

# Falling in Love with God

Mark 12:30

## Intro

Someone was asked, “What does love do to you?” The person responded, “Love makes you nuts, usually in a good way, though not always. It makes you a happier person and more productive at work. It makes you easier to get along with and more fun to be around, unless you're hanging with someone who just got dumped, but even then, you can probably help get them out of their dating doldrums. It makes you glad to be alive.”

Well, this past Friday I was very glad to be alive! I had a wonderful epiphany, a God moment. Friday morning I walked down to Coffee Culture for my usual coffee and toast. I sat at the table, took out my cell phone and checked my emails. One of the emails caught my attention. It was a message from Christ Alone Ministries. The title was “*I Can't Help Falling in Love with God.*” The writer was talking about one of his all-time favorite songs by Elvis Presley: “I Can't Help Falling in Love with You.” He said that while he was listening to the song it made him think about his love for the Lord. He went on to say, “Lord, take my hand, take my whole life too, for Lord, I can't help falling in love with You.”

When I finished looking at the email I put my cell phone on the table and within a second the coffee shop started playing, guess what? Elvis' song on: “I Can't Help Falling in Love with You.” I was blown away and with tears in my eyes I said, “God this one is for you. I love You, I love You! And I can't stop loving You!”

Many Christians live at a great distance from a felt experience of the love of God. In North America sometimes Christianity is shallow, sterile and often lacks spiritual life. In many of our churches there are people who have a faith, who've been brought up in the church to believe in Jesus but they have no living experience of His love.

We read in 2 Thess. 3:5 “*May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's patience.*”

This is a prayer for Christians. Paul is writing to the church. It's a prayer that God will do something in us who believe but do not always feel that God loves us. Paul is saying to believers in this verse, “I want something better for you. I want your soul to be filled with the love of God.”

## Testimonies of Experiencing God's Love

I want to share with you some real life examples of the love of God flooding a person's soul, so that you will be encouraged to pray for more of this love yourself.

### John Wesley

Wesley was a pastor. He had preached on two continents—in England and in America. Something happened to him on Aldersgate Street in London on May 24, 1738, while he was listening to a man read the preface to Luther's work on Romans. Here is Wesley's description of what happened:

“About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given to me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Amazingly, Wesley had been preaching in church for years, but now he tasted the love of God. He had a new sense of its sweetness. His life and ministry were transformed.

### Jonathan Edwards

In 1737 Edwards rode out into the woods for a time of prayer and wrote of his extraordinary experience: “I had a view that was for me extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God . . . and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love.”

He went out into the woods, tied up his horse, and saw the love of Christ in a way that he had not seen it before. He had a “view” of it. He got a glimpse of it. Its sweetness came home to his soul.

### Blaise Pascal

One of the most intense descriptions of this kind of experience comes from Pascal. Pascal is especially interesting because he was a mathematician and a scientist. It would be easy for some of us to dismiss this loving call by saying that there are certain more emotional types of people who have these experiences.

Pascal had an extraordinary experience of the love of God. He scribbled some notes of what happened to him, and then he sewed them into the inside of his coat, where they were found after his death:

“This day of grace 1654

From about half past ten at night, to about half after  
midnight. Fire!

God of Abraham, God of Isaac God of Jacob. Not of the philosophers and scholars.

Security, feeling joy, peace

God of Jesus Christ . . .

Greatness of the human soul . . .

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy . . .

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ

May I never be separated from him.”

What happened to Pascal? His heart was “*directed into the love of God and the patience of Christ*” (2 Thess. 3:5).

These testimonies show an amazing work of God in the hearts of people, causing them to experience God's love and Christ's patience in a new way.

### **To Experience God’s Love**

Recently, a seminary professor asked 120 students this question: “Do you believe that God loves you?” Out of 120 Christian students preparing for ministry, how many do you think said, “Yes”? Only two! The rest gave answers like this: “I know I'm supposed to say, 'Yes' . . . “I know the Bible says he loves me . . . but I don't feel it,” or “I'm not sure I can really say I believe it.”

