

Do You Know How Important God's Love Is?

Sadly today many teachers within the Christian church seem intent on minimizing the importance of God's love. Religion puts the love of God in a lesser position to the "weightier, more spiritual" endeavors of trying to please God through religious formula and exercises. This is nothing new. During the time Jesus walked on the earth, the Pharisees were more focused on keeping the details of the law than on God's love.

Luke 11:42

"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone¹.

After the cross, this same thing happened. Instead of rejoicing that the Gentiles were becoming believers in Jesus Christ, the Sect of the Pharisees insisted that they must obey the law to be saved.

Acts 15:1, 5

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." . . . 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

The same thing happens today. Instead of focusing on God's love and what His love has made us and given us, an emphasis is put on what the individual "must DO" in order to "please" God. Love is seen only as a foundational doctrine for some; a starting point, and that after that we must move on to the "deeper things of God". It sometimes seems that there is a deliberate attempt to side-line/demean the love of God by "balancing" it with something else. However, God's love IS of the utmost importance and the most precious treasure we possess.

Jude 1:20-21

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

1 Corinthians 13:13

But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

¹ Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. They were very meticulous about keeping the law, so much so that they omitted the more important aspects of the law; namely, justice and the love of God. This passage in no way endorses the idea that Christians should keep the law.

I. God IS love!

How could the love of God ever be "simply foundational" when He IS love? He is not only the God "who" loves, but love itself.

1 John 4:8b

God is love.

II. God is motivated by love and His love is expressed through His grace.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Titus 3:4-7

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

III. The love of God is the root (life source) of our relationship with God.

A. Just like a tree that grows strong and tall when its roots are healthy, the stronger our "root" of knowing that God loves us, the stronger and healthier we will grow as Christians.

Ephesians 3:17

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love...

IV. We are filled with God's fullness by knowing the love of Christ.

Ephesians 3:17b-19

That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

V. Trying to “Balance” God’s Love. God loves us, BUT...

A. What about truth?

Some people say “truth” means “law”. Truth is not law. Truth is that which is “actual” and in the New Covenant setting refers to the truth about Jesus Christ. Jesus called himself truth. Truth is NOT a balance to love.

John 1:17

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

B. What about justice?

Some will demean God’s love by trying to “balance” His love with His justice. This is short-sided. God’s love, His grace, is what motivates Him to both declare us guilty and to make us righteous (innocent).

Romans 3:19-26

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- *God’s justice declares all men guilty before Him.*
- *God IS just, but He demonstrates His righteousness (justice) by justifying (declaring righteous) all men who believe.*
- *We are made righteous by grace through faith in Jesus (v 22-23).*

C. What about judgment?

John 5:24

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

D. What about God's wrath?

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 Amplified

For God has not appointed us to [incur His] wrath [He did not select us to condemn us], but [that we might] obtain [His] salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) ¹⁰ Who died for us so that whether we are still alive or are dead [at Christ's appearing], we might live together with Him and share His life.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

VI. God's love for us was the basis of Paul's prayers for the Church.

A. Paul wanted us (the Church) to know the love of God, not just intellectually, but deeply in their heart/spirit. Paul gave this illustration/prayer so that we would see ourselves as being loved by God deep inside of you.

2 Thessalonians 3:5

Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Paul didn't pray that they would get closer to God through "spiritual disciplines". He prayed that they would KNOW the love of God.

VII. God demonstrated His love for us by giving us Jesus in death. To sideline God's love is to demean Christ's sacrifice.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no

longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

1 John 4:9

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

VIII. God demonstrates (right now) His love for us by giving us Jesus in death. Seeking additional “proof” of His love for you is not necessary.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Notice that His love in this verse is in the present tense. We do not need to seek out “manifestations” of God’s love. He currently is demonstrating His love for us by what Jesus did. Instead of seeking out emotional experiences like extra-Biblical powers or demonstrations, we simply believe in, receive, and enjoy His love for us.

IX. Under the Old Covenant, the emphasis was on loving God.

Deuteronomy 6:5

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Matthew 22:34

But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. ³⁵ One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷And He said to him, “ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

A. Under the Old Covenant the emphasis was on what the individual HAD to do to love God with ALL. There is only one person who did this perfectly and that was Jesus. He fulfilled all the Law.

X. Under the New Covenant, the emphasis is on God loving us.

1 John 4:10

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

XI. Love is not something we lay aside to get to the more “important” or “weightier” things of God. His love is the reason for the good news. God IS love, and love is:

1 Corinthians 13:4-10

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

A. This is God’s love toward you.

1. God is patient (patient, longsuffering, forbearing, lenient).
2. God is kind (benevolent, useful, good, gracious).
3. God does not envy (not against, not jealous).
4. God does not parade Himself (not boastful).
5. God is not puffed up (not haughty, not arrogant, not proud).
6. God does not behave rudely (unbecomingly, unseemly, unmannerly).
7. God does not seek His own (not conceited, not arrogant, not inflated with pride, does not demand His own way or own things).
8. God is not provoked (not exasperate, not irritable, not touchy or fretful or resentful).
9. God thinks no evil (take no account of the evil done to Him, pays no attention to a suffered wrong, keeps no record of wrong, does not impute evil).
10. God does not rejoice in iniquity (injustice, moral wrong, unrighteousness).
11. God rejoices in the truth (sympathizes in gladness with the truth, rejoices when right and truth prevail, rejoices when the truth wins out).
12. God bears all things (covers with silence, endures patiently, bears up under anything and everything that comes, never gives up).
13. God believes all things (is ever ready to believe the best of every person, never loses faith, has faith in, entrusts, commits to, put in trust with).
14. God hopes all things (to expect or to confide, have hope, His hope is fadeless under all circumstances, is always hopeful).
15. God endures all things (remains, bears, endures everything without weakening, endures through every circumstance)
16. God never fails (never lapses, never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end, will last forever, never stops existing, never ends as will prophecies, tongues, and knowledge).
17. When Jesus returns (Who is love) then that which is in part will be done away.

XII. The Love of God is EVERYTHING and affects EVERY aspect of our lives. Under the New Covenant the emphasis is not on what we ourselves can do, but on God Himself and what He has done. As we walk in His love for us, we will love Him more than anyone ever could under the law.

A. God's love is our very existence, the core of our relationship with Him.

1 John 4:16

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:9

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

B. Faith works by love.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

C. His love released us from our sin.

Revelation 1:5

...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

D. His love controls us.

2 Corinthians 5:14 AMPLIFIED

For if we are beside ourselves [mad, as some say], it is for God and concerns Him; if we are in our right mind, it is for your benefit,

14 For the love of Christ controls and urges and impels us, because we are of the opinion and conviction that [if] One died for all, then all died;

15 And He died for all, so that all those who live might live no longer to and for themselves, but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sake.

E. We love God and others more than any religion of self-effort could ever produce.

1 John 4:19

We love because He first loved us.

1 Thessalonians 4:

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love.

1 John 4:7-8

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:19

We love, because He first loved us.

- F. The world will see that we are His disciples by our love for each other. The love between us is supernatural. It allows us to bridge ethnic, generational, and gender gaps. Yes, anyone can love, but the love between believers is so extraordinary, that the world takes notice.

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; **as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this **all will know that you are My disciples**, if you have **love for one another.**²”

1 John 3:23

And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another (as I have loved you), as He gave us commandment.