

Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture.

Topic 2 - The Doctrine of God Lesson 28 - The Attributes of God: Love

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God is Love. What is Love?

- “God’s perfect love is His determination to give of Himself to others, and is His affection for Himself and His people.” - MacArthur, pg. 181
- This definition affirms that God has affections (or emotions), but once again, it is necessary to note that God’s affections are not passions by which He is driven but active principles by which God expresses His holy dispositions. He does not have emotional fluctuations.
- “God’s love means that God eternally gives of Himself to others.” - Grudem, pg. 199
- This definition understands love as self-giving for the benefits of others.
- Love is “an attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice; a high level of interest in the well-being of another.” (Gk: Agape) “To approve of, to like, to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, to befriend.” (Gk: Phileo)
- Love is not an emotion (feeling or emotional response). It is a willful choice as to how we will relate to another person or thing.

God's Love

- “God is love.” (1 John 4:8)
- God's love is ultimately between the Three Persons of the Trinity. It is eternal and reciprocal.
- John 3:35 The Father loves (*agape*) the Son, and has given all things into His hand.
- John 5:20 For the Father loves (*phileo*) the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.
- John 10:17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.”

God's Love

- John 14:31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.
- John 15:9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”
- John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world...26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

God's Love (even in the Old Testament)

- Deut. 4:37 And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power,
- Deut. 7:8 but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt....13 And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

God's Love (even in the Old Testament)

- Deut. 10:15 The Lord delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day.
- Deut. 23:5 Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you.
- Isaiah 43:4 Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.
- Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old.

God's Love (even in the Old Testament)

- Jeremiah 31:3 The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.
- Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son...4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.”
- Hosea 14:4 “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from him.
- Zeph. 3:17 The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”

God Loves Righteousness and Justice

- Psalm 11:7 For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.
- Psalm 33:5 He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
- Psalm 37:28 For the Lord loves justice, And does not forsake His saints; They are preserved forever, But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.

God's Love is Manifested in 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.
- Romans 5:7-8 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
- 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. 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.

Can We Love like God Loves?

- We imitate this communicable attribute by loving God in return, and second by loving others in imitation of the way God loves them.
- Matthew 22:37 Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment.
- 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
- 1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.
- Eph. 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Can We Love like God Loves?

- 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
- Matt. 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Can We Love like God Loves?

- 1 Cor. 13:4 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.
- (God is Love)

God's Love is Not Unconditional

- God's Love is not unconditional, it is conditioned upon His nature, character and essence.
- God is not a respecter of persons and shows no partiality.
- Romans 2:11 For there is no partiality with God.
- God loves us as we are IN Christ.
- 1 Tim. 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcOzTZUOBn0>