

Knowing God's Love

The Challenges We Face Today

The challenge that many followers of Jesus face is being able to experience God's love in a very real and consistent way.

- Intellectually we know that God loves us, but often we are not able to experience His love.
- Many are not secure in God's love because they don't really believe that God loves them.
- We fail to see day-by-day all the ways God demonstrates His love for us.
- We don't spend the necessary time in prayer and in the Word so that we are able to consistently abide in His love.

This spiritual challenge must be faced head on and dealt with by consistently keeping God's love in the proper perspective.

Lesson Truth

God is love and His love for us is unconditional and constant. His love never stops, but flows around and through His creation at all times. When we are disconnected from His love, we no longer experience it. It is still there, but we are disconnected from it.

We must be diligent to make sure we stay connected to His love and to find our security and well being in the love He is pouring out toward us.

Lesson Goal

The goal for this lesson is for you to learn how to experience God's love consistently by believing that He loves you and by paying attention to how He demonstrates His love toward you each and every day.

Lesson Discussion

God Loves Us



John 3:16 ESV "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

One of the greatest struggles of the Christian life today is to sincerely believe that God loves us, that God loves me personally and individually. Intellectually we believe this, but often our thoughts and behaviors show that we don't really believe this.

God loves us because He says so in His word. But deep down in our hearts we are not experiencing the reality of His love daily in our lives. When was the last time that you sensed the love of God for you to the point where you were lifted up on high and your heart burst forth with the joy of knowing and sensing His love for you?

God wants us to experience and enjoy His love not just occasionally when we are at church or when something has gone well, but even in the difficult times. We can and must learn to experience His love consistently because it is in His love that we find hope and security.

What is it that keeps us from consistently experiencing God's love, which is the grandest love in the universe? The Bible says that God is love and that He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die on a Cross for us. If God's love is that big and so encompassing, how is it that most of the time we cannot or do not experience it?

We need to understand God's love and then we must learn to experience it. We can begin to understand God's love if we take a look at how we give and receive love.

Understanding God's Love



1 John 3:1 ESV “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

A good example of love is a mother's love for her child. We can experience love from our mother because we experience it in a very real way. We are cuddled, hugged, played with, fed, changed and rocked.

As a child we feel safe and secure in our mother's love. Some of us may not remember what that was like, but you only have to be around a mother and her newborn to see this in practice.

Yet God's love for you is even greater than a mother's love for her child. His love is limitless, eternal, and unconditional. If this is so, it seems that His love would be very easy to experience, right?

The reason it is not easy to experience God's love is because God does not love us physically like a mother does. No physical hugs, cuddles and rocking. God loves us spiritually and it is our spiritual relationship with Him that allows us to truly experience the depth of His love for us in a very real way.

God will see to it that we are loved physically through others, but even greater than that is being loved spiritually by God. When we experience His love regularly, we find that life will be so much more fulfilling and joyful. We experience a hope and a security that cannot be found in anyone else.

The key dynamic required for us to consistently experience God's love is our relationship with Him. When we are out of relationship with Him we will feel disconnected from Him and we will stop experiencing His love.

In order for me to sense the love of another person I must have relationship with them in some way. If I no longer have contact in any way, I cannot experience that person's love. Contact can be by phone, letter or whatever. Relationship through some kind of contact is essential to be able to experience the love of another.



Psalm 119:76 ESV “Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant.”

Experiencing God's Love

When children grow up they can reach a point where they are no longer in tune with the love of their parents and no longer respond to their parent's love. It becomes very difficult for parents to continue loving their children when the children reject the parent's love and no longer respond to their love.

The love of the parent is still there and available, but the child may be out of touch with it. They may value the love of friends or other things in the world more than the love of their parents. They may leave home and thereby be separated from the love they were used to getting from their parents.

How can they get back to the point where they can experience their parent's love for them in a very real way? The only way to experience love is to receive it from one who is giving it. This requires personal contact in one form or another.

