

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD?

WEEK 2 –LOVE

Introduction

What Does This Attribute Mean?

Webster's Dictionary from 1931 defines love as: "A strong feeling of affection or a devoted affection for or attachment to"

Definition:

1Cor. 13:4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8** Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

John 15:12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

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God's Attribute of Love

John Frame wrote: "God's love is at the heart of the biblical story, especially precious to the hearts of God's people." (Frame, DoG, p414)

"his self-giving affection for his image-bearing creatures and his unselfish concern for their well being, that leads him to act on their behalf and for their happiness and welfare." (Frame, DoG, p414)

J.I. Packer's definition is also helpful:

"God's love is an exercise of his goodness toward individual sinners whereby, having identified himself with their welfare, he has given his Son to be their Savior, and now brings them to know and enjoy him in a covenant relation." (Packer, Knowing, p123)

Does Scripture Teach That God Exhibits This Attribute?

1 John 4

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. **10** In this is love, not that we have 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 also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. **19** We love because he first loved us. **20** If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

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John 3:16

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Augustine: “God loves each of us as if there was only one of us.”

Tozer, from Knowledge of the Holy (p 102)

The love of God is one of the great realities of the universe, a pillar upon which the hope of the world rests. But it is a personal intimate thing, too. God does not love populations, he loves people. He loves not masses, but men. He loves us all with a might love that has no beginning and can have no end.

We can see God’s love manifested in a couple of ways:

1 - God’s Self-love

A - Love for his own glory:

Is. 42:8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

John 17:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, **2** since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. **3** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **4** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. **5** And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

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B - Love for the Son:

John 3:35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

John 15:9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

John 17:26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

C - Love for the Father

John 14:30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, **31** but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

Answering a Common Question:

Is there a Difference between OT God and NT God?

- Often stated that the God of the OT is the wrathful God and God of the NT is the loving

Deut. 7:7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

Deut. 7:13 He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.

Deut. 10:15 Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

General Love

2 - God's Saving Love

Rom. 5:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

How Does This Attribute Affect the Christian?

Eternal Life: God's Love gives us eternal life

Infinite: God is infinite & his love is infinite

Eternal: God is eternal and his love is eternal

Geerhardus Vos said: "The best proof that God will never cease to love us lies in that he never began."

Sacrificial:

Specific:

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Unconditional: God's love doesn't depend on outside influences.

Unbreakable, unshakable:

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? **33** Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Notice: not just separate us from God...but his LOVE) Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? **36** As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." **37** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, **Rom. 8:39** nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's Love is Our Example: