

Why Does God Love You?

Series: Understanding God Helps You To Understand You.

How do you explain love?

In your life, do you feel loved or mostly alone and unloved?

The kind of love we receive here on earth has a significant impact on how we view the love of God. If we feel unloved, it can lead us to believe wholeheartedly the lie that God's love has to be earned, that it is conditional, and that we have to be perfect for Him to love us.

What Does The Bible Say?

17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made

complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. (Ephesians 3:17–19 NLT)

Nothing is greater than feeling the love of God. There are no limits to His love.

“God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.”

Saint Augustine

God loves you, not because of who you are or what you've done. God loves you because of who He is.

34 Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. (Mark 6:34 NLT)

God's love is emotional.

13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:13 NLT)

God's love is costly.

God's love for you is:

Limitless!

Emotional!

Costly!

How Can You Obey?

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. 2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. (Ephesians 5:1–2 NLT)

Does your love for God cost you anything?

7 Don't participate in the things these people do. 8 For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only

what is good and right and true. 10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.

15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.

(Ephesians 5:7–10;15-17 NLT)

Does your love for God have any limits?

18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life.

Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18–20 NLT)

Does your love for God contain emotion?

Is your love for God:

Costly?

Limitless?

Emotional?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Notes:

This series is originated from the book, Thurman, C. (2017).
The Lies We Believe About God: Knowing God For Who He Really Is. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

Explore:

The statement that God loved Jacob but hated Esau has troubled some people. Paul quoted it in Romans 9:10–13 to prove God’s electing grace for both Israel and all who trust Jesus Christ for salvation. But the verb “hate” must not be defined as a positive expression of the wrath of God. God’s love for Jacob was so great that, in comparison, His actions toward Esau looked like hatred. As an illustration, Jacob loved Rachel so much that his relationship to Leah seemed like hatred (Gen. 29:20, 30–31; see also Deut. 21:15–17). When Jesus called His disciples to “hate” their own family (Luke 14:26), He was using the word “hate” in a similar way. Our love for Christ may occasionally move us to do things that appear like hatred to those whom we love (see Matt. 12:46–50).

Someone said to Dr. Arno C. Gaebelin, the gifted Hebrew Christian leader of a generation ago, “I have a serious problem with Malachi 1:3, where God says, ‘Esau I have hated.’ ” Dr. Gaebelin replied, “I have a greater problem with Malachi 1:2, where God says, ‘Jacob, I have loved.’ ” We certainly can’t explain the love and grace of God, nor do we have to, but we can experience God’s grace and love as trust Christ and walk with Him. The Lord is even willing to be “the God of Jacob.”

Malachi’s third evidence for God’s love is God’s evident blessing on the people of Israel (v. 4). Like other nations in that area, Edom suffered during the Babylonian invasion of Israel, but the Lord didn’t promise to restore their land as He promised the Jews. The proud Edomites boasted that they would quickly have their land in good shape, but God had other plans. He called Edom “The Wicked Land” (v. 4, niv), but Israel He called “the holy land” (Zech. 2:12). Keep in mind that the Edomites were indeed an evil people (see Obad. 8–14) who deserved

every judgment God sent their way. To the Jews, the Babylonian invasion was a chastening, but to Edom, it was a judgment.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be amazed* (pp. 141–142). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Explore:

1:2c–3a. The Lord’s claim over Israel was vindicated by two considerations. First was His love expressed in His free choice, His election of Jacob and his descendants (including this generation which had questioned Him) to inherit the promise. This was contrary to the normal practice of choosing the oldest son. Esau, also named Edom and the father of the Edomites (Gen. 36:1), was the firstborn of the twins. Yet even before birth God freely elected Jacob, later named Israel, as the heir (Gen. 25:21–34; Rom. 9:10–13). The Hebrew words for loved and hated refer not to God’s emotions but to His choice of one over

the other for a covenant relationship (cf. Gen. 29:31–35; Deut. 21:15, 17; Luke 14:26). To hate someone meant to reject him and to disavow any loving association with him (cf. Ps. 139:21). Nor do these words by themselves indicate the eternal destinations of Jacob and Esau. The verbs refer to God’s acts in history toward both of the two nations which descended from the two brothers.

