

LOVE (*agape*—Godly Love) part 1-A

GOD THE FATHER



...I have loved you with an everlasting *love*... Jeremiah 31:3

Day 1: If you could describe God in your mind, what leaning would your words take, a negative or a positive slant? Can you envision a loving God? In your upbringing, did your family, peers, associates shape or sway your understanding of God? In what ways?

Day 2: Make an ongoing list using the letters of the alphabet to detail the characteristics of God (i.e. Aô Almighty; Bô blameless...). In what ways do your descriptions give evidence to the significance of God in your life personally? (i.e. How has He revealed His might to you? Is He truly blameless?)

Where do these Biblical traits fit into your log? Rewrite each in your own words. Are you surprised at what you read?

- Psalm 30:5
- Proverbs 15:3
- Isaiah 40:28
- Jeremiah 25:15-16
- Nahum 1:3
- 1 Timothy 1:17

Day 3: Recap face-to-face encounters with God from the perspectives of two major prophets in Isaiah 6:1-8 and Ezekiel 43:1-5. Are these images startling to you? Believable? Why do both prophets fall prostrate in the middle of the manifestations? How would you react if you found yourself in the presence of Jehovah God?

Day 4: Read Psalm 52:9. Is God known by other names? If yes, how many can you recall? (You may wish to refer to your list on Day 2.) Coin a few more of your own by completing this phrase: öthe God who _____.

What do the names in these passages connote about God's character? Do they mean anything to you personally?

- Psalm 83:18
- Amos 4:13
- Exodus 3:13-14
- Galatians 4:6-7
- Isaiah 44:6

Day 5: Summarize the account of Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis 16:1-16. What name did Hagar give God? Is it a correct tag? What title would you have given? In your loneliest moments did you feel that God was watching from a distance or that He was right there beside you?

Day 6: Are all gods the same? How is the God of the Bible different? How would you explain Jehovah God to a truly inquisitive person?

What do you glean from these passages?

- Psalm 68:4
- Psalm 96:4-6
- Isaiah 40:18-20
- Isaiah 46:5-7
- Isaiah 64:3-5
- Jeremiah 10:6-10

Day 7: Read the story of Belshazzar in Daniel 5:1-30. How did the queen identify the God of Daniel? Is it incredible to you that knowing *about* the power of the most Holy God did not change the behavior of the young king? How often does your conduct convey indifference around others?

Day 8: Using a thesaurus or dictionary, do a study on the word *omnipotent*. How all-powerful do you believe God truly is? How often do you reflect on His might? Is there anything He *cannot* do? If yes, what? In what ways has God shown His power to you?

Consider these verses. Would you agree with these writers' opinions?

- 2 Chronicles 25:5-9
- Psalm 57:5
- Psalm 115:3; 135:6
- Jeremiah 32:17-19, 27
- Matthew 19:26

Day 9: Read the Lord's revelation of His omnipotence in Job 38:1-41; 39:1-30. How do you approach One with such power? Is there any way to please such a Being? Is He Master in your life? Does He laugh at your pitiful efforts at playing god?

Day 10: Do a word study of *omnipresent*. Is it unnerving to know that you are never truly alone, that your private thoughts are not secret? If you operated on the conviction that God was watching at all times, would there be a major noticeable change in your daily activities? Explain your answer.

Summarize these passages reiterating God's omnipresence.

- Genesis 28:16-17
- 1 King 8:28
- Job 11:7
- Isaiah 66:1-2
- Ephesians 4:10

Day 11: Read a song of David in Psalm 139. What is the tone of the psalm? In what ways did David reflect his awe? In what ways are you humbled by God's constant presence?

Day 12: Complete a study for the word *omniscient*. Then read Isaiah 55:8-9. If God doesn't think like man, how can someone presume to understand what He is doing? Do you sometimes feel His guidance may be a little skewed? (i.e. What? The deal's off! But I've already sold my house, bought the plane tickets, boxed up my office!) What do you do in situations like these? How can He be loving and wise and allow such confusion?

Reword these verses about God's omniscience:

- Job 34:21
- Psalm 33:13-15
- Isaiah 40:13-14
- 1 Corinthians 1:27-29

Day 13: Using a thesaurus or dictionary, do a study of the word *sovereign*. Is God a dictator? How can *sovereignty* and *love* rule together? Are you master of your destiny, or are you a marionette made to dance by a mere tug of your strings?

Comment on what these Biblical men record:

- 1 Samuel 14:6
- Job 41:11
- Psalm 135:6
- Ecclesiastes 3:14-15
- Isaiah 14:24; 43:13

Day 14: Read of an unusual victory for Judea in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. How does Jehoshaphat's prayer explain God's sovereignty? How did music bring down three unified realms bent on destroying Judea