

BIBLE STUDY SERIES:

TRUSTING THE FATHER

**CHARACTER & NATURE OF GOD:
“LOVE”**

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CHARACTER AND NATURE OF GOD: “LOVE”

INTENTION:

Just as we can confuse ourselves as to what is “Good”, we can confuse ourselves to what is “Love”.

Growing up, the kind of love my dad had for me included punishment (abuse)—and the religious church I grew up in interpreted God in that same fashion: out to get me “in love”. I thus feared God was always disappointed in me and although thought He might love me because He “was obligated to”, I really felt in my heart that this love of God was really Him looking for reasons to punish me for my imperfections.

I lived this way for decades before coming to finally believe opposite to that understanding—now knowing that God’s Love has no punishment. And because He wants to Love me always, I never have to fear any punishment from Him. We have that ability to come close to Him, into His presence, because we never have to fear Him.

CHARACTER AND NATURE OF GOD: “LOVE”

Bible Study: Lesson 002 (Character and Nature of God, Part 2)

I. TOPIC (PART 2 – LOVE):

We want to continue to look at the Character and Nature of God—this time as “Love”.

As we learned to see what it means that God is “Good”, we want to see also what it means to see God as “Love”. Sometimes we can view love (especially in the world we live in) as including feelings of abandonment, suffering, and pain. But this is not the true Love that is from God—an “Agape” ([G26](#)) Love. This same Love He asks us to live in, is the same Love He lives in.

God = Love. Jesus Christ exemplified what this type of love looks like. Furthermore, we are told to love Him and each other in the same way. The Lord will never ask us to love someone “more” than He loves us (and demonstrates that love to us). His LOVE towards us comes without conditions on our part—we aren’t to love Him for Him to Love us. No, it is the other way around: He Loved us FIRST; and because He Loves us, this should remove any fears we have towards Him that would hinder our love back. For how can you love someone you fear?

- *Refer also: Bible Study Lesson 033 – Loves*

II. READING:

[1 John 3:16-24](#) (NIV) {PoG}

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

19 This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20 If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, {as} He knows everything. 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from Him anything we ask, because we keep His commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is His command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 The one who keeps God’s commands lives in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

[1 John 4:7-21](#) (NIV) {PoG}

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.

13 This is how we know that we live in Him and He in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17 {Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He (Jesus Christ) is, so are we in this world.} 18 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.

19 We love because He first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And He has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

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1 John 5:1-5 (NIV)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

III. RELATED VERSES AND QUESTIONS:

A. John 3:16-19 (NIV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Question: What does God's Love look like? Imagine watching your own child be beaten and crucified on a cross for someone else's fault / sin.

Response:

B. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (NIV) {PoG}

Love is patient, love is kind. {Love} does not envy, {Love} does not boast, {Love} is not proud. 5 {Love} does not dishonour others, {Love} is not self-seeking, {Love} is not easily angered, {Love} keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 {Love} always protects, {Love} always trusts, {Love} always hopes, {Love} always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.

Question: Since we have learned that God = Love, in these verses, replace the words "Love" with "God" and read through it again. Does that change how you see God?

Response:

C. Mark 12:28-31 (NIV)

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" 29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

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Question: Which commandment is the most important? Why do you think so?

Response:

D. [Galatians 5:14](#) (NIV) {PoG}

For the entire law is fulfilled in {this one word}: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Question: This one “word” is love. Have you ever loved a difficult “neighbour” or “person”—or yourself?

Response:

E. [Galatians 5:22-23](#) (NIV) {PoG}

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, {faith}, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Question: Being Born-Again, we have the Fruits of the Spirit. How do you manifest Love to yourself and others?

Response:

F. [Romans 5:5b](#) (NIV)

...because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Question: Do you feel the Holy Spirit? In what ways do you feel God’s Love through you?

Response:

G. [Ephesians 1:3-4](#) (NIV)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love.

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Bible Study: Lesson 002 (Character and Nature of God, Part 2)

Question: What does it mean to be Holy and without blame? Do you believe you are?

Response:

H. [2 Timothy 1:6-7](#) (NIV)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Question: How does the Lord’s Holy-Spirit-Gift of power, love, and discipline help in your everyday life?

Response:

I. [Jude 1:20-21](#) (NIV)

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Question: What are some ways you can build yourself up in your belief?

Response:

IV. FURTHER THOUGHT:

A. [Ephesians 3:14-21](#) (NIV)

For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,
21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Thoughts: Being “rooted and established in love” is that we live and dwell in how much the Lord loves us! His love is immeasurable to us and we should never doubt that. When we come to realize His over-encompassing love, we realize He has nothing but Love towards us (not anger or wrath). For when we fear the Lord in that He is always dwelling on our mistakes and eager to punish us, we lose sight of His love—in that there is no love in fear:

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1 John 4:18a (NIV)

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.

And that living without fear makes life so much less stressful; we do not have to dwell on our own mistakes either, knowing that His love took care of all our mistakes at the Cross (hence why we do not have to believe we will be punished). His power works in and through us; but when we fear or lose sight of His love, we limit God's immeasurable ability in our life. Let's not limit God!

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS / NOTES (LESSON 002):

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