How can this be? Jonathan Edwards used a simple analogy to get to the heart of this problem: “There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness.” You can know honey is sweet, because someone tells you, but you don't really know its sweetness until you've tasted it.

You can know God loves you because your pastor or Sunday school teacher told you, but you don't really know God's love until you've experienced His love.

Pray this prayer, “Lord, direct my heart into your love.”

We live in a “been there, done that” culture and the great danger is in developing a “been there, done that” form of Christianity: “I know God loves me, that Jesus died for me and that my sins are forgiven. So, what's next?” Then one day someone says, “Do you really believe that God loves you?”

A. W. Tozer says in his book *The Pursuit of God*:

“We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found him, we need no more seek him. . . . In the midst of this great chill there are some who will not be content with shallow logic. They want to taste, to touch with their hearts the wonder that is God. I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God.”

Some of you think God is cold, harsh and demanding. Perhaps these thoughts are deeply rooted in your mind. You need this prayer: “Father, direct my heart into your love!” Ask God, and go on asking until your heart begins to thaw in the warmth of the love of God.

## **GOD’S EXPECTATION**

God has a single expectation for a relationship with you. He spells out his desire in Mark 12:30, “*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*”

What are the daily choices you can make to love God passionately? Let’s look at each of the ways God wants your love.

### **Love with All Your Heart**

Loving God with all your heart means reserving the best of your affection for him. Make time each day to build an intimate relationship with him through prayer—through conversation. He wants to know you and be known by you.

Start by sharing joys with him. Run to him first with your big news at work. Sing to him at the top of your lungs on a great day. Fill him in on your private hopes. Tell him how much you appreciate him. Boost him up to others.

But also talk to him first when you’re feeling down. Cry to him when you’re overwhelmed at home. Be honest when you’re disappointed or angry—even if it’s him you’re angry with. Share your fears.

Apologize when you’ve made a mistake. Ask him for forgiveness.

Then let him talk. He has things to say, and he wants a relationship that goes both ways. Ask for his advice and seek out his answer. Listen to his stories in the Bible. Hear out people who speak his truth. Each day, set aside time to get to know God.

### **Love with All Your Soul**

Loving God with all your soul means dedicating your life to him. Begin by asking him, “How do you want me to spend my time, energy, money, and talents? What can I do with my resources to honour you?” Find out what God values and stay true to those things. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” When you invite God into all areas of your life, he will show you how to live in a way that pleases him.

He may ask you to shift your spending habits from self-indulgence to those less fortunate. He might encourage you to change your attitude toward others. He’ll probably ask you to find friends who support your relationship with him. He’ll definitely urge you to forgive and love people the way he forgives and loves you. In every area of your life, look for ways to show your commitment to him.

### **Love with All Your Mind**

Loving God with all your mind means backing up your passion with knowledge. Get into His word, study, meditate on the things of God. Listen to the experiences of others. Take a class. Ask Him for guidance. Make an effort to find out who He is. Discover what He likes and what He dislikes.

Loving God with all your mind also means directing your thoughts to valuable things. When you focus on hope and love instead of fear and hate, your heart and actions follow. Philippians 4:8 says, “*Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*”

### **Love with All Your Strength**

Loving God with all your strength means persevering for Him each day. To what lengths will you go for the one you love? Genuine love demands strength and courage like nothing else.

It means you must muster your resources to protect your relationship with God every single day. It means being honest, and sometimes it means doing the unpopular thing. It means listening to truth and holding yourself accountable.

Loving God strongly is walking away from sin. It’s admitting you’re wrong and making a change. It’s asking people to help you protect your relationship with God when you don’t feel like it. It’s avoiding things that could take your attention and love away from Him. It’s getting up and trying again after you’ve failed. Each day, be willing to fight for your relationship with God.

### **Conclusion**

Mark 12:30, “*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*”

I want to say with all my heart, soul, mind and strength that “I Can’t Help Falling in Love with God.”