

▲ This is the month the World focuses on ‘LOVE’ so it might be wise for us to do the same thing! From here to Bangkok you can get those little red blow up hearts!! Mostly Marketing, but it is always good to be reminded to express our feelings, or appreciation or LOVE for someone – whether it is Parents, children, husband, wife, friends – whoever.

No doubt we are looking at some different definitions of just what Love is and what it looks like – but the Bible is full of teaching on LOVE including some admonitions or warnings. Often when we go wrong – the Bible says it is because we ‘left our first love.’ We stopped loving the ONE who always loves us. Almost any time our FAITH breaks down, or our moral compass, it began with a break down in our relationship with the one who LOVED US FIRST.

Or we developed a love for ‘things’ instead of God or people. That is fine in the short run, but things (STUFF) can’t love you back. No one on their death-bed wishes they had more things! Usually it is just the opposite.

Love is one of those fixed points on our Compass of Life that keeps everything else in order. When we are focused on Loving – a lot of the rest of life tends to work itself out and there are some reasons for that.

So over the next few weeks we will look at How God Loves, How We love Him back, and How we love one another, our neighbors, and the world.

▲ Let’s start with the nature of God:

▲ Great verses in 1 John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God; he that loves not, does not know God, for GOD IS LOVE.

We will come back to some of the points in this verse over the next couple weeks, but lets focus today on those last few words – GOD IS LOVE.

This is pretty critical to our understanding of God – and ultimately ourselves.

This deals with the nature of God. It doesn’t say that God loves, it doesn’t say that He has love. It says that HE IS LOVE.

At the very heart of God’s nature is Love.

He does not have love, He does not GIVE Love, He is love.

▲ Love is not a reward system with God.

It is not based on something we do or do not do.

It is based on WHO HE IS. And it is one of those things that DOES NOT CHANGE WITH GOD.

There is no Country Western Song about “God Stopped Loving me today”!

Not gonna happen!

It is not an emotion. It is not a feeling. It is first of all a choice based in His very being – His essence – who He is!

And if we don't understand that, there will be days when we feel loved, and days when we feel unloved – or even unlovable. But if that is the case, it means that we do not yet know who God is. A lot of our questions about what God does are based in the fact that we don't know who God is!

Because He IS LOVE, and He loves no matter what you do or do not do.

He may not love what you do, but He still loves

▲ I love this verse in Romans 5:8 But God commanded (demonstrated) his love toward us, in that (IN THIS), while we were yet **sinners**, Christ died for us.

God loved us when we were unlovely, unworthy of His love. GOT TO GET THAT!!
So he does not love us less today or tomorrow because of what we do or do not do.

He doesn't love me more because I do missionary work.

He doesn't love me less because I lose my temper or anything else.

▲ He loves by nature.

This is one of the Moral Attributes of God. It is a Character Quality HE POSSESS that can be transferred or given to others. He intends for His creatures to possess them. He gives these to us.

▲ 1John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

This is where the Nature FLOWS. We KNOW AND RELY on the fact that God always loves us. I want to be around people that love me. I never dread going home because I know I am loved. That is how it should be with God. It is how He intends it to be.

▲ We are going to be loved any time and every time we show up, no matter what the circumstances.

▲ Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

▲ We are not going to be ashamed by putting ourselves out there and then finding out it was a joke or a trick - or that our love is not received or reciprocated. There is no fine print that we don't meet the conditions for!

▲ Eph. 5:2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Here we see love demonstrated. We will come back to verses like this in the coming weeks because His constant Love for us, towards us, is what enables us to love as well. This is not meant to be a one sided love, but it can be. This verse tells us that He loved us enough to give His life for ours. He traded his life for my life because He loved me.

▲ So again, He doesn't love me MORE than he did at the Cross, or does He love me LESS than He did at the Cross. That is NOT in HIS nature. GOD IS LOVE. Everyday, all day, all year, all eternity!!

Let's look at a few more verses that demonstrate How God feels about us:

▲ **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

▲ God LOVES US TO LIFE! I think there is a lot we have to learn about that verse. The LOVE of God produces LIFE. There are a lot of things we do in God's name that produce death! But that is another week. What we find here is that DEATH does not originate or live in the heart of God. Love Does.

▲ **John 15:9** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."
▲ This is how much Jesus loves us. He loves us as much as He is loved!

▲ **Romans 8:35** "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?"

▲ No circumstance or situation separates us from God's love. You hear testimonies of Believers that have been locked up in prisons all over the world – persecuted for their faith, and what you find consistently is that they experienced a greater presence of God in their lives that we often do. I just read the story of a man who was forced to work in waist deep sewage every day. He would sing 'I come to the garden alone...' The fragrance was so sweet it overwhelmed Him. God can love us in spite of our circumstances!

▲ **2 Timothy 1:7** "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

When you come to Christ, you receive more than a Valentine card, or a momentary declaration of Love. Scripture teaches that you receive the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit of God carries the same nature and attributes, or Characteristics of God.

▲ You received more than words, you received the same Spirit that COMES with the Nature!!

Galatians 5:22 says BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – what grows on the HOLY Spirit living in our lives is – Love, Joy, Peace, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Longsuffering, and Self-Control.

▲ **1 John 3:1** "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children (sons) of God! And that is what we are!"

Tekon – young adult heirs! Legally – naturally HIS!!

We aren't loved into SERVICE.

We aren't loved into SUBMISSION.

We aren't loved into SLAVERY.

▲ WE ARE LOVED INTO SONSHIP.

We are loved IN TO the ROYAL Family.

▲ Here is the fact – I am loved – unconditionally – RIDICULOUSLY – EXTRAVAGANTLY – ETERNALLY – DAILY – No matter what I feel like – no matter what I act like, whether I deserve it or not – and I can't earn it!

▲ I just have to accept the fact that God loves me more than anything!

▲ I am His favorite (ME)

▲ He would rather die for me than live without me!

▲ And nothing in heaven or on earth can separate me from His love.

So what do I do with all of that?

▲ Learn to ACCEPT IT! Take it by faith. Take it as Biblical Fact. It is what God says. If you disagree, you are disagreeing with the one who made you!

▲ Take Him at His word. That is an act of faith. Trust.

▲ Then, you have to renew your mind, change your thinking by Speaking these things over yourselves. Declare it!

▲ Have to reprogram your belief system to get the benefits!!

▲ I am a Loved son, a loved daughter...I am loved unconditionally....

▲ He Loves me more than anything

Get that working in you! Find scriptures that relate to the Love of God for YOU and USE THEM!

We will look at in the next couple weeks how to express that.

What you give away increases!! You can't give away what you don't carry!

Want to be loved? Give Love away!! But that is next week!!