

God's Love for Us

If we could grasp how great the love of God is for us, it would _____ our lives. No one _____ you like the Lord Jesus. From start to finish the Bible is God's supreme _____ of love and redemption. The more we read the Bible, the more we can understand the _____ of the God who created us and sustains us. Though mankind can be hard to love, God has never faltered in wanting to _____ those who seek His face and draw near. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from _____, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

God hasn't hidden His love for us; God displayed it beyond dispute in the _____ of Jesus Christ upon the cross. The Bible says, "For while we were still _____, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still _____, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). We were weak, ungodly, and sinners; but Christ was still willing to _____ for our sins and to wash us clean in His blood. Such love is truly abundant and beyond comprehension.

Jesus bore the cross to _____ us of our sins and to open the door to have a loving relationship with our Father in Heaven. The Lord loved us when we were weak and couldn't _____ ourselves. He helped us when we were ungodly and had little _____ of Him. He died for us while we were sinners, who had _____ Him. Christ loved our souls when we didn't deserve it, understand it, or appreciate it. Such amazing love!

Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 3:14-19, and actually include part of a prayer that Paul is praying. Oh, what a wonderful prayer.

The Old Testament uses a rich and amazing _____ to describe the love God has for His people. The Bible says God is abounding in this kind of love. Some versions call it "steadfast love," some "lovingkindness," and some simply "mercy."

Psalms 103:8-14 says, "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in _____ love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his _____ forever. He doesn't _____ with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who _____ him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he _____ our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who _____ him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are _____."

"Steadfast" love is the deepest and best love; it's the kind of _____ love that doesn't let go and doesn't fail. It's loyal, faithful, kind, and good. It's compassionate and merciful. This type of love is built upon a voluntary covenant, an everlasting commitment to those who are in His _____. Psalm 86:15 says, "But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." Because the God of Heaven is kind and good, He's willing to pardon and forgive our sins, if we'll remain _____ to Him.

When you consider all that Jesus gave up in bearing the cross to save us from sin, you can't _____ His love. If anything, the magnificent love of Jesus was stubborn, unflinching, and utterly unselfish. Jesus didn't merely give up something; He sacrificed Himself _____. On the cross the innocent Lord Jesus sacrificed _____. He kept _____ and did nothing, while men slandered Him, falsely accused Him,

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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condemned Him, scourged Him, mocked Him, and crucified Him. First Peter 2:22-24 says, “He committed no _____, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he didn’t revile in return; when he suffered, he didn’t threaten, but continued _____ himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might _____ to sin and _____ to righteousness. By his _____ you have been healed.”

Jesus bore the punishment and death for our sins, sins we should have borne, and the punishment we should have had, and He bore it personally in his _____ body. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us _____ (Isaiah 53:6). His suffering was physical and spiritual. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For our _____ he made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Everything that Jesus did, He did out of an undeniable and pure _____ for us. Can you imagine what it must have been like for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to know that he would _____ scourging and crucifixion? According to Matthew 26:38 Jesus was greatly troubled and sorrowful, even to the point of death. Luke 22:44 says, “And being in an agony he _____ more earnestly; and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

They didn’t simply bind Jesus, they _____ His hands and feet to a rugged cross and suspended Him in the most agonizing position. As they crucified Him, He prayed that the Father would _____ them. They mocked Him, insulted Him, and did their very _____ to Him. Through all of His suffering, Jesus remained quiet; He uttered no _____. He didn’t even _____ them in return. He didn’t call for the twelve legions of _____ to wipe them out. The Lord’s stubborn love lasted for six long hours on the cross. No matter how _____ men were to Jesus, Jesus, His steadfast love held Him to the cross. He loved us to the end.

First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good, and it’s pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who _____ all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the _____.” Again, 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his _____ as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” God doesn’t want a single soul to be lost, but our heavenly Father grants us the _____ to choose Him or to choose sin. You can’t make someone love you by _____. Nor did God make us robots who mindlessly _____ at His command. God wants us to know Him, to know the _____ and to love Him freely for Who He is. This means we must be _____ to choose Him or reject Him. God loves everyone, but His blessing and grace are reserved for those who _____ to love Him. We must freely and lovingly choose to believe in Him, to repent of our sins, and to follow Him.

Occasionally I hear people _____ of God’s “unconditional love.” Yes, I know what Jesus said in Matthew 5:45 that God “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” God is certainly _____ to all! Jesus didn’t bear the cross for us only because we were so good and deserved it. No, Jesus died for us because we were sinful and _____. In that sense, He unconditionally took the initiative; but we cannot for that reason _____ that to remain in God’s love we can do whatever we wish. We can’t assume that God’s love for us will continue to _____ us if we turn from Him.

