

Term 1 - Understanding the Journey

Lesson 8

Our Love – By the Word of God

The love of God is the most powerful force on earth and in heaven. In this lesson, we will see that faith operates by love. Without God's love, the most powerful faith is meaningless. From the beginning and throughout our lives, God's love is the foundation of our faith and the witness of Christ Jesus. We know that *"without faith it is impossible to please God"* (**Heb 11:6**). Without love, we know not God and neither are we known of him. **1 John 4:8** *"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."* **John 13:35** *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

God's Love Preceded our Love

The world has never been without God's love. His love is shown towards all the earth, in every country and every nation. His love called us to Him and His love continues to call all mankind to Him today. **John 3:16** *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* The most amazing thing about God's love is that He gave it to us freely when we deserved it the least. **Romans 5:6-8** *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* **1 John 4:10** *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* **1 John 4:19** *"We love him, because he first loved us."*

These scriptures are a fundamental truth of our faith and a witness of Christ Jesus to the world. God was not against you before you came to know Him. He is not against those who do not yet believe in Him. Through His love, we believed upon Him and through His love (shown through us), others may come to know Him. **2 Peter 3:9** *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"*.

Gods' Love is not Worldly Love

God's love is not the same as the "love" defined by the world. God's love is from above. It is a holy love (agape) that comes only by God. God's love has unique and powerful qualities that changes a man or woman into a new creature in Christ Jesus. The qualities of God's love are revealed to us very clearly in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth:"* Charity is God's love in action. These verses reveal God's love to all of us from His original calling of us to Him and during our ongoing journey of faith. It is a kind of love that no man possesses without God.

When we look at the qualities of God's love, we see that only Jesus Christ shows such a great love towards us. What patience! What hope! What faith! What selflessness! What commitment! What power! This great love lets us know that there is no one who is more for us than God. The love we may have in the world can be very fleeting but the love of Jesus Christ is forever. **Hebrews 13:5** *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"*. **Matthew 28:20** *"and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* **1 John 3:1** *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:"* This scripture shows us the depth of the Father's love through Christ Jesus. We are not only known as believers or Christians but we are known as "sons of God". What an honour. What love!

Importance of God's Love in our Journey of Faith

The importance of God's love in our lives cannot be overstated. The Word says that we must also love God. **Matthew 22:36-40** *"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Everything that we believe or do as Christians must be founded on the love of God.

On our journey, we grow in faith and are given gifts of the Spirit to do mighty works of God. Or, we may make great sacrifices. Without love the works and sacrifices are nothing. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* **1 Corinthians 13:8** *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."* **1 Corinthians 13:13** *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."* Charity in these scriptures is the love of God in action.

God's Love in Us Assured

We see from the Word that God's love is critically important in our life. God makes provision for us so that we can fulfil that which He asks us to do. Jesus prayed unto the Father for His love to be in us. **John 17:20-26** *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

The Spirit in us has distinct heavenly qualities known as the Fruit of the Spirit. **Galatians 5:22** *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love”*. This love is not something you strive to achieve. It is simply who Christ Jesus is in you. This love gives you the ability to move in God’s love. Finally, there is the power of the Holy Ghost baptism. **Romans 5:5** *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* As disciples of God, we are fully equipped with the Love of God so that we can reconcile souls unto the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ.

God’s love is greater than all the challenges we might face in the world. **Romans 8:35-39** *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

The Evidence of God’s Love in Us

It is not a complicated process to determine whether we love God. The way to love God is incredibly simple and shown in these scriptures: **John 14:15** *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”*. **John 14:21-24** *“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.”* **1 John 2:3-6** *“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”* **1 John 5:2-3** *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”* **2 John 6** *“And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.”* **John 15:10** *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.”* These scriptures show us that the simple way to love God is to keep His Word. In John 14 and 15, we see the promise of the Father and Jesus Christ to make their abode in us if we keep His Word.

Warnings About the Love of God in End Times

Matthew 24:12 *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”*

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Revelation 2:1-5 *“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*

The love of God is precious and powerful. The enemy knows this very well. He will attack the love of God in our lives and in the Church to have us stray from the Word of God. We do not need to fear the enemy but we must be aware and on guard. We know that the love of God in us is more powerful than the wiles of the enemy. **1 Thessalonians 5:8** *“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”* **Deuteronomy 7:7-9** *“The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations”;* **John 15:9-10** *“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”*

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

SCRIPTURES	QUESTIONS
<p>1 John 3: 11-18</p> <p><i>(11) For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.</i></p> <p><i>(12) Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.</i></p> <p><i>(13) Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.</i></p> <p><i>(14) We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.</i></p> <p><i>(15) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.</i></p> <p><i>(16) Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.</i></p> <p><i>(17) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?</i></p> <p><i>(18) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was God’s message to the Church from the very beginning? 2. What sign in our life shows that we are living in newness of resurrection life? 3. What is God’s warning about not loving others? 4. How did God show His love? 5. What does it mean for us to lay down our lives? 6. How are we to love?

1 John 4: 7-21

(7) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

(8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

(9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

(10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

(11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

(12) No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

(13) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

(14) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

(15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

(16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

(17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

(18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

(19) We love him, because he first loved us.

(20) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

(21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

7. What does the love of God show in our lives?

8. How is God's love manifest towards us?

9. What is the effect of our love for one another?

10. What is a sign of God's love dwelling in us?

11. Who is God?

12. What is the relationship between fear and the love of God?

13. What causes us to love God?

14. What is the relationship between our love of God and our brother?

ANSWER KEY

Read 1 John 3: 11-18

1. God's message was that we should love one another and not be jealous of one another.
2. We love the brethren.
3. We abide in death not life. To hate is like murder and no murderer can have eternal life.
4. Jesus Christ laid down His life for us.
5. Serve others with God's love and attend to the well-being of others
6. Just as faith requires works, so is our love shown by works and by upholding the Word of God (truth)

Read 1 John 4: 7-21

7. The love of God shows that we are born of God and know Him.
8. God showed His love by sending His only begotten Son. Jesus Christ into the world to take away our sins.
9. God dwelleth in us. His love is perfected in us and we have boldness in the day of judgement.
10. We confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God and tell the world that He is the Saviour of the world.
11. God is love. He does not exist separately from love.
12. There is no fear in love. Perfect love (the love of God) casts out fear and the torment that comes with it.
13. We love God because He first loved us.
14. If you love God, you will also love your brother. The two cannot be separated.

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