

**Subject: Our Loving God**

**Scripture: 1 John 4:7-11**

What can you afford to live without? Some things are not luxuries; they are necessities like the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. God's love is our greatest need. Some of God's attributes are referred to as "affections," such as God's love, anger, mercy, and kindness. All of these affections are perfect, and love is the prominent one. The Bible has three simple but profound statements: God is Spirit; God is life; and God is love. It is God's nature to love. He is the source of all love.

### **HOW GOD DESCRIBES HIS LOVE**

Apart from the Bible we would not know about God's love. God reveals some things about Himself in the physical world. *Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God.* But the love of God is revealed only in Scripture. The Bible uses a special word (*agape*) for God's love. It is not sentimental love. It is the love of choice. W. E. Vine said of *agape* love that it is the deep and constant love toward those who are unworthy, producing in them a reverential love for God and a practical love for others who are also loved by God.

God's love is unconditional – It is not based on what we do or don't do. In order to appreciate God's love we have to understand that we are sinners, yet God loved us anyway. He didn't love us because we are lovable or so loving in return. *1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.* God loves all people regardless of the way they live or whether they love Him in return. *Matthew 5:44-45<sup>44</sup> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;<sup>45</sup> That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* Lehman Strauss said: "A person may hate God, curse God, deny Him, or defy Him, still God pursues the vilest enemy in order to do him good."

God's love is unchangeable – God will never stop loving you. Some of you have heard someone say, "I just don't love you anymore." No one will ever hear God say that.

*Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

God's love is unbreakable – *Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Nothing in our past, present, or future can separate us from God's love. No physical or spiritual enemy. No natural or supernatural enemy. Nothing on earth or in heaven can ever separate us from God's love. Notice the phrase in verse 39, "in Christ Jesus our Lord." If we are in Christ, He will always love us.

**HOW GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE** – God reveals His love to us in many ways.

God demonstrates His love by caring for us – As we have seen, God provides the sun and rain. He cares for us in our troubles. *Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

God demonstrates His love by chastening us – **Hebrews 12:6-7**<sup>6</sup> *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*<sup>7</sup> *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?* Fathers correct and discipline their children because they love them.

God demonstrates His love by sending Christ to die for us – **1 John 3:16** *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* **1 John 4:9-10** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* **Romans 5:8** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Whenever you begin to wonder if God loves you, just think about the cross. Augustine said that the cross was a pulpit from which Christ preached God's love to the world. A couple was having problems and went for counseling. At one point the husband spoke up, "I've given you everything. I've given you a new home. I've given you a new car and all the clothes you can wear..." His list went on. When he finished, the wife said, "All that is true. You have given me everything...but yourself." The greatest gift anyone can give is himself. God gave Himself in Christ.

**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.* The word "so" is the biggest little word in the Bible. God gave the very best He had to offer. **Romans 8:32** *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* **Ephesians 2:4** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.* Paul prayed that believers might understand the riches of God's love. **Ephesians 3:18-19** *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.* How can we know the unknowable? We may not be able to explain it, but we can experience it.

*Could we with ink the oceans fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the oceans dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.*

These words were added to the song, "The Love of God," after they were found written by a man said to be insane. He understood something about God's great love.

### **HOW GOD DIRECTS HIS LOVE**

Who benefits from God's love? Who is on the receiving end of such love?

God has a special love for His Son – Jesus is the object of the Father's eternal love.

**John 17:24** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* When Jesus was baptized the Father spoke from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17).

God has a special love for the whole world – **John 3:16** – The world in this verse means all the people in the world. The Bible speaks of “the world” in three ways: the planet, the people, and the philosophy and system that dominate everything. God sent His Son into the world to provide salvation for all who would repent and believe.

God has a special love for all of His children – **1 John 3:1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **Ephesians 5:25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*

God has a special love for each of His children – **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.*

Someone asked a great theologian, “What is the greatest thought that ever passed through your mind?” After a pause He said, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” If God loves us with such a great, infinite, unconditional, unchangeable, unbreakable, sacrificial, and personal love, shouldn’t we love Him in return? Jesus said the first and great commandment is **Matthew 22:37** *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* And Jesus also said in **John 14:15** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*