

God's Love for Us Ephesians 3:14-19

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

If we could but grasp how greatly God loves us it would _____ our lives. No one loves 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 God who created us and sustains our very existence. 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 above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

God hasn't _____ His love for us; God has displayed it beyond dispute in the _____ of Jesus Christ upon the cross. The Bible says, "For while we were still weak, 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 sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). We were weak, ungodly, and sinners; but Christ was still _____ to die for our sins, to wash us clean by His blood. Such love is truly abundant and beyond comprehension.

Jesus bore the cross to _____ us of our sins and then to open a door for us 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 offended Him. Christ loved our souls when we didn't deserve it, when we didn't understand it, or even appreciate it. Such amazing love!

Our reading today comes from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 14 to 19.

The Old Testament uses a rich and amazing word to _____ the love that God has for His people. The Bible says that God is abounding in this _____ of love. Some versions call it "steadfast love," some "lovingkindness," and some simply just "mercy." **Read Psalm 103:8-14.** "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 _____ upon a voluntary covenant, an everlasting commitment to those who are in His favor. 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 remain _____ to Him.

When you consider all that Jesus gave up in bearing the cross to save us from sin, you cannot _____ 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 everything. He kept _____ and did nothing, while men slandered Him, falsely accused Him, condemned Him, scourged Him, mocked Him, and crucified Him. First Peter 2:22-24 says, “He committed no sin, 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 He continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree (it was personal), that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by his wounds you have been healed.”

Jesus bore the punishment and death for _____ sins, and it’s the punishment that _____ should have borne, He bore it personally in his _____ body. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all (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 _____ love 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? Jesus was greatly troubled and sorrowful (Matthew 26:38). “And being in _____ He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).

They didn’t simply _____ Jesus, they nailed 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 revile them in return. He didn’t _____ for the twelve legions of angels to wipe them out. The Lord’s stubborn love lasted for _____ long hours on the cross. No matter how ugly men were to Jesus, Jesus’ steadfast love held Him to the cross. He loved us to the _____.

First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good, and it’s pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Second Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should _____, but that all should reach repentance.” God doesn’t want anybody to be _____, but He grants us the freedom to choose Him or to choose sin. God wants us to know Him, and to know the _____, and to love Him freely for Who He is. 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 people _____ of God’s “unconditional love.” Yes, I know Jesus said in Matthew 5:45 that God “makes his _____ rise on the evil and on the good, and sends _____ on the just and on the unjust.” God is certainly _____ to all! Jesus didn’t bear the cross for us because we were so _____ and deserved it. Jesus died for us because we were _____ and needed saving. In that sense, He unconditionally took the initiative; but we cannot for that reason assume that to remain in God’s love we can do whatever we _____. We can’t assume God’s love for us will continue to bless us if we _____ from Him.

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

It's a fantasy to think that we can sin all we wish and still count on the _____ of God. It's fantasy to think that we can _____ against God and still be right with Him. It's fantasy to think that we can remake God in our own image and still _____ Him. It's fantasy to think that we can rewrite His commandments, ignore His holiness, corrupt His character, and forget His justice but still count on His love.

Read Hebrews 10:26-31. We must never take the love and grace of God for _____. It's too valuable to squander.

You might be thinking at this point, "Phil don't you remember that the Bible says, "God is _____." Yes, I know 1 John 4:8. But picking a passage out of the Bible and ignoring _____ verses that are just as inspired isn't accurately handling the Word of God. We shouldn't understand 1 John 4:8 that "God is love," without _____ consulting 1 John 1:5-7. **Read 1 John 1:5-7.**

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

Hebrews 12:14 says, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will _____ the Lord." Some might wonder if God loves us, why would He _____ on our living holy lives. Some think that if God loved us, He wouldn't demand that we live by all those _____. But let's stop and think. Is God trivial? Are His laws petty? No! God insists His people live holy lives so as to _____ us and give us peace. We should consider the righteous way of life that Jesus commands as a precious _____, not as a burden or something petty or trivial. God isn't being _____ when He asks us to treat others kindly or to refrain from evil. Everyone _____ when we live good lives. God's goodness is one of the ways that He shows His love.

When we _____ against God by breaking His commandments, He disciplines us with love. Godly discipline is not _____; it's training 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 loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.” The book of Hebrews 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 trained by it” (Hebrews 12:10-11). God disciplines our sins that we may _____ in His holiness and live with Him. He acts for the long-term good, not simply for the moment.

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

Why is this important? Because the Lord created you for more than what takes place in this _____. God loves you and is interested in your life here on earth and in the hereafter. He wants you to live with Him forever in _____. Along with Paul we pray “that Christ may _____ 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 _____ the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

The Lord Jesus _____ lives throughout His ministry. 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 _____ to Him, He prayed, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Peter described Jesus as One who “went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). The Lord Jesus is _____ doing good in the lives of men and women. He leads them out of _____ to sin 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 He loves us, the more we’ll determine to demonstrate that same kind 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, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, forbearance, and loyalty. Love motivates us to be holy and faithful. It teaches us how to love the truth and to live with integrity and virtue. We need God’s love to become _____ people!

The love of God should make you want to become a better Christian. When you become a Christian by placing your trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, when you are turning away from sin, when you’re confessing Christ before others, and when you’re baptized into Christ, you become a Christian. When you’re baptized, the Lord washes away your sins; He adds you to His family, the church. Nothing you will do today is more important than becoming a Christian and professing Your love for God. Won’t you become one today?