



## Lesson 3 – God Is Love

Love is another one of God's attributes that Scripture seems to highlight in a unique way. Love is a crucial part of understanding God's character, yet love is a word we can have a hard time defining.

### The Definition of God's Love

Defining God's love is quite the challenge. Since the Bible nowhere gives us a definition, any attempt we make is nothing more than our best effort. The imperfect definition we will use for this lesson is: **God's love is a self-sacrificial \_\_\_\_\_ to and \_\_\_\_\_ in another.**

This involves both the actions of God – His love is seen in His giving for the good of another – as well as an emotional component – God delights in those He loves. When it comes to God's love for His creatures, this is a love that flows out in specific ways.

### The Demonstration of God's Love

#### God's Love Moves Him to Show \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:4 connects God mercy and love: God shows us mercy because of His great love. Mercy is related to pity. God pities or has compassion on those in a miserable condition, either because of their circumstances (i.e. the poor) or because of their choices (i.e. sinners).

#### God's Love Moves Him to \_\_\_\_\_

The ultimate display of God's love was the death of Christ on the cross. God's love is a sacrificial love, a love which gives for the good of another. When discussing the trials, pains, and suffering of this world,



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Paul points back to the giving of God's Son as the ultimate proof that God loves us and is for us (Romans 8:31-39). If God is willing to give us the most precious gift that could possibly be given in the history of the universe – *His own Son* – then won't He freely give us *all* things?

#### **God's Love Moves Him to \_\_\_\_\_**

God's love compels Him to pursue sinners as well as His children. Jesus described His mission as coming for the spiritually sick rather than those who thought they were doing well (Luke 5:31). As for God's pursuit of His children, we often talk about "tough love" because we realize that people don't always enjoy the love they are shown. Hebrews 12:5-12 uses the image of a parent disciplining their child to describe our relationship to God.

#### **The Response to God's Love**

As we study the love of God, we should see a genuine difference in the way we live. Specifically, we should be compelled to love God and to love others. This love will pour to God and others.

#### **God's Love Should Compel Us to Love \_\_\_\_\_**

A true, genuine love for another person has a way of creating love in response. The sincere love of suitor has turned the heart of many an apathetic young lady. We were designed to respond to love, and this is true on a human level as well as in our relationship with God. John put it this way: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). As we meditate on God's love, it should create within us a love for God and a desire to follow and obey Him.

#### **God's Love Should Compel Us to Love \_\_\_\_\_**

Jesus ties together the two greatest commands in the law: love God and love others (Matthew 22:37-40). If God is love and He loves people, then it would be odd for someone to love God and then not love other people. John picks up on this, especially in 1 John, where he argues that love for God will translate into love for others (1 John 3:17; 4:7, 20-21). Especially when it comes to Christians, it would be very odd for us to say that we love God but we can't stand the people He has chosen for His family!

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