

## Experiencing God's Love Part 2

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Last week I mentioned the first 5 definitions of God's love.

#### **1. THE LOVE OF GOD IS UNCONDITIONAL.**

**For God so loved the world...**

God's love is not based on our spiritual condition or our moral tendencies. It is not based on our behaviour or our attitude toward Him. Rather we see here that God's love for mankind is universal and unconditional. He loves everyone. And this is one of the things that sets Him apart from every other god held up by every other world religion.

#### **2. THE LOVE OF GOD IS SACRIFICIAL.**

**...that He gave...**

God shows us that true love has nothing to do with what others can do for me, but everything to do with what I can do for others. And what are the results of God's sacrificial love? He gave, He did not just lend it to us, He gave, so it is without expecting to get his Son back.

#### **3. THE LOVE OF GOD IS VALUABLE.**

**...His only...**

Here we see the value of the Father's love for us. Not only was He willing to give, but we see here that He was willing to give the only one He had. When you give to someone out of your abundance that is one thing, but when you give out of your poverty that is quite another. He loved us so much that He was willing to give us His "one and only" (NIV). God gave us all, without any reservations.

#### **4. GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONABLE.**

**...Son...**

God's love is not merely some abstract concept. It isn't just a philosophy or a theological concept. God's love was made manifest in this world through the person of Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father. Jesus Christ came into this world to reveal to us the love of God in human form.

God's love is personable on the one hand because it was made visible through a person – Jesus Christ – but also because it is given on a person – you.

**Max Lucado writes:**

There are many reasons that God saves you: to bring glory to Himself, to appease His justice, to demonstrate His sovereignty. But one of the sweetest reasons God saved you is because He is fond of you. He likes having you around.

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He will listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and yet He chose to live in your heart. And the Christmas gift He sent you, is He Himself in Bethlehem. In today's young people's speak, He's crazy about you!

## **5. GOD'S LOVE IS ACCESSIBLE.**

**...that whoever believes in Him...**

The really good news about God's love is that it is not limited to a select few. It is not available only to those who were born with the right colour of skin or who live in the correct continent. Nor is it difficult to obtain. It is not reserved only for the intellectual elite or the power brokers or financial wizards. No, the love of God is accessible to "whoever believes in" Jesus – the only Son of God.

God has come down to our level. He is not a distant God who loves us only from some mystical, faraway place that is completely removed from us. Rather He has entered into our world, and He longs to enter into our lives.

## **6. GOD'S LOVE IS NONJUDGMENTAL.**

**...Should not perish...**

God's goal in sending his Son from heaven to earth was not to condemn you and show you how bad you are, how unworthy you are or how hopeless you are. God's only desire in sending His Son was to show you His love and draw you into a love relationship with Himself.

Jesus didn't come into the world in order to rebuke you - He came to rescue you. He didn't come to criticize you - He came to cleanse you. He didn't come to punish you - He came to pardon you. He didn't come to destroy you - He came to deliver you.

### **Post-it® Notes--Success from Failure**

Everyone knows what Post-it® Notes are. They are those great little self-sticking notepapers. Most people have Post-it® Notes. Most people use them. Most people love them. But Post-it® Notes were not a planned product.

### **Illustration:**

No one got the idea and then stayed up nights to invent the Post-It Note. A man named Spencer Silver was working in the 3M research laboratories in 1970 trying to find a strong adhesive. Silver developed a new adhesive, but it was even weaker than what 3M was already manufacturing. While it stuck to objects, this new glue could easily be lifted off. It was super weak instead of super strong.

No one knew what to do with the stuff, but Silver didn't just discard it. Then one Sunday four years later, another 3M scientist named Arthur Fry was singing in the church's choir. He used paper markers to keep his place in the hymnal, but they kept falling out of the book. Remembering Silver's adhesive, Fry used some to coat his markers. Success! With the weak adhesive, the markers stayed in place, yet lifted off without damaging the pages. 3M began distributing Post-it® Notes nationwide in 1980 - ten years after Silver developed the super weak adhesive. Today they are one of the most popular office products available.

God is an expert at turning failures into successes.

### **1 Jn. 1:9**

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

However, this does not mean that God is not a God of judgment. There is a huge difference between recognizing right and wrong and being judgmental. There is a difference between judging the unrepentant sinner and being judgmental.

Being judgmental means that one has a critical spirit that only looks for the bad in people and then is quick to condemn them when these bad points are found.

God, on the other hand, will judge us for our sins and even sentence us to hell, only as a last resort if we refuse to accept his offer of forgiveness.

### **Hebrews 10:28**

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

### **Hebrews 10:29**

How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified Him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

Another way of looking at it is that it isn't so much that God sends us to hell as that we chose hell over heaven – we chose Satan over God – we chose sin over righteousness.

## **7. GOD'S LOVE IS BENEFICIAL.**

**...but have eternal life...**

More than fifty years ago, at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, a young sociology professor assigned his class the project of interviewing 200 city youths residing in downtown slums. He asked them to predict their future. Students predicted that ninety per cent would serve time in prison. Twenty-five years later the same professor asked a class to track down the original boys and discover

what had happened to them. One hundred eighty were located and only four had ever been in jail. Why were predictions so far off?

Looking for common factors, over 100 of the boys mentioned, the strong influence of a teacher was the common factor. They then located the teacher, a seventy-year-old Sheila O'Rourke, in a Memphis nursing home. Puzzled by the interest in her, she could only exclaim, "All I ever did was love each of them."

That is the power of love. If that is the result of being loved with an imperfect, human love what must be the results of being loved by a perfect, divine love? As a result of this teacher's love each of these boys had a real chance at life. But as a result of God's love each of us can have an eternal life.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Years ago, a young man who had quarrelled with his father left home. He continued to keep in touch with his mother and wanted very badly to return home for Christmas, but he was afraid his father would not allow him. His mother wrote to him and urged him to go home, but he did not feel he could until he knew his father had forgiven him. Eventually, there was no time for any more letters. His mother wrote and said she would talk with the father, and if he had forgiven him, she would tie a white cloth on the tree which grew right alongside the railroad tracks near their home, which he could see before the train reached the station. If there was no white cloth, it would be better if he remained on the train and moved on.

So, the young man started home. As the train drew near his home, he was so nervous he said to his friend who was travelling with him, "I can't bear to look. Sit in my place and look out the window. I'll tell you what the tree looks like, and you tell me whether there is a white cloth on it or not." So, his friend changed places with him and looked out the window. After a bit, the friend said, "Oh yes, I see the tree." The son asked, "Is there a white cloth tied to it?" For a moment the friend did not say anything. Then he turned, and in a very gentle voice said, "There is a white cloth tied to every limb of that tree!"

In some sense, Jesus Christ is the white cloth our heavenly Father tied to the tree, to the cross of Calvary, signalling that it was safe for us to return home to his love. Will you come home today?