

Introduction: God's Unconditional Love

Understanding God's unconditional love for me was not as easy as it should have been. For years I wondered, worried, and struggled, doubting God could really love me when I kept failing so miserably to observe and keep His commandments. I knew intellectually I was saved by grace, but somehow I thought I needed to keep my status as His child on my own. I tried doing whatever I thought would please Him. Yet the more I tried, the more I felt like a failure despite my apparent outward success.

In His great faithfulness and love, God sent a dear woman to help me understand I was to live the Christian life the same way I entered into it—by faith and reliance upon God and His unconditional love.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6

My job was not to try to keep God's love; it was to rest in His love, letting His love transform me. Love, joy, and peace—they were the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of my efforts. Did this mean I just did whatever I wanted to? Not at all! But instead of a slave trying to please his master out of fear, I could now live like a son serving out of love—and knowing that my Father loved me no matter what. What a difference this made in my life! Instead of trying to earn favor with God, I could now see my need for God's priceless love to me on the cross and ask Him to transform me.

As I looked at scripture in light of God's unconditional love, the Old Testament began to make sense for the first time. All throughout the Israelite's history, we can see God's unconditional love. The Israelites constantly messed up and frequently forgot God. But God NEVER forgot them. He punished them, and they often missed out on the blessings that could have been theirs, but He never gave up on them. He always kept drawing them and pulling them towards Himself.

“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.” Deuteronomy 7:7-8

Even God's giving of the Law demonstrates His love—the Law reveals our sin so we would realize we need a Savior.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.” Romans 5:20

To help you reflect on God's unconditional love, my daughter, Katherine, and I have put this compilation of scriptures together. Simply print the verses on the next two pages on cardstock paper, cut around the cut lines, and put all the verses in a box, lunch bag, envelope, or bowl (any container will work). Every day, pull out one verse and read it together.

As you read the verses together, discuss some of these questions: “Is God's love dependent upon me? How did God demonstrate His love to me? If I really realize God loves me, have I any reason to fear or worry? How does His love practically transform my life? How can I really love those around me?”

I would like to invite you to e-mail me your thoughts or comments as you study the verses. My e-mail is cloop@christianperspective.net. I look forward to growing in appreciation for God's love together with you!

- Cris Loop

“...God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved...

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

John 3:16-20

“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

Jeremiah 31:3

“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.”

Romans 5:6-8

“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.”

Deuteronomy 7:7-8

“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.”

Romans 8:35-37

“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.”

1 John 4:18

“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.”

Isaiah 43:1-4

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

1 John 4:7-8

Produced by Christian Perspective, a ministry dedicated to encouraging others to,
“Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore” (Psalm 105:4).

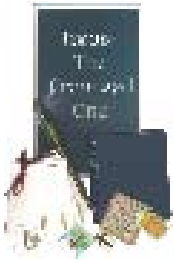
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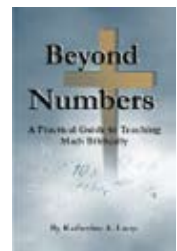
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