

Session 3 God Loves Us with All of His Heart

I. REVIEW: THE ULTIMATE REALITY

- A. God is love—wholehearted love (1 Jn. 4:16). The very being of God is wholehearted love. Wholehearted love is of first importance in God’s personality and in all of His relationships—to God, to us, and in what He desires from us. From eternity past, God has loved God with all of His heart and strength. This is how the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Spirit, etc.
- B. The love burning in God’s heart has at least five distinct expressions that are deeply interrelated.
1. ***God’s love for God***: Each person in the Trinity intensely loves the others with all their heart.
 2. ***God’s love for His people***: He loves His people with all of His heart, mind, and strength. He loves the redeemed with the same intensity that He loves within the fellowship of the Trinity.
 3. ***Our love for God***: God’s very own love is imparted to His people by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5).
 4. ***Our love for ourselves***: We love ourselves in God’s love and for God’s sake.
 5. ***Our love for others***: We love others in the overflow of experiencing God’s love (1 Jn. 4:19).
- C. One foundational premise in this teaching series is that God loves us with the same intensity that God loves God and that we must abide in this truth all of our days (Jn. 15:9; 17:23).
- ²³“...***that the world may know that You [the Father]...loved them as You have loved Me.***” (Jn. 17:23)
- ⁹“***As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.***” (Jn. 15:9)
- D. ***Abide in love***: To abide in love means to continually live in it. This requires that we *focus* on living in God’s love. We set our heart to go deep in *beholding*, or understanding this (1 Jn. 3:1). We must be students of God’s emotions and grow in understanding of God’s multi-faceted love.
- ¹***Behold what manner [quality] of love the Father has bestowed on us... (1 Jn. 3:1)***
- E. The union in the Godhead reveals the nature, quality, and intensity of His love and relationships. These relationships are a picture of what perfect love is, and of how God relates to God, how He relates to us, and how we relate to Him and others. Each person of the Trinity enjoys and fully engages in the relationship with the others. Jesus has joy and enthusiasm in His love for the Father. He is moved in loving the Father and in being loved by the Father. His love is never mechanical. He is not disinterested or bored in His relationship with the Father.
- F. We best understand God’s love as we consider the glorious truth of the Trinity. The way that God loves within the Trinity is the way He loves us—it is the very same love. He never suspends one attribute for even one moment. He always loves in fullness—He never loves us with just a part of His love, because that would be to deny His own character. He will never diminish or grow in love, because His love is infinite in measure and eternal in duration.
- G. God’s greatness includes His burning love, infinite power, great wisdom, and majestic splendor. Insight into God’s greatness first includes seeing the quality of His love and the relationships within the Godhead. This gives us insight into Jesus’ beauty, supremacy, and worth.

II. SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION: THE REVELATION OF GOD’S LOVE

- A. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as One who loves us. We will only love God to the measure that we see that He loves us. It is the core truth that transforms us.
¹⁹***We love Him because [we understand that] He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)***
²¹***Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus... (Jude 21)***
- B. The ultimate statement about our worth is that Jesus has the same measure of affection towards us that His Father has towards Him (Jn. 15:9; 17:23). This is both the simplest and deepest truth in the kingdom. It is both the introduction and the pinnacle of the kingdom. This truth gives every believer the right to view themselves as “God's favorite.”
⁹***As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love...¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that...your joy may be full. (Jn. 15:9-11)***
- C. As we progressively experience God’s love, we feel joy or a deep sense of well-being (Jn. 15:11). Understanding Jesus’ love frees us from the dominion of the inferior pleasures of sin in part; it allows us to experience the superior pleasure of encountering His burning heart of love.
- D. The Most High went so low in becoming man and bearing our sin to bring us so near to Him. The measure of His love is seen in the drastic measures He took in redeeming us to be with Him.
²²***Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... (Heb. 10:22)***
- E. Jesus was zealous that His people be very close to Him forever (Jn. 14:3; 17:24).
²⁴***Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am.” (Jn. 17:24)***
³***I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (Jn. 14:3)***
- F. Jesus’ glory includes many facets of His greatness—He who is *so high* (transcendent) went *so low* (immanent) in love and humility, to bring us *so near* (to rule with Him forever) because we are *so dear* to Him (Bride/sons). He went so low because of His desire for partnership—includes us ruling the earth with Him forever (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17-18; Dan. 7:22).
²¹***To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:21)***
¹²***If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. (2 Tim. 2:12)***
- G. We matter so much to Him. He wants us to have “ownership” with Him in His unfolding plan of redemption. We are not disassociated spectators who will merely sit back to watch Jesus rule. We are to be awestruck with Him and filled with gratitude in seeing how far His love goes.
²¹***For all things are yours: ²²whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. ²³And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. (1 Cor. 3:21–23)***

