

You Are Loved



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real l-o-v-e

"This is real love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." 1 John 4:10, NLT

This verse can change your entire Christian life! Real love isn't that we love God, but that He loves us.

What does that mean?

For many of us, we are often focused on how much WE love the Lord, our passion for God, our service for the Lord and our obedience to Him - all of those are good things, but we shouldn't overlook that the real emphasis isn't on us! The emphasis is on God and His love for us - the focus is on how much HE loves us, His passion for us, His service towards us and His intensity for loving us!

Life-change happens when you embrace that the emphasis is on God loving us first. He is the initiator and we respond by loving Him back. He chose us, before we chose Him. Think about it -- He loved us at our most unlovely point. God demonstrated His love for us that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. If He loved us then, He loves us now!

When we know and believe the love God has for us, and that His love for us came before we ever did anything to serve or obey Him -- then you can truly rest in His love for you. Be encouraged as you remember today that He loved you first and He still does!

Say This: *"Father, thank You for showing me what real love is -- not that I love You, but that You love me. Today, I receive Your love and I rest in Your love. Thank You. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

what great love

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" 1 John 3:1, NIV

Okay, we're talking about LOVE again! I just can't help it. The Father has bestowed and lavished His great love on us through His Son -- Jesus! God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven and we could become His children. Now that's something worth talking about.

That was a big deal. That was love in action. God poured out the greatest expression of love towards us. Let's remember: because of sin and the fall of man, we were in bondage to the devil. Then along came Jesus! Jesus rescued us by paying the price for our ransom with His blood. When we believed and received Jesus into our lives, the Father lavished His love upon us and called us the children of God!

Have you thought about that lately? Think about the joy, benefits, security, stability, blessings, favor and continual love a child receives from a good father. Our Heavenly Father is such a father and He provides all of these things for His children...us!

Notice the phrase, *"...that we should be called..."* Literally, the idea of being "called" the children of God means being called aloud or by name. God has declared aloud to all of heaven and hell that because of Jesus' shed blood, we are His kids and He knows us by name. Rejoice in that fact! He calls you His dearly beloved child.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." John 1:12, NKJV

Say This: *"My Father loves me. He has lavished His love on me so much that I am called a child of God. I am the (son or daughter) of my Heavenly Father and I am a member of His family. He is my loving Father. He loves me and I love Him. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

a tangible experience

"...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Romans 5:5, NKJV

Need love? Looking for love? Want to know what true love is?

God has poured His love in us! The unconditional love of God has already been poured out into our hearts. We don't have to ask, search or beg for His love. In fact, 1 John 4:16 says *"we have come to know and believe the love God has for us."* It's already within us -- we just need to tap into it! We need to release it. We need to access it. We need to know and believe it.

So, in the event you are hungry for the tangible experience of God's love today, here's one way to tap into it...pray to experience it! There is a great prayer in Ephesians 3 on experiencing God's love. Pray this for yourself and others:

"May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself!]" Ephesians 3:17-19, AMPC

Say This: *"Father, thank You for pouring out Your love in my heart. Help me to tap into that love so that I may experience it in a more tangible way today. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

He loves us

"This is real love – not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." 1 John 4:10, NLT

It's not that we loved God...it's that He loved us! This is real love. God loved us so much He did something about our lost condition -- He sent His Son Jesus to be a sacrifice and take away our sins. God the Father loved us so much He gave His only Son. Jesus loved us so much that He laid down His life on that cross in our place!

Often we talk and sing about how much we love the Lord. Maybe you remember songs like, *"Oh how I love Jesus..."* or *"My Jesus, I love Thee; I know thou art mine. For Thee all the folly of sin I resign..."* These are great songs and really powerful when we sing them from our hearts.

However, there is something even more powerful -- real love is not that we love Him, but that He loves us! We need a fresh, life-changing revelation of how much Jesus loves us. He wants us to be so secure, comforted, confident, safe and at rest in His love that we cease to live lives shrouded in fear and dread, rejection and approval-seeking or insecurity and intimidation. His perfect love casts out all fear.

Today, it might be good to focus on talking and singing about His love for you. Allow Him to penetrate your heart at the deepest level. Maybe it would be a good day to download a couple of songs like this: *"Jesus Loves Me This I Know"* (the classic) or *"How He Loves"* (Jesus Culture or David Crowder Band).

Say This: *"Father, I thank You for loving me so much You gave Your only Son for me. I know You are a good Father. Jesus, I thank You for loving me so much You freely laid down Your life on the cross for me. I know Your love is so wide, deep, high and long. I desire to know You and Your love more and more – so that Your love spills out of me to touch others who need to know Your love. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

the verdict is in

"...God is love." 1 John 4:8, AMPC

I grew up thinking God was a harsh judge. I just knew He was watching from heaven and ready to bop me the minute I got out of line. I don't remember anyone telling me these things -- it's just the concept I had. It took many years to get my mind renewed and my heart responsive to the truth of who God is, as revealed in His Word. Through Jesus, the Father has revealed Himself as a God of love, mercy, kindness, patience and goodness!

How about you? What's your view of God? I've discovered that many people have difficulty seeing and experiencing our Father as who He truly is -- love. There are probably many reasons for this -- childhood experiences, your upbringing, etc. -- not to mention that we have an enemy, the devil, who works overtime as the accuser of God. The enemy wants to separate us from the Lord, so he tries to convince us that the Lord is mad at us, disappointed in us and thinking lowly of us.

The truth is: God is not the harsh, angry, mean judge and taskmaster that we've believed Him to be. On the contrary! The verdict is in -- God is LOVE! God is everything love is. Love is patient. Love is kind. Love keeps no record of wrong. Love believes the best. Love never fails. (Read 1 Corinthians 13 for a refresher on what love is - our Father is all of that and more!) God is kind. He is rich in mercy. He is gracious. He is patient. He is good.

Someone might say, "Yeah, but what about the judgment side of God? God hates sin, you know?" When Jesus died on the cross for us, He took our place and experienced the judgment for sin, on our behalf. Therefore, those who believe, receive and follow Jesus can look forward to goodness and mercy following them all the days of their lives!

Say This: *"Father, I believe You are love. Because of the cross of Jesus Christ, I am able to receive Your love towards me on a daily basis. I pray that You help me experience the length, breadth, depth and height of your love for me. I love You because You first loved me. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

want more basics?

"To be mature is to be basic..." Colossians 1:28, MSG

Whether you're a seasoned believer or new in your walk with Christ, the basics are for you! The basics are the foundation that we build our life of faith upon, so let's learn them, re-learn them, strengthen them and get stirred up about them!

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