There is a giving and there is a receiving of love. There is the state of being loved by someone and then there is the response to being loved. If we never respond to the love of another or we take it for granted, it might not be long before we are no longer experience that love.

Some people enjoy receiving love, but never give it. We must learn how to receive and give love equally. There are the givers and takers.

We must learn to give love and we must learn to receive and respond to the love of others. God's love flows out from Him all the time. It cannot help but flow out from God because God is love. His love is there all the time and is never ending. It is as eternal as He is.

When we lose contact with God's love and are no longer responding to it, it can seem to us that it is no longer there and that God has stopped loving us. We may begin to feel isolated and God will begin to feel less real to us.

How can we prevent this from happening? How can we stay in His love consistently and experience the constant flow of His love to His creation? We must stop and tune into God's love and then respond to it. There is no other way.

For instance, you can have a radio, but unless that radio is tuned to a station, you only hear static. Many people today only hear static and are not experiencing God's love because they are not tuned in.

As we tune in to God, we will sense His love and then we must respond to that love, not take it for granted. We respond by giving thanks, praising Him, and by becoming more obedient to Him. We turn our mind to Him more and more throughout the day so we can stay in His love.

God's love is unfolding to us each day in a hundred different ways that we rarely notice. Most of what God does for us gets ignored or taken for granted. No one who loves likes to be taken for granted or ignored, and the same goes for God.

As a mother provides for all the needs of her baby, so God provides for all the needs of His children because He loves them. We know this is true because His word says so.

In order for a baby to be cuddled by its mother, it must be close to her. God can only cuddle us spiritually if we will get and stay close enough to Him so He can cuddle us. We need to stop

rushing through life and just take some time and climb up in His arms and receive His love.



1 Peter 5:7 ESV "...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

God cares about you very much. He cares about every detail of your life. Every hair on your head is numbered. As you submit to His love and do what He has shown you to do, you will be able to consistently remain in His love.

Characteristics of God's Love

It is helpful to focus and meditate on the characteristics of God's love, such as the eternal existence of His love, the depth of His for us, His demonstration of His love for us, and that His love is unfailing at all times.



Exodus 15:13 ESV "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode."

Psalm 6:4 ESV "Turn, O LORD, and deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love."

Unfailing love is love that is always there. It is love that never gives up on us and is always willing to take us back again. When you learn to trust in God's unfailing love, you find eternal security and an anchor for your soul in the difficult times of your life.

We get so wrapped up in the things of this life that we soon forget about God and His love for us. But as soon as we sit still long enough and bring our mind back to Him, we can be refreshed in His love.

We must establish the discipline of spending time with God so we can bask in His love. We must come and be with Him and just sit with

Him for awhile and let Him put His arms around us and love on us. He wants us to enjoy His love, but we are not willing to take the time to stop and experience His love.

Many will never establish this discipline because God is not important enough. Many give Him lip service saying that He is the most important thing to them, but when you watch their daily lives, you can see that He is not.

The nature of God is love. His love is eternal and it does not change from day to day. His love is always and forever. Nothing will ever change that. We may not understand how that can be, but we don't have to understand it to receive it.

One of the most important characteristics of God's love is that His love is unconditional. Even though He may discipline His children, His love for us remains the same. He loves us in spite of our sin and failure. His desire is that we always turn back to Him so He can clean us up and make things right.

The depth of God's love was demonstrated for us by His sending His only Son on a lonely mission to die for us to pay the price for our sin. His love for us is without equal.

God's love is also nurturing, as a mother loves her child. A child experiences motherly love in a very physical way. When we were babies we were cuddled, hugged, played with, fed, changed and rocked to sleep.

As a child we feel safe and secure in our mother's love. Some of us may not remember what that was like, but you only have to be around a mother and her newborn to see this in practice.

Yet God's love for you is even greater than a mother's love for her child. If that is so, it seems that His love would be very easy to experience. The reason it is not easy to experience God's love is because God does not love us physically like a mother can. No physical hugs, cuddles and rocking.

