

Lesson 5: *Loved!*



*“God loved the world.
Go thou and do likewise.”
Erwin W. Lutzer*

*“God proved his love on the cross.
When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world,
“I love you.”
Billy Graham*

This lesson, perhaps more than any other, changes everything about us. When we understand just how deeply and sincerely God loves us, we will never be the same. It doesn't matter what the people we have known and loved in our lives say about our lovability. God says we are loved. We don't have to chase after it anymore. There is no need for us to cry out to God for love... He has lavished us with the purest and most complete love we could ever receive.

Despite all the love God shows us, love is under attack in our world today. Satan wants to convince us that we are unlovable and even undeserving of love. God tells us we were created to be love and to love others. Even the definition of love is no longer sacred. Satan works very hard to both dilute and pervert the meaning of love. We can know the true meaning, however. Scripture actually has a lot to say on the subject of love so let's dig in.

Loved (Jesus' Sacrifice) - - - - -

There is no better place to start a discussion on love than at the foot of the cross. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." The cross is the ultimate expression of God's love.

Please read the following verses which highlight the crucifixion.

Luke 22:1-6 and Luke 22:47-48

Who betrayed Jesus?

Have you ever been betrayed by a close friend? How did it make you feel?

Luke 23:13-25

What crime did Pilot find Jesus guilty of?

Jesus was completely innocent. He was accused, tried, and judged to be without fault.

Luke 23:44-49

What happened to the temple just before Jesus breathed his last?

These final moments of Jesus' life show us the extent of God's love. His undeserved punishment made him the only viable sacrifice worthy enough to wash away our sins. The act of his obedience to God's will tore the veil in the temple in two. This act carries a lot of symbolism. This veil divided the place where God resided and the place where man could dwell. By Jesus' death (and resurrection) the way was opened for us to enter into God's presence. A love that can

never be realized is a very sad love. That is not the kind of love we have from our God. We are not kept at arms distance and forced to adore our savior from the other side of the divide. The very nature of Jesus' sacrifice shows us that God loves us so deeply he spared no expense to ensure that we could spend eternity with him. Now that is love.

Loved (Not what the world offers) -

We can't understand God's love for us if we look at it through the lens of the what the world has to offer. 1 Corinthians 1:18-19 says, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." To understand godly and perfect love, we must view it through the truth of God's word.

Please read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and fill in the chart below.

LOVE IS AND DOES	LOVE IS NOT AND DOES NOT

The next time you get confused at what true love is, just look back on this list. God has given us the perfect example of true love. Accept nothing less!

Loved (Now go and do the same!) - -

What is the point of understanding love if we never live in it? We were never meant to gorge ourselves on God's love and hoard it from our brothers and sisters and the hurting world around us.

Please read 1 John 4:15-21.

How does the fact that we "live in love" prove that we have a close relationship with God?

How then would a life without love prove we are not living in a right relationship with God?

What is the command we are given in verse 21?

How can you live that out in your own life?

God is love. God and be love in this world.