- H. God gave the dominion, or leadership, of the earth to humans (Gen. 1:26-28). It was an eternal decree that He never took back, even after Adam sinned and committed high treason by abdicating his leadership and authority over the earth to Satan (Lk. 4:5-6).
²⁶God said, “Let Us make man in Our image...let them have dominion...over all the earth...” (Gen. 1:26)
- I. David was overwhelmed at seeing this and the dignity of the redeemed in God’s sight (Ps. 8:4-6). This was surely a component of David’s passion for God. This understanding awakened David’s heart in love for God. We marvel at seeing what His love is capable of and how far it will go.
⁴What is man that You are mindful of him...⁶You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet... (Ps. 8:4-6)
- J. We are so dear to Him. The truth of our worth and identity is found only in Him. The revelation of *His worth to us* is magnified in seeing *our worth to Him* in His grace. He also magnifies His greatness through releasing His glory in and through His people. We are vessels of His grace, even “trophy of grace,” that express how loving, kind, wise, and powerful He is (Eph. 2:7). Salvation gives such dignity to the redeemed. Each one expresses the beauty of God’s love.
⁶He...made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:6-7)
- K. He is exalted in openly manifesting the great quality of His love, power, and wisdom. In seeing who we are to Him, we gain insight into His majesty. Who would love us this much? What kind of Man loves so deeply—even such undeserving ones as us? We only see the mere edges of how He feels about us and who we are to Him (Job 26:14). As beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, so great love reveals the nature of the one who loves so deeply. Our greatness in His grace is just one of many expressions of His supreme greatness that is infinitely superior to all others.

III. WE WILL NEVER EXHAUST THE LOVE OF GOD

- A. We will never exhaust the vast ocean of God’s love, but will forever experience new aspects of it.
¹⁸May be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:18-19)
- B. God’s love is like a vast ocean that is big enough to reach all people and to cover our sin forever. The width of love speaks of embracing each type of person and personality in every nationality. The length of love speaks of reaching far beyond our failure in this life and continuing forever. The depth of love points to how far Jesus descended and what it costs Him to save us (Phil. 2:8). The height of love speaks of the measure of exaltation that we receive in His grace (Rev. 3:21).
- C. Passes knowledge: It requires the aid of the Spirit to understand God’s love, and it will take all of eternity to comprehend its immensity. His love will never be fully calculated or measured.
- D. Fullness of God: Walking in our full destiny is connected to us growing in the truth of His love.

IV. APPLYING THE TRUTH OF GOD’S LOVE

- A. We must not refuse His love for us—that is to deny Him part of the joy He has in relating to us. We must not give our negative emotions more authority over our heart than God’s Word. We must submit our emotions to God’s Word by speaking His truth over our negative emotions.
- B. It is not difficult to believe that God loves believers in heaven. The difficulty is in believing that He has affection for weak people. God loves unbelievers, but He loves and enjoys believers.
- C. God does not confuse the spiritual immaturity of sincere believers with rebellion (remember that both sheep and swine get stuck in the mud). The Lord rejoices over us each time we sincerely repent of our failure, long before we even attain to spiritual maturity (Lk. 15:4-7, 17-22). The Lord feels *compassion* over the prodigals on the day they repent (Lk. 15:17, 20). God revealed His enjoyment of the prodigal son in the father giving him the best robes (Lk. 15:22). The newly repentant, yet immature prodigal son had many areas of his life that still needed transformation.
- D. God delights in showing us mercy. He wants us confident that He enjoys us (even in our weakness) as we walk in sincere repentance. Then we run *to* Him instead of *from* Him.
¹⁸***He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)***
- E. In John 21:20, John wrote his “signature” for his life work. This verse tells us how he carried his heart and lived his life. John never mentions his own name in his gospel, but refers to himself five times as “the disciple the Lord loved” (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). He wanted to be known by how he related to Jesus, not by what he accomplished before men.
²⁰***Peter...saw the disciple whom Jesus loved [John] following...?” (Jn. 21:20)***
- F. John had one of the greatest “resumés” in history by being in relationship with Mary (Jn. 19:26-27) and the apostles, including Peter and Paul. He was instrumental in great revivals and wrote five books of the New Testament. Jesus promised him he would rule on a throne in Israel (Mt. 19:28) and he saw his name on a foundation of the wall in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14).
- G. The measure of His worth and love is seen in the drastic measures He took in redeeming us.
⁹***“You are worthy...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood...
¹⁰And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”***
(Rev. 5:9–10)

V. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (*i.e., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS*)

Ask each to pick 1 question—after everyone answers one; then pick another to answer (if time permits)

1. What is one point in this session for which you would like more understanding?
2. What is one point that inspired or challenged you? Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
3. What is one point that you want to impart to a younger believer? Why? How will you elaborate on it?
4. What is one point in this session that needs to be emphasized to the larger Body of Christ? Why?