God loves us spiritually and it is our spiritual relationship with Him that allows us to truly experience the depth of His love for us in a very real way. God is a spiritual being and the love that God expresses toward us spiritually is far and away more uplifting than any other love that can be found on this planet.



1 John 3:1 ESV "See what kind of love the father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him."

When we are born again into God's kingdom, we become His children, and He loves us and cares for us dearly beloved children. As we are obedient to Him and submit to Him, we will find that everything in our lives will turn out for our best.

God's nurturing love is what provides for our physical needs. His love protects us and gives us guidance and instruction for our lives. His love is also the reason He disciplines us and corrects us so that we can experience the best He has for us.

Remaining in His Love

The main problem with our being able to experience God's love is that we do not and will not take the time. A child very quickly gets to the point where they are so busy and so energetic that it is difficult to cuddle and love them.

God's love flows out from Him all the time. It cannot help but flow out from God because God is love. His love is there all the time and is never ending. It is as eternal as He is. How then do we tap into this vast expanse of His love that is continually and constantly flowing throughout all creation?

The only way we can experience His love is to submit to Him and then choose to make time for Him so we can bask in His love. We must discipline our minds concentrate on Him often

throughout the day and spend time giving thanks and praise.

We must stop being so busy and so involved with other things to sit long enough to get in tune with the vast expanse of God's love flowing to us. God is not going to force us to sit still so we can experience His love. He will encourage us and try to get our attention, but we must choose to come to Him and then we can experience the reality of His love.



John 15:9-11 ESV “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

Jesus said “remain in my love, just as I remain in my Father's love”. We have a choice to come to and stay in God's love. His love is being poured out through Jesus Christ to us. If we will just come to Jesus and then remain with Him, we will experience the depth of His love all the time.

Again, the problem is we will not come to Him. When we finally do come to Him we do not remain with Him. We run off again doing our own thing ignoring and failing to respond to His love. We take Him for granted - shame on us.

The most wonderful, the most fantastic love relationship possible is available to us and we ignore it because we think we do not have the time. We must make time and we must take time away from other things. Nothing in life is more important than our relationship with God through His Son, and we must begin to live our lives as if this is true.



Ephesians 3:14-19 ESV “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every

family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

We must take time away from other relationships, whether other people or other things, and learn how to remain in His love. No one can remain in His love for you, you must do that yourself or you will remain outside His love.



One Step for Living This Truth

The foundation of the *One Step* series that you have been reading is to be able to live God's truth, one truth at a time, one step at a time.

Next we will suggest the specific action steps you can take to allow the truth taught in this lesson to be lived in your own personal life.

You only have to do these steps to master this lesson. Your focus and effort should be to make sure you consistently and persistently do the steps as directed below.

You must discipline your life to make time to abide in God's love. In His love you will feel secure and always have hope. Outside His love you will find uncertainty and hopelessness.

ACTION STEP

Spend at least 30 minutes each day with God in prayer reflecting on how much God loves you. Reflect on

Scriptures that convey His love for you.

If at any time you are feeling disconnected from His love, get back in touch with Him and remember His love for you. Develop the discipline of coming back to and remaining in His love.

You will have completed this lesson when you find that you are able to abide in His love more and more throughout you week.

Stick with this truth until you are living it. Don't go on to the next lesson until you have completed the lesson goal.

Come back to this lesson as often as needed to remind you to remain in His love. Learn to bask in His love often.

Continue to read a chapter in the Gospels each day. The Gospels are where you find the teachings and life of your Lord and you should be in them daily. Write down other Scriptures that you find that talk about God's love for you.

As you continue to practice living this truth, you may need to come back to this lesson often. Don't be in a rush to start the next lesson.

Even if it takes several weeks to get this truth integrated into your life, keep it as your primary focus until you feel you are living it.

Remember, the most common problem with Christians today is that they know many truths about the Christian life, but are not able to live them. Make sure you are solidly living this truth before attempting to tackle the next truth.