

Introduction - Three facts about love

- **Fact #1:** It's a Universal Need = We are all looking for love!
- **Fact #2:** There's a Universal Solution = God loves all people everywhere and longs to meet the deepest needs of their heart for love!
- **Fact #3:** There's a Tragic Disconnection = Nevertheless, most people remain starved for love for three primary reasons:
 1. They don't know God loves them.
 2. They know of God's love, but have not received it.
 3. They have received God's love, but don't know how to experience it in daily life.

“Over the years, I have come to realize that the greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity, and power can indeed present a great temptation, **but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection.** When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions. The real trap, however, is self-rejection. . . **Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life** because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the ‘Beloved.’ **Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence.”**

- Henry Nouwen
(As quoted in Brennan Manning's, *Abba's Child*)

Defining “The Love of God”

- **Definition** – God’s love is His holy disposition toward all that He has created that compels Him to express unconditional affection and selective correction to provide the highest and best quality of existence both now and forever for the objects of His love.
- **Characteristics of God’s agape love include:**
 - It is a giving love John 3:16
 - It is a sacrificial love John 3:16
 - It is an unconditional love John 3:16
 - It is a boundless love Ephesians 3:14-21
- **God’s love is expressed primarily through His goodness, mercy, longsuffering, and grace.**

Ryrie’s Basic Theology, pg. 44
- **God’s love for you means . . .**
 1. His thoughts, intentions, desires, and plans for you are always for your good and never for your harm.
 2. He is kind, open, approachable, frank, and eager to be your friend.
 3. He emotionally identifies with your pain, joy, hopes, and dreams and has chosen to allow your happiness to affect His own.
 4. He takes pleasure in you just for who you are totally apart from your performance and/or accomplishments.
 5. He is actively and creatively orchestrating people, circumstances, and events to express His affection and selective correction to provide for your highest good.

God reveals His love to us through . . .

_____ - He made you for Himself. Genesis 1:26-27, Colossians 1:16

_____ - He shows His kindness to all. Matthew 5:44-45, Acts 17:24-27

_____ - He is proactively pursuing you. Luke 19:10, John 4:23-24

_____ - He chastises us to protect us from self-destructive behavior.
Hebrews 12:6

_____ - He supernaturally pours His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
Romans 5:5

_____ - Jesus revealed the nature of God's love for us.

- Jesus' **life** modeled compassion, grace, and truth John 1:14
- Jesus' **teaching** explained God's love Luke 15
- Jesus' **death** demonstrated the extent of God's love 1 John 3:16, Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

**An object's value is always determined by the price paid for it.
To God, you are worth the price of His Son's death in your place.**

How must we respond to God's love?

1. We must _____ by faith in **our hearts**. John 3:16

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

John 1:12

2. We must _____ it by faith in **our minds**. 1 John 4:13-16

HOW?

1. Saturate your mind in the truth of God's love for you. Romans 8:28-39
2. Ask God to help you grasp His love for you. Ephesians 3:14-21
3. Refuse to seek love in cheap substitutes. 1 John 2:15-16

3. We must _____ it by faith through **our wills**.

- The command John 13:34-35
- The calling 1 John 3:16-18
- The promise Luke 6:38

Resources: A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy* – chapter 20,
J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* – chapter 12, Chip Ingram, *How Great a Love*