

God's Love: Lesson 1

DAY 1

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. —Ephesians 2:8-9

Take a moment and read John 3:16. If it's a verse that's familiar to you, try and read it with fresh eyes. Read it as if you were encountering it for the first time. Let its message sink in.

As you go through your day, there are two points to take away from this verse. The first is that God's love is giving. Because God loves us, He created people, He wants to have a relationship with us. But this is impossible because of our sin. Unless, that is, God made it possible for a great sacrifice to remove the punishment our sin earns. This verse tells us that God gave His own perfect Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for our sins. Do you realize how incredible this is!

God's love is wrapped up in who He is. God is love. And He wanted a relationship with us. So, He gave His love. It was a gift. An amazing, powerful gift. What an awesome thought!

The second thought to consider today is that the love God showed by sending Christ makes it possible for anyone who believes in Him to have a relationship with Him. Our relationship with God is based on His character and sacrifice, not our performance.

There's no one so bad that he or she can't come to God and experience His love!

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Take a minute to think about what this means in your own life. There is absolutely nothing you can do to earn this love that God shows. Have you tried to be good enough? You never will be. Have you tried to follow all of the rules to the letter? At some point you'll mess up.

Here's the great news! God's love alone allows this relationship in spite of our failures. You learned in your Bible study this week that God's love is unfailing. It does what we can't do. It allows us to have a relationship with Him. And that is a powerful, powerful truth to consider!

Something To Think About . . .

- Take a moment to simply talk to God in a prayer and thank Him for His unfailing love that will never leave you hanging no matter what you do or don't do.
 - Then, think about one way you can keep this truth in front of you today. How can you make sure you remember today that God's love will never leave you?
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DAY 2

Take a moment and read this quote:

"Though our feelings for God come and go, his love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to him." — C. S. Lewis

Something To Think About . . .

- How does this quote make you feel?
 - What does it cost you to experience God's love?
 - What does it cost God to give His unfailing love to you?
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DAY 3

Today's devotion is simple. But it requires you to think a little. Remember a time when you really felt God's love, a time when you knew beyond all doubt that God 100% loved you.

Can you picture that time?

Now, don't DO anything. Just hold that time in your memory today as a reminder that God knows you and loves you. I mean, He really, really loves you.

Store that fact in your heart. Don't forget it. Let it soften your heart and lead you to love God more in return.

DAY 4

For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! — Romans 5:10

Valentine's Day. It's a day set aside to express our love for those close to us. When you think about this holiday, what are some of the words that come to your mind? What are some ways people show their love to others on Valentine's Day? Why do you think people are so quick to boldly and extravagantly express their love on February 14th but maybe not so much on other days of the year?

It might be because, if we're honest, there are some people who require some extra effort in order to show them love! Read the following verses and identify how God says we are to respond in love to these people: Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 10:27, and John 15:12-13.

It's easy for us to justify why we don't show love to certain people. After all, some people might do things so mean to us that we think they can't be overlooked. The problem with this line of thinking is that if we look at Scripture, we see that we were once God's enemies. And yet, He chose to overlook our sins to love us.

Romans 5:10 says, "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him by the death of His Son, shall we be saved through His life!" There was a time when God chose to look past the fact that we were His enemies and make a way for us to have a relationship with Him. If God, who is perfect and sinless, was able to show love to sinners, we should do the same for those whom we find hard to love.

This kind of love seems impossible. The truth is that it is impossible apart from the power of God. Recall 1 John 4:7-8. Because God IS love and He lives in us, we are able to demonstrate His love to those who are hard to love.

Something To Think About . . .

- Who do you need to make an extra effort to love today?
 - How can you demonstrate God's love to this person?
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DAY 5

Today, make it a point to notice moments where you see or experience evidence of God's love.

Maybe it's in a beautiful sunset. Or maybe it's in the kindness of a friend toward another friend. Whatever the case, consider recording the moment.

Take a picture with your phone. Write a one or two sentence note in a journal or on a scrap of paper. Draw a picture or a symbol that reminds you of what you saw or experienced.

Remember that God's love is all around you. There are constant reminders of His love practically surrounding you. But you have to be looking for them.

Don't miss your chance to experience God's love in the world around you. Open your eyes. Expect to see Him!