The Lord’s steadfast love, His covenant love of _____, has conditions. The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone loves me (did you hear the word “if”), he will keep my _____, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. But whoever does not love me does not _____ my words. And the word that you _____ is not mine but the Father’s who sent me” (John 14:23-24). God promises love and abiding presence to those who love Him and _____ His words. A person who doesn’t love God won’t _____ about keeping God’s words.

We cannot sin all that we wish and still count on the _____ of God. It’s a fantasy to think we can _____ against God and still be right with Him. It’s fantasy to think we can remake God in our own image and still _____ Him. It’s fantasy to think we can rewrite His commandments, ignore His holiness, corrupt His character, and forget His justice but still _____ on His love.

Hebrews 10:26-31 says, “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the _____, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who’s set aside the law of Moses dies without _____ on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much _____ punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will _____.’ And again, ‘The Lord will _____ his people.’ It’s a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” We must never take the love and grace of God for _____. It’s too valuable to squander.

You might be thinking at this point, “Well Phil, don’t you remember what the Bible says? God is _____.” Yes, I know 1 John 4:8. But picking a passage out of the Bible and ignoring other verses that are just as inspired isn’t accurately handling the word of _____. We shouldn’t understand 1 John 4:8 that “God is love”, without _____ consulting 1 John 1:5-7. These verses say: “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is _____, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, God, while we _____ in darkness and sin, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the _____ of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

J. I. Packer said in his book, *Knowing God*, “that the God who is love is first and foremost light, and sentimental ideas of his love as an indulgent, benevolent softness, divorced from moral standards and concerns, must therefore be _____ out from the start. God’s love is _____ love. The God whom Jesus made known to us is not a God who is indifferent to moral distinctions, but a God who _____ righteousness and _____ iniquity, a God whose ideal for his children is that they should ‘be perfect. . . as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48). He won’t take into his company any person, however orthodox in mind, who will not _____ after holiness of life.”

Hebrews 12:14 says, “Strive for _____ with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Some might wonder if God loves us, why does He _____ on our living holy lives? Some think if God loved us, He wouldn’t demand that we live by all those _____. Let’s stop here and think. Is God childish and trivial? Are His _____ petty? No. God insists His people live holy lives to protect us and give us peace. We should consider the righteous way of life as a precious _____, not a burden, petty, or trivial. God isn’t being _____ when He asks us to treat others kindly or to refrain from evil. He’s showing us His love by _____ us live good lives.

When we _____ against Him by going against His commandments, He disciplines us with love. Godly discipline is not abuse; it’s _____ given for our good. Proverbs 3:11-12 says, “My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he _____, as a father the son in whom he delights.” Hebrews 12:10-11 explains that God “disciplines us for our _____, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been _____ by it.” God disciplines our sins that we may _____ in His holiness and live with Him. He acts for the long-term and for that good not just simply for the moment.

Our society despises discipline, thinking love leaves people _____ to do anything they want. They believe _____ against any behavior is mean-spirited and judgmental. But God speaks against sin out of love not meanness. Remaining silent about sinful behaviors that _____ lives is far more mean than warning somebody about sin. God speaks out against sin because He _____. He wants to _____ us.

Why is this important? Because the Lord created us for _____ than what takes place in this life. God loves you enough to be interested in your _____ here on earth and in the hereafter. He wants you to live with Him forever and ever in _____. Like Paul, we pray “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through

faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be _____ up to all the fullness of God.”

The Lord Jesus touched lives throughout His _____. He healed the sick, the lepers, the blind, and the deaf. He raised the dead, walked on water, stilled the storm, and fed the multitudes. When men did their worst to Him, He _____, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.” Peter described Jesus as One who “went about doing _____ and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). The Lord Jesus is still doing good in the lives of people. He leads them out of _____ to sin and to become children of God. He leads them out of distress into hope, out of doubt into faith, and out of apathy into love.

We need the love of God in our lives _____ day! The more we grasp how much God loves us, the more we’ll determine to demonstrate that same _____ of lasting, committed love. Knowing the love of God will _____ us better fathers and husbands, better mothers and wives, better citizens, better children, and better friends. God’s love _____ us patience and kindness, compassion and forgiveness, and forbearance and loyalty. Love motivates us to be holy and faithful. It teaches us to love the truth and to live with integrity and virtue. We need God’s love to become better people.

The love of God should make everyone want to become a Christian. You become a Christian by placing your trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, turning away from sin and begin showing your love for God, confessing Christ before others, and by being baptized into Christ. When you’re baptized, the Lord washes away your sins (Acts 22:16) and adds you to His family the church. Nothing you will do today is more important than becoming a Christian. Won’t you become one today?