



# Teaching God's Word to Train Disciples

## Fellowship BIBLE CHURCH

Audio of Pastor Don Griffin's sermons is available at  
<http://www.fellowship-katy.org>

It has been said that the great theme of the Bible is the love of God. That is good news because we all need love. We need to know that we are important to somebody, that someone truly cares about us. In a recent interview, comedian/actor Jim Carrey was asked the question: "What do you still desire?" to which he responded: "Love." He has already had two failed marriages, and what he really wants, is love.

Madelyn Murray O'Hare, the outspoken atheist who was instrumental in getting prayer removed from public schools seemed, on the surface, to be tough

as nails. Yet recently her journal was uncovered and numerous times she had written, "Somebody, please love me."

If no one else loved that lady, we know God did. 1 John 4:8 says, "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 John 4:16 says, "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 him."

There are a lot of things that we cannot understand about god. For instance, I don't understand the Trinity, how that god is one substance and yet three persons. I don't understand how that god is from everlasting to everlasting, never having a beginning or end.

## Learning to Relate to God

### His Love

### Part 3

But I can be comforted and the fact that, for some reason known only to himself, god loves me and you. He not only loves us, he abounds in His love for us.

*Nehemiah 9:17 says, "But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love."*

We are in a series on learning how to relate to god based on his character and his works. So far we have seen his mighty power in creation, and last week we saw that he is a holy god who is totally separate from all sin. Today, we will explore the wonderful news that god loves us.

### WHAT IS GOD'S LOVE LIKE?

#### 1. GOD'S LOVE INVOLVES SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Love involves doing good for someone else, and it has to have an object. The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives." "Love is the verb, and "wife" is the object. Love implies doing something for someone in a sacrificial way. In her column,

Ann Landers told about a man named Bubba whose wife, Emily Sue, was going into labor. Bubba, called 911, and the operator told Bubba she would send someone out right away. 'Where do you live?' asked the operator. Bubba replied, 'Eucalyptus Drive.' The operator asked, 'Can you spell that for me?' There was a pause and then Bubba said, 'How about I drag her over to Oak Street, and you pick her up there?'

Love is expressed in the giving of oneself for the good of another, and it requires sacrificial effort, such as finding out the spelling of "Eucalyptus." One of the reasons God created the human race was so that he might love people and do good things for them. In fact, his love is so great that he gave his son to die for us.

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

Whenever we are tempted to think that nobody loves us, we need to be reminded that God loves us.

## 2. God's Love Is Unconditional

One of the most amazing things about God's love is that it is given to us when we do not deserve it and continues even when we do not respond to it.

I saw a headline that said "Waterford boy, 8, saves sister's life." In one of the paragraphs to follow the boy says, "I wouldn't do it again. She's been a pain this week."

That is not like god's love. God's love continues even when we do not deserve it. God's love is like the mother of a new-born baby. As soon as the baby is born, its mother begins sacrificially taking care of it. She gets up all hours of the night to feed the new baby. She changes dirty diapers, changes the baby's clothes. She is there around the clock for her child, and never once does the infant say "thank you."

There is absolutely no gratitude on the part of the baby. But that doesn't keep the mother from sacrificially taking care of her child. She has an unconditional love for her child.

In the same way, God does not love us because of what we can do for him. He loves us unconditionally.

Since his love is unconditional, there is nothing we can do to make Him love us any more, and nothing we will ever do to cause Him to love us any less.

He loves us perfectly and completely regardless of how we perform.

*In Deuteronomy 7:7-8, God says to Israel, "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt"*

There is no human reason for His love for Israel. They were a rebellious people. He loved them simply because He loved them. That is how it is with you and me.

God loves us just because He loves us. He loves us when we're grouchy just as much as when we're happy. He loves us when we sin just as much as

when we don't. He never stops loving us because His love is eternal.

*Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

## 3. God's Love Is Holy

*Hebrews 12:5-6, "And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."*

What kind of parents would we be if we let our children do anything they pleased, such as put their hands in the fire, ride their tricycles on the freeway, or play superman on the roof of the house?

We discipline them in order to take care of them because we love them, and that is what god does.

## 4. God's Love Is Comforting

If we really believe God loves us, the world suddenly becomes a friendly place to live. If God loves me and wants to do the best for me, then I can stand strong even when the world seems to be caving in around me.

*Isaiah:54:10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.*

*Isaiah 43:1 But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

God is not saying, "I love you so much, I will give you an easy and comfortable life." He is promising

to be there in the midst of our troubles. God says, "The path you take may be through the rivers, but you will not drown; the path may be through the fire, but you will not be consumed in the flames."

God says, "Whatever you go through, I will always love you and always be there for you. God's unconditional, eternal love never fails."

## DO YOU LOVE GOD?

In Matthew 22:34-46, Jesus teaches us how to please God. He tells us how we can best serve him. He says, "*You shall love the Lord your God.*"

Jesus is quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5. These verses are called the shema or "the first word" in Jewish Law.

