

# "The God You're Looking For..."

study  
guide  
# 6

1 John 4:8-16

<sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

<sup>13</sup> We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup> 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 him.

## ...is a loving God.



In this study we encounter God's...

- ⇒ *love*
- ⇒ *mercy*
- ⇒ *compassion*
- ⇒ *grace*

The idea of love, like "goodness", is one that we all sense but have trouble defining. The Greek language had at least four words for love:

- \* **storge** - to like something, as in "I love my chair, I love my car, I love my home"
- \* **eros** - physical, sexual love
- \* **philia** - brotherly love, friendship ("Philadelphia" literally means the city of brotherly love)
- \* **agape** - self-sacrificial love, the love God shows us

Larry Richards comments on this last word:

"The fourth Greek word is the noun *agape*. In ordinary speech this was a rather weak word, conveying fondness or pleasure. It was a helpful word in that it could be used to alternate with either *eros* or *philia*. But it was an orphan word, without any fixed heritage to give it special meaning within Greek thought. It is this word that the NT adopts and infuses with unique meaning. This word was chosen by the NT writers to convey to future generations the unique dimensions and overwhelming depth of God's love and to explore the impact of that love on human beings."

(Expository Dictionary of Bible Words)

The Bible has been called God's love letter to people. In the following passage from Deuteronomy, God for the first time in the Bible tells the Israelites the motive behind what he did for them in bringing them out of Egypt. What is that motive?

"You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire. Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today." (Deut. 4:35-38)

The word love, loves or loved occurs about 40 times in the Gospel of John and about 40 times in the books of 1, 2 and 3 John. Using a concordance, scan the usages just in 1 John and jot down your observations:

- *does John define love?*
- *what is God's love like?*
- *how are we supposed to love?*

**Read** the following verses and remember who is writing them. What do they tell us about John? Do they furnish a clue as to why he uses the concept of "love" so often in his writings?

⇒ John 13:23

⇒ John 20:2

⇒ John 21:7

⇒ John 21:20

- How has God's love changed your life?

### Summary of "The God You're Looking For"

If you've been studying with us this last six weeks, think for a moment and try to summarize what you've learned about each of the following attributes of God and how they affect your life:

**1. YHWH - God is there, He is not silent, he will be with you**

**2. God is good**

**3. God is holy**

**4. God is personal**

**5. God is in control (sovereign)**

**6. God is love**

"This renders heaven a world of love; for God is the fountain of love, as the sun is the fountain of light. And therefore the glorious presence of God in heaven fills heaven with love, as the sun, placed in the midst of the visible heavens in a clear day, fills the world with light. The apostle tells us that "God is love"; and therefore seeing He is an infinite being, it follows that He is an infinite fountain of love. Seeing He is an all-sufficient being, it follows that he is a full and overflowing and inexhaustible fountain of love. And in that He is an unchangeable and eternal being, He is an unchangeable and eternal fountain of love."

Jonathan Edwards  
(1703-1758),  
in The Character  
of God  
by R.C. Sproul