

The Origins of Love

When we hear the phrase “*the origins of love*,” we might think of Plato's mythical Greek story about love: the tale of divided human beings searching for their lost halves. But love is harder to define because it depends on how a person experiences it. Love can involve personal affection, sexual attraction, friendly admiration, brotherly loyalty, compassionate concern, or worshipful adoration. To answer the question “*the origins of love*” accurately, we need to go to its beginning. The Bible teaches that love originates in the Triune Godhead, within the eternal relationship that exists among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God isn't just loving; God is love. All love originates with God. **1 John 4:19** says, “*We love because He first loved us.*” We don't have any love of our own to offer back to God. We must receive our love from God so we can give it back to Him. Loving is unique to the human experience as God's image-bearer. **1 John 4:9-10**: “*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. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*” Our Lord and Creator loves us. He never asks us to change before He accepts us; He takes us as we are. When the Holy Spirit moves in and begins to rule our lives, He cleanses us from the inside. He erases the past through His forgiveness. He begins to work in us what pleases Him. Over time, grace transforms us. From the very beginning, continually, and throughout eternity, we have a God who looks at us as we are, and declares, “*I love you. I love you just as you are. I love you too much to leave you the way you are.*” The good news of the gospel is that God is love. **John 3:16**: “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.*” While Jesus Christ hung on the cross for the sins of the whole world, the repentant criminal turned to Jesus and prayed **Luke 23:42-43**: “... saying, “*Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!*” And He (Jesus) said to him, “*Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.*” You see, Jesus loved that man, forgave that man, and took him with Him to paradise. This is as if God were saying to us, “*I love the whole world, and that includes you.*” I don't love the world in general. I love the whole world, and I personally love everyone in it. God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love. That's the object of God's love. God so loved the world. He reaches out to every one of us just as we are, despite our brokenness and baggage, and it is similar to Him saying, “*I am focusing my infinite love on you. Not because of who you are, but in spite of who you are and because of who I am.*” He expects nothing from us except love in return. **1 John 4:7-8**: “*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*” Why does God love us? Not because we are better than anyone else, but simply because He loves us. God loves us because He loves us. It is His nature. God is love and the origin of love.