him, trusts in Him and relies on Him

It goes beyond the born-again experience. It is basically a demonstrated lifestyle of **Biblical Faith** of BOTH believing His Word AND obeying His Word continually.

Our **FAITH** or State of **BELIEVING** = **Activated by Love**

### **Galatians 5:6**

*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

So when I receive the LOVE of God – it works in me to cling, to trust and rely on Him.

Therefore, every day **I have to trust in God and His love** = I have to cling to it, trust in it, and I have to rely on it **to live a saved life.**

What John 3:16 is really saying is **that God offers His love to the whole world But we are NOT LOVED by God until we RECEIVE that love** which includes (1) having **faith** in Him (through His Word), (2) **submitting** to Him as God and (3) **trusting** in His motives towards us.

We can't believe the **LIE** that God loves us so much that He won't allow us to go to hell. Because **If I reject God – I reject His love.** Which means His love can't really save me if I rejected it.

**He loved us so much that** He emptied Himself of glory and clothed Himself in flesh and causing that flesh to be a substitutionary sacrifice for man - so that we can be saved. And He's willing not only to forgive us of all of our past, present and future mistakes BUT He's also willing to **ABIDE** in us and with us and to let us abide in Him and with Him. He's willing to do all that **but if I reject Him, I reject the LOVE that makes that ALL that happen.**

### The Process of Maturing in God's Love

#### **Rom 5:1-5**

*Therefore being justified by **faith**, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only so, but we glory in **tribulations** also: knowing that tribulation worketh **patience** (ENDURANCE); <sup>4</sup>And patience, **experience**; and experience, **hope**: <sup>5</sup>And hope maketh not ashamed; **because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

- We start with **FAITH**, wherein we are **PERSUADED IN OUR MIND** about the Rhema of God. Being able to hear God's voice gives us faith (Rom. 10:17).

- Then we must have His **PEACE** = the ATMOSPHERE of our relationship with God as a **SURRENDERED VESSEL**. This also means that we are not controlling anything and because of that, we are not feeling any pressure or fear.
- And then we need to go through **TRIBULATIONS** = SITUATIONS THAT CAUSE PRESSURE AND POSSIBLY PAIN.

### **And why are tribulations important?**

Because we need to be crucified with Christ, for the power and faith of Christ to live in us.

### ***Galatians 2:20***

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

- **Tribulations** are what we call as **Agents of Crucifixion** since we can't crucify ourselves.

### **5 AGENTS OF CRUCIFIXION**

1. **Infirmities** – human inabilities (mental, physical, emotional, etc.)
2. **Reproaches** – when “valuable” people that I know and care about say or do negative things to me.
3. **Necessities** – when the God Who can supply all your needs does NOT supply on your time schedule.
4. **Persecutions** – words or actions done against me because of my faith.
5. **Distresses** – negative circumstances that cause me pressure or tribulation.

These agents remind us that we can do NOTHING without Him so that we can be totally dependent upon God; walking in the spirit and not in our flesh. As God uses us mightily as His conduit, He actually uses these thorns in our flesh to keep us saved. And God allows these agents to push us to grow in our love.

- Then as we go through TRIBULATION willingly, that builds **PATIENCE** or **ENDURANCE** in us.
- And when we have learned to accept the tribulations in our life that God has allowed, then ENDURANCE works in us **EXPERIENCE**.
- Experience is growing in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, **of how Trustworthy He is**.
- As God brings these things to pass and fulfills His Word – **you find out that He is faithful** to His Word. This is when we reach the place that when He speaks, **we're not just believing His Word but we're believing in the ONE Who gave the Word**.
- And as we gain more EXPERIENCE in living in the atmosphere of the love of God - **THIS IS WHAT PRODUCES HOPE!** **HOPE is confident expectation of the certainty of something**. It is Trusting in the character of Christ, not just on what was said (which is FAITH) but on Who said it. It is **greater than faith** and HOPE makes us rejoice in advance, as a **source of joy!**
- Growing in our relationship with Jesus is a **PROCESS** that involves time invested and time elapsed with experiences that grow us from **FAITH to HOPE**.
- **And as we believe in the One Who gave the Word AND the Words He gives, now we begin to know the NATURE and the CHARACTER of this ONE that we have confidence in what He tells us.**
- **And when we really get to KNOW Him = we are **MATURING in the LOVE of GOD** wherein the love of God becomes the entire **FOUNDATION** of our life.**
- **By KNOWING, EXPERIENCING and TRUSTING the love of God** - I can also have **confidence with EVERY CRISIS**.
- As His perfect or mature love in us will **cast out all fear**. **1 John 4:18** *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*
- It is **BELIEVING THAT MY GOD IS IN CONTROL** and nothing can happen to me that He does not allow **because I trust in His love!**

