

# EXPERIENCING GOD'S LOVE

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” —MARK 12:30**

There are many verses in Scripture that talk about the love of God, but perhaps the most profound statement is found in 1 John 4:8 & 16, which say, “God is love”. Love is not one of God’s functioning attributes as is His omniscience (all knowing), or omnipotence (all powerful), but is His very being. The fact that God loves us is one of the fundamental truths about Him, but for some that may seem a distant reality. There is, however, a difference in God loving us and us experiencing His love.

Experiencing God’s love does not come automatically. By definition, love is relational. We can love someone deeply, but if that love is not reciprocated, it only produces pain. Genesis 6:5-6 speaks of God’s own experience. “The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on earth and his heart was filled with pain.” The reason is quite clear. The people did not love Him back, and that was demonstrated in their wickedness and sin.

On the other hand, to be loved by someone and not know it also means there is no experience of that person's love. In order to experience the love of God, we need to come to know Him, which is only possible in relationship with Him. Jesus tells us to love our God with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength. What this means is that everything we do; everything our energy is engaged in and every ambition we hold, will in some way say, "I love God."

Jesus also said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Even in the best of times, we will admit that is not always easy, but our relationship with others is intricately related to our relationship with God. If we picture the cross, and envision the vertical as the relationship we have with God, it meets at the core and heart of the horizontal, which reaches outwards to the relationship we have with others. The relationship with God and with others cannot be separated. One is an expression of the other, and when we believe, as Jesus teaches, when He calls us, He empowers us. We are all loved by God, but if we do not respond to His love, there can be no experience of His love.

**PRAYER:** Dear Precious Lord, thank You for the many ways I experience your love, but especially for giving me Jesus who is my life.

**TO REFLECT UPON:** Am I expressing my love for God in relationship with others?