

The Character and Attributes of God
Lesson 5 – The Love and Forgiveness of God
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Introduction: We need to be taught and reminded daily about the love of God.

- A. In our age words have been changed to mean almost anything! This is true when we speak of “love.”
1. Rather than letting men define love, let us look to God whose very nature defines love! God, truth and love go hand in hand. **(1 Jn 4:6-8)**
 2. Love is the greatest thing we can possibly possess. **(1 Cor 13:13; Mt 22:37-38)**
 3. We must not accept a counterfeit. Knowing God will let us see love!
- B. How does God teach us about love?
1. He tells us He loves us. **(Ex 34:6)**
 2. He shows us He love us. **(Jn 3:16)**
 3. We can conclude that He loves us. **(Neh 9:30-31)**
 4. All teaching is found in these forms (CENI).

I. God shows us that His love is unconditional.

- A. How can a man die for his enemies? **(Rom 5:6-8)**
1. This teaches me that the love of God is not dependent upon what I have done!
 2. Why would the creator of the universe make me the center of His love?
 3. I know because He demonstrated it. Why did Jesus not just die a quick death?
- B. Our redemption is foreshadowed in the book of Hosea.
1. God has Hosea to take a wife who would become a harlot. **(Hosea 1:2)**
 2. What would be the attributes of a woman who chose to be a harlot? What kind of pain would this cause her husband?
 3. Her unfaithfulness is shown in the naming of the children. The first child was named Jezreel (whose name means "God sows; God scatters"). The second child was named Lo-Ruhamah (whose name means "unpitied"). The third child was named Lo-Ammi (whose name means "not my people").
 4. What kind of pain did Hosea experience in knowing that some, it not all of his children born by his wife were not his? **(Hosea 9:1; 2:2)**
 5. Our God hurts when we forsake Him! **(Eph 4:30)**
 6. God does not give up on anyone! God has Hosea buy back his wife who was sold as a worthless slave. Imagine the scene! **(Hosea 3:2-3)**

II. The mighty demands of the love of God

- A. The love of God is exactly like the Son of God in His ministry. Wherever He went He disturbed, revealed and changed men who spent time with Him.
1. What did He do when He went into the temple? **(Jn 2:13-17)**
 2. What did Jesus do when He spoke to the rich, young ruler? **(Mk 10:17-22)**
 3. In both cases the love moved Jesus to expose the heart.
- B. A failure to know God will make us unstable and undependable. **(Hos 6:4-6)**
1. Have you been a “yo-yo” Christian? **(2 Cor 4:1; Eph 3:17)**
 2. When we understand God’s love we will no longer be the center of our universe. It will not all be about me!

3. Because God loves me, I love His word and I am serious about putting away sin in my life. **(1 Pt 2:1-3)**

III. What is God's forgiveness like?

A. What does forgiveness mean to God?

1. He blots out our sins! **(Acts 3:19; Isa 43:25)**
2. God does not remember our sins any more. **(Heb 8:12)**
 - a. He is described as casting them into the sea. **(Micah 7:18-19)**
3. God receives us back to a full fellowship. **(Lk 15:20-24)**
 - a. There is no grudge holding with God. Men are another matter!
 - b. Our biggest problem is in believing this.

B. What do we mean? This is where the deceitful heart can do the most damage.

1. Have you heard of brethren that would have nothing to do with one another? **(1 Jn 3:14-16)**
2. "I will forgive you but I do not have to like you." **(1 Jn 3:18-19; 1 Pt 1:22; 2:1)**
3. Until we learn to get out of ourselves then these things are impossible.
4. Will you be "cheated" by showing mercy and longsuffering?
5. There is a wonderful burden lifted when you are no longer thinking this way.

C. How do I know if I have forgiven another? Here is a test.

1. Do we get pleasure in their hurt?
2. Do we intentionally avoid being in their presence?
3. Do we vividly remember what we have suffered?
4. Are we uncomfortable when they are praised?
5. Do we go out of the way to be helpful to that person?
6. Are we willing to pray for the person?

III. We must learn how to forgive others

A. When God tells us to "put on" something it is a learning process. **(Col 3:12-15)**

1. I have seen is where brethren separate themselves under the banner of the "grace of God" by planting bitterness and strife in the hearts of their disciples.
2. God's love helps us to work out our problems. **(James 3:17-18)**

C. How can I develop a greater love for God? Do you remember you are forgiven?

1. Consider the parable Jesus used to open the heart of a Pharisee. **(Lk 7:40-43)**
2. Let you and I answer the question. Who loves more? The one forgiven more!
3. How much have you been forgiven? **(Lk 7:47)**

Questions

1. Define the love of God.
2. Is God's love unconditional? Does this mean all men will be saved?
3. What is the message of the book of Hosea? How did Hosea show God's love in his life?
4. How does God's love change men? Give some bible examples.
5. How does God describe His forgiveness?
6. What substitutes do men make instead of really forgiving?
7. How can I learn to forgive? What is the first step?