This commandment to love God was and still is the first text every Jewish child memorizes. It was so important that scrolls bearing the command were bound to the wrist and forehead of faithful Jews so they'd not forget it.

It is easy to go through the motions of religion without really loving God. The following is a short test to give us an idea of where our "love level" for God is.

1. If we love a person, we like to think about him  
Someone who truly loves the lord thinks about him throughout the day.

2. If we love a person, we like to hear about him  
If you want to get my attention, talk to me about my family. I'll be glad to listen. Do you like to listen to others talk about the lord?

3. If we love a person, we like to read about him  
If you've ever been away from home for any length of time, you have probably experienced the excitement of getting a letter from a parent, friend or family member. God has written us a letter in his word.

4. If we love a person, we like to please him  
The Apostle Paul said he made it his goal to please god at all times.

5. If we love a person, we usually like his friends

John tells us in the book of 1 John that one of the marks of salvation is that we love other Christians and want to be with them

6. If we love a person, we are jealous about his name and honor.

We do not like to hear him spoken against, without speaking up for him and defending him.

7. If we love a person, we like to talk to him.

We find no difficulty in finding something to talk about. Do you love to spend time with the lord?

## HOW TO SHOW GOD LOVE

### 1. OBEY GOD

How you obey god will have a very profound effect on your life.

*Jesus said in John 14:21, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."*

Those words, "show myself to him," speaks of a special relationship with God. There's no question that people like David, Moses and Abraham had a very special relationship with god that others did not have. God is saying, "if you live in a state of obedience to me, I will reveal myself to you in a special way."

Jesus goes on to say in

*John 14:23, "Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

The words, "make your home with him," speak of a very intimate relationship. Before I became a Christian, I live together with my best friend in a small house off campus. I know the arrangement that we had would only stir up trouble in most situations, but we were really close. When I went to the closet to pick out a shirt to wear for that day, it didn't matter whether it was my shirt or his shirt because what was his was mine and mine was his. The same was true for the food that we ate-we share just about everything. It just so happened, but he became a Christian one day before I did. We went off to Bible College together and were once again roommates in

the dorm. When we graduated from school, we went to the same church and worked on the same staff together. That was a very close relationship, and there are not many of those in life, but that is nothing compared to the relationship Jesus is promising with God if we obey Him. Your love for Him will be shown by your willingness to obey Him.

## 2. TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT GOD

God loves people, and He wants people to know about Him. He wants people to know what He is like, and you can show your love for Him by sharing the knowledge of Him with others.

## 3. TRUST HIM

*Psalm 109:20-22 20 May this be the LORD's payment to my accusers, to those who speak evil of me. 21 But you, O Sovereign LORD, deal well with me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me. 22 For I am poor and needy; and my heart is wounded within me.*

If you grew up, with a parent who truly loved you sacrificially, you are very fortunate.

You may have experienced lying in bed at night with your mom or your dad sitting by your side listening to you pour out your heart about something that happened in school or something that someone said or did that hurt you deeply.

Unfortunately, when you become an adult, there are not many people in this world who we can really trust when it comes to the deepest matters of our lives. Our inner lives are like a big house with many rooms. We allow a lot of people come into those first few rooms and talk to us on a superficial basis. As you go deeper into the house of your soul, you let less and less people in. When you get to the real serious stuff in your life, very few people are invited in. And then, you may have certain rooms in your life that are off limits for everyone. Why? Because the things in that room are so sensitive that you're not sure you can trust anyone with them.

That is where God is different. There is nothing in your life no matter how deep and sensitive that you cannot trust Him with. He sees what is in the deep-

est compartments of your life, and He understands what's going on there better than anyone else, including yourself.

*Psalm 62:8, "Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."*

Take those deep, dark secrets in your inner being and pour them out to the Lord and then be careful to listen.

## 4. SERVE HIS PEOPLE

*John 21:14-16 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. 15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."*

Sometimes a couple have the opportunity to get away for a few days without the children.

The children may not be with them in physical form, but they stay with them in their hearts, and every day one or both of the parents call home to make sure everything is going well. At that point, there is nothing that a baby sitter can do for the parents any more important than to watch over the children and keep them safe.

That's what Jesus is saying to us. He is saying, "IF YOU LOVE ME," TAKE CARE OF THOSE WHO BELONG TO ME."

In a parable in

*Matthew 25:40, Jesus said, "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"*

There is no such thing as loving God and ignorant of the needs of His people, and we are not just talking about physical needs. We are talking about spiritual needs.

We are talking about people who are struggling in their Christian walk, people who are not as fervent for the Lord as they once were.

We are also talking about people who are hungry to serve God, people that you can disciple. Jesus said, "If you love me, take care of my sheep.

Ask God to help you love Him more. John Wesley wrote 250 years ago, "No man loves God by nature, any more than he does a stone. What we love we must delight in, but no person has naturally any delight in God. In our natural state we cannot conceive how any one should delight in God. Everyone of us is totally powerless to love in the way that god wants us to love. We just don't have it in us. The good news is that god can love through us as we yield our lives to him.