

GOD IS: INFINITE LOVE

God is love. You learned this in Sunday School. You hear it on the street, in media. Even on the lips of people who seem to be unbelievers. Yet they believe God is love. They love to say this when they want you to approve their non-Christian behavior. The love of God is even an expletive. But what does it mean, that God is love? 1 John 4, *"love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 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. 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"*

1- God's love is INTRINSIC. God is love, but love is not God. God is loving, because love is at the heart of His divine nature. He defines all derivative forms of love. The Bible uses '*phileo*' for tender affection, friendship, and '*storge*' for parental love of a child. Love is about giving, and lust is about taking, and '*eros*' is lustful perversion of husband-wife love. Self-giving sacrificial love is '*agape*' - the love most associated with God in the Bible. The New Testament uses it particularly of God's chosen people, just as the Old Testament word '*hesed*' refers to God's covenant love, loyal deliberate giving of favor to His people. Psalm 103 says *"the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting, on those who fear Him, and to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments."*

God's love is revealed in relationship to His people. WA Grudem says "God's love means God eternally gives of Himself to others," because love is intrinsic to the trinity. If God were not three persons in one Godhead, there would not be love. JI Packer says, "the endless life of the triune God is mutual affection and honor." The Father from all eternity has loved the Son who has loved the Spirit who has loved the Father, all in perfect love forever. Matthew 3:17 *"this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* John 3:35 *"the Father loves the Son."* John 17:24 *"You loved Me before the foundation of the world."* John 14:31 *"I love the Father."* Mutual love is implied in John 14:13-14 as the Spirit speaks whatever He hears from the Father, in order to glorify the Son. In Romans 5:5 the Holy Spirit pours out God's love, as in John 17:26 the love with which the Father has loved the Son has been poured out on believers. In Galatians 5:22, love is the fruit of the Spirit. The benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 says, *"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*

2- God's love is INFINITE. His love is from eternity past to eternity future. Psalm 103 speaks of God's steadfast everlasting lovingkindness which never fails. Ephesians 1 proclaims its magnitude: *even as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him, in love, He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us. Whew! Breathtaking good news! God's eternal love in Christ placed on us prior to creation.* SJ Lawson says, God marked the horizon of our destination before our journey began.

1 John 3 says *"see what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God, and so we are."* In John 17:9 Jesus said, *"I am not praying for the world, but for those whom You have given to Me, for they are Yours; they are not of the world even as I am not of the world."* In Jeremiah 31:3 the Lord says to His people, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love."* This does not mean every person who has ever lived, but every person who has received God's favor. When God says "I love you" He is speaking to His redeemed people, because everyone else has rejected His love, even though His goodness ought to lead them to repentance and faith. JI Packer says, "the supreme expression of God's goodness is the amazing grace and inexpressible love that shows kindness by saving sinners who deserve only condemnation, and saving them at the tremendous cost of Christ's death on Calvary."

As 1 John 4 says, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. We simply receive His love, and His life, by grace through faith. SJ Lawson says "believers are objects of God's distinguishing redeeming love, which is so great that He gave us His only begotten Son to die for us on a cruel cross, so that we will be with Him forever and ever." So that we intimately experience His intrinsic and infinite love forever. The best part is, you don't have to wait. You can know His eternal love today, by trusting Jesus!

Next time we'll explore how God's intrinsic, infinite love is costly, willful, passionate, and commanded.