

Discipleship Series for New Believers

Lesson 1: God's Love

God's Love-Why

I would want to instruct a new believer on God's love because Satan is always attempting to lie to Christians about the character of God. I believe this is one of the reasons God repeats over and over in the Scriptures that we need to know Him; Satan is always representing God as other than He truly is. However, if we seek to know God, He will continue to reveal the truth of His character to us, and this will break the lies of the enemy off of our lives.

Knowing God's love is so important in the believer's life because I John 4:19 states, "We love, because he first loved us." As we begin to understand God's love toward us, we desire to return this love to Him. We do not end up grudgingly serving God because we have to, and we do not just offer Him religious duties, but we worship Him with a pure heart of love. Sometimes people have a hard time serving God simply because they do not know the great love He has for them.

Knowing the love of God also helps the believer not to live their lives in condemnation. Condemnation causes fear in approaching God because Satan has convinced us God is angry at us or we are not good enough to come to Him. I John 4:18 shows, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." Therefore, as believers, if we learn God's love, we will no longer believe the lies of condemnation which cause us to fear approaching God.

God's Love-How

I want to begin by sharing a personal testimony about how God has made His love real to me in my life and then build on that truth through the Scriptures. Aside from saving me, God has made His love real in my life by opening my eyes to how good He is. After I first began a relationship with Jesus, I sought God with my whole heart. I desired to know Him with everything in me. But some things happened, and I no longer had a close relationship with Him. He has shown His love and mercy in my life by being good to me in a time I least deserved it. At my weakest point in my life concerning God, He brought me to a place where I would seek Him. Where there used to be such a strong desire to seek Him, there was no desire. However, His love for me did not change. He had been the one fighting for me to have an intimate relationship with Him. He placed me in a very structured environment where I would seek Him. God did everything for me to have an intimate relationship with Him until I got stronger in the Lord and no longer needed this type of environment to continue my relationship with Him. This most demonstrates the love of God to me that He's gracious and good towards me when I least deserve it. It also brings out the truth in 2 Corinthians 12:9 which states, "My grace is sufficient for you,

for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” While I have been in the weakest time in my life with God, He has been faithful and strong!

The fact that God’s love is constant towards us regardless of how we feel about our relationship with Him can be seen through the Scriptures. God loves us when we are in our sin, and His love toward us is even more evident in the life of the believer. The Apostle John shows in scripture that God has love for sinners, and His love moved Him to come here to earth so that we, sinful man, could receive eternal life. John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God’s love for the world was so great that He did not spare anything for us to have a relationship with Him, not even His sinless Son, Jesus. Jesus was perfect and never did anything wrong. All He did was good and helped people.

Jesus demonstrated His love toward us by coming to earth and living His life for us. Then He died a very painful death on a cross for us and rose from the dead perfect and victorious over death on the third day so we might know Him. The love God has for us is vast and beyond comprehension. There is no way God could show greater love than He already has by giving us His very life. John 15:13 illustrates, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” God’s love toward us is perfect and greater than any other we will ever know.

When God reveals Jesus’ purpose behind coming to earth, we see God’s heart. It is revealed that God’s motivation for Jesus’ ministry at the very essence was love. He came not to condemn lost humanity, but to save us. Each one of us is deserving of God’s wrath and judgment, but because God is love He came and brought us salvation instead. John 3:17-18 captures God’s purpose for sending Jesus so aptly, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Jesus is God’s gift of love to a lost and dying world.

God’s love is not only toward those who do not know Him. His love is also for the Christian. If He does not spare anything for those who are against Him, how much more has He made provision for those who desire to please Him? God has forgiven our sin by Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection, and if we happen to sin after we know Christ, it is not unforgivable. God has made provision in Jesus also for the sins committed after we know Christ. This does not mean we should go out and sin, however, because it is our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. But we can rest in the knowledge that God loves us and that His grace is even more bountiful to His children who love and want to follow Him. Romans 5:8-10 brings out this truth to us saying, “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him

through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!”

As Christians we can just rest in and enjoy His love. We do not have to live our lives burdened down by the guilt of sin. We do not have to strive to gain God’s love and approval. As His children we already have it. What Jesus did on the cross for us was enough. God’s love for us is constant. He cannot love us any more or any less. He has the power to keep us in correct relationship with Him so we do not have to spend our lives worrying. God is for us, and He will do whatever it takes in our lives to keep our hearts in love with Him. Romans 8:31-39 portrays that since God’s power and love is for us we can just enjoy our relationship with Him, and He will take care of the rest. The Apostle Paul wrote, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

As believers we never have to question God’s love in our lives because He has proven it in every stage of our lives. He loved us before we knew Him, He made provision for us after we came to Him, and He is fighting for us to keep us with Him. There is no greater way to display love for an individual than the way God displays His love for us.