

So Loved Part 1

Steve Berger January 24, 2016

Love — what is love?

Love is one of the most misunderstood things, there's an ache to know it. The search for it is expressed in the popular media of today: being loved forever touches us deeply; no one wants to be unloved; where can I go to be loved?

- **1 John 4:8 — God is love**

...God is love.

The most hope-filled words in the world, close second "God loves you."

- love is the very essence of God's being- the very Fount and Source of Who He is and what He does! God is love!
- Adam Clarke, 19th century theologian and scholar wrote, "It has been well observed that, although God is holy, just, righteous, etc., he is never called holiness, justice, etc., in the abstract, as he is here called Love. This (love) seems to be the essence of the Divine nature, and all other attributes to be only modifications of this."¹

Important... *love is at the very center and core of God's being, everything else He does flows from love... holiness, justice, mercy, kindness etc., all rooted in love! **He's NOT hate, anger, distant, disinterested, stingy, reluctant, withholding etc. God is love!***

God's love is everlasting

Philosophical... *if God is love, love **must be** eternal/everlasting — because God is...*

- **Jeremiah 31:3**

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

- love is everlasting- never ends, because God doesn't
- "everlasting love" is the love God has for His people — never runs out
- lovingkindness is how God draws us to Himself — "khesed," love, grace, favor, kindness is how God woos us to Himself, **Romans 2:4 kindness, goodness, graciousness, love of God that leads us to repentance. We are lost without the love of God!**

¹ Vincent M.M. Galici, Sr., *Threshold, Aperture to the Light of the World*, (RoseDog Books, Pittsburg, PA 2011), 349

- **This love...**

- John Gill, 18th century theologian and scholar wrote, “The nature of this love is from everlasting; a love of the utmost delight and pleasure; it is special and peculiar, unchangeable, and will continue forever.”²

So important... God draws us, woos us, loves us all as an act of His own sovereignty, choice and will. He decided He would love us, therefore we are loved. God loves me!

- security in sovereign love — God chose us, settled issue
- rest in sovereign love — didn't work to get, don't work to maintain

Listen... our being "worthy" of God's love is only due to us being the chosen, beloved objects of God's love, and NOT our own loveliness or merit. **This isn't to demean us, it's to make much of the matchless love of God!**

Clear biblical principles

- **Deuteronomy 7:6-8**

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

- God made it clear that He didn't love them because of anything to do with them, on the contrary, God set His love upon them, because He willingly chose them to be His special treasure above all the peoples of the earth!

- **Romans 5:6-8**

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- **Ephesians 2:1-5**

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

We were without strength — sick, weak, feeble, ungodly — wicked, sinners, dead in sins, walking in Satan's ways, children of wrath — then God, out of His great love with which He loved us, demonstrated His love by sending Jesus to die for us, and make us alive!
We did nothing to earn or merit God's love at all, yet He sent it!

² John Gill, *Book of Wisdom*, (James J. MacCabee Company, 2009), 118

Greatest demonstration of God's love

Clearly... *the single greatest definition and demonstration of God's love for lost, sinful people is His sending His Son to die in our place so we could be forgiven and live forever!*

- **1 John 4:9-10**

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 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.

God manifested and demonstrated His love by sending Jesus for us, in our lost condition, to provide our payment for sin and salvation!

“How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that He would send His only Son, to make a wretch His treasure!”

Jesus is God's calling card,

an invitation, to a love relationship that is at the core of our being we all long for and need — have you surrendered to that love yet? He's lovingly waiting!

Next definition of God's love — 1 Corinthians 13

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Suffers long - patient

Kind - gracious, benevolent

Does not envy - isn't jealous, it's generous

Does not parade itself - isn't boastful, it's covert

Isn't puffed up - isn't arrogant, it's humble

Does not behave rudely - doesn't dishonor, it honors

Does not seek its own - isn't selfish, it's sacrificial

Isn't provoked - isn't irritable, it's easy, chill, calm

Thinks no evil - doesn't keep records of wrong

Does not rejoice in iniquity - doesn't affirm, validate or celebrate sin

Rejoices in truth - affirms, validates and celebrates truth

Bears all things - never gives up

Believes all things - never loses faith

Hopes all things - always hopes for best

Endures all things - perseveres through all things

Love never fails - God is love!

- “As time has passed on, my theology has grown more and more simple. It is simply this, ‘*Jesus loves me.*’”³ Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Discussion Questions

1. Read Adam Clarke’s quote about all of God’s other attributes being modifications of Love. Discuss.
2. Why is it hard for us to think that God could *delight* in His love for us?
3. Read Ephesians 2:1-5. What is the difference between *mercy* and *love*. Which comes first?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Which attributes of love are the hardest for you to live out? Why do you think so?

³ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “My Growing Thought of God,” (*International Journal of Religious Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Volume 12, December 1935*), 5