## NOTES

In our spiritual journey, we must experience a **progression from Faith to Hope, then from Hope to God's Love**.

### **1 Corinthians 13:13**

*And now abideth faith, hope, charity (AGAPE), these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

### **Ephesians 3:17–19**

*<sup>17</sup> That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, **being rooted and grounded in love**, <sup>19</sup> And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God**.*

## The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Greatest Commandments

### Mark 12:29–31

<sup>29</sup> And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: <sup>30</sup> And **thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.** <sup>31</sup> And the second is like, namely this, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** There is none other commandment greater than these.

1. The **FIRST** Commandment means that we need to give ourselves **WHOLLY** unto God (giving every part and area of our life to Him).
  - It is an **INTENTIONAL CHOICE** that we need to make in order to love God since love is a choice and an exercise of the will.
  - God sends souls to Hell because He is responding to THEIR CHOICES and the DECISION OF THEIR WILL to NOT GO where He wanted them to go because He can't violate their will.
  - **So I have to CHOOSE to love God.** Because if I don't purposefully choose to know God, to love God, to have God and to obey God THEN I am in effect choosing not to love Him or do those things.
2. The **SECOND** Commandment tells me that I am supposed to love my neighbor as myself.
  - But before I can love God or my neighbor, I need to first **RECEIVE His love for myself** because He's the Source of that Agape love.

**1 John 4:19** We love him, because he first loved us.

### **FOUNDATION OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US that we need to receive:**

- God gave us His love **BEFORE** He agreed with everything going on with our lives.

## NOTES

Failure to love and forgive yourself = **SHAME**

Need to **cast down imaginations** (false images of yourself) to be set free from shame. (2 Cor. 10:5)

### **Romans 5:8**

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

- Since He loved me before I was “perfect,” **I’ve got to be able receive the love of God “JUST AS I AM.”**
- Because that’s the foundation of His love – **He loved me just as I am.** And we need that simple faith so that we can be covered by His gift of righteousness every single day.

**Because of the love of God, there are TWO THINGS that we MUST ABSOLUTELY BELIEVE** (*which are the two things that the love of God produces to those who become mature in the love of God*):

1) **That I am lovable**

He loves me because I am His (not because I earned it). He loves me not because of what I do but because of who I am. Thus, I need to believe that He loves me just as I am.

(2) **That I am worthy to be loved.**

No matter what my past is like – I AM WORTHY TO BE LOVED. Not in the sense that we have earned or deserve it but that **He considers us as WORTH LOVING**. And He proved our worth by hanging on a cross in our place so that we can be saved.

And when I make mistakes – **God still loves me. Because He chose to love me.** And as He chose to love me, I have to choose to RECEIVE that love so that I can give that love back to Him.

**And the revelation of God’s love “to us” is the basis of all revival and harvest.**

He came to seek and to save the lost because of His love. He endured the cross because of the love of God! And if we are truly the body of Christ, then the love of God must be “working in us” to love the lost! And as the love of God “matures” in us, we will love others as ourselves, enabling us to fulfil our ultimate purpose as His body in saving the lost.

**Matthew 22:39-40**

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*