Blaising, C. A. (1985). Malachi. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1576). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Explore:

Paul abruptly tackles the issue in no uncertain terms in verse 3: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” To catch the force of

Paul's words, we need to understand that the word "greed" is sexually freighted in this context. It means greed for someone else's body. Marcus Barth renders it as "Insatiability."

The television ad for Calvin Klein's Obsession perfectly portrays this idea. The camera focuses close up, in black and white, on an intense, lustful male face, which then has superimposed on it an amber flame which becomes the amber bottle of Obsession as he intones his desire.

Paul says there must be none of this — no "sexual immorality, or ... any kind of impurity, or ... greed" for others. There must "not be even be a hint" of it! Literally, it is not to be named (or discussed) among them. They should also refrain from discussing and rehashing the sins and immoralities of others.

While Paul always demanded that Christians call sins by their names, however loathsome they were, he regarded extended conversation about such sins as dangerous to spiritual health.

Too much discussion of evil often functions like an incantation, bringing the very thing we say we despise into our lives.

Hughes, R. K. (1990). *Ephesians: the mystery of the body of Christ* (p. 156). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Explore:

Walk in Love

The rsv translates 5:1, “be imitators of God, as beloved children.” This has a stronger, clearer ring than “be followers of God.” The principle of the imitation of God is one that Jesus took from the Old Testament. “The Lord said to Moses, “Say to ... Israel, You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2, rsv). Jesus said, “You, therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48, rsv). “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36, rsv).

In this passage the idea of imitation is tied to a particular aspect of God's nature and action: "forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32) and "walk in love" (5:2). Paul also uses the favorite image of Jesus, "children of God." Is there a connection here with Jesus' word in Matthew 5:43, that we are to love even our enemies that we may be children of God?

Certainly it is not too much to affirm that these words of Paul, in the style, content, and spirit of Jesus' teaching, embody a core principle of the gospel. As children of God, we are to imitate God. We are to act in our own little spheres as God acts in His universe, and thus prove that God is our Father.

Walk as Children of Light

Dorothy Sayers, the theologian and mystery novelist, likened our thoughtless, purposeless, rote participation in public worship to those "bit actors" who appear at the studio, play through the

brief scene and shots to which they are assigned, and leave, unaware of the meaning of the drama in which they are cast, ignorant of whether it is comedy, tragedy, drama, or melodrama.

Is not this the Christian problem? We want to be “bit actors,” moving in and out of the drama of redemption—the new life of justification and sanctification—as we please. It can’t be so. “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

The passage calls to mind two other passages: (1) the familiar words of John 12:35, 36: “Walk while you have the light ... that you may become sons of the light”; (2) the passage in Rom. 13:8–14 which has the same challenging ring and makes the same contrast as this passage—“Let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light; let us walk properly as in the day” (vv. 12, 13). The Romans passage closes with that favorite image of Paul: “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are not actors.” Paul does not say, “You belong to the light”; he says, “You are light” (Eph. 5:8). Living as children of light, our new nature partakes of the highest element in which we now dwell and manifests itself in our conduct.

Dunnam, M. D., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1982). Galatians / Ephesians / Philippians / Colossians / Philemon (Vol. 31, pp. 217–218). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.

Question 1 of 5

How would you explain to someone what Jesus said in Luke 14:26: “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple”?

Question 2 of 5

To what degree do you feel that God loves you less when you do something wrong and loves you more when you do something right?

Question 3 of 5

Which of the aspects of God's love spoke the most powerfully to you? Which ones didn't speak to you much at all?

Question 4 of 5

How has the way you've been treated in the past affected your view of God's love?

Question 5 of 5

Jesus was able to love people who were even hard to like.

Name some folks you find hard to like. Why is this? Name some folks who may find you hard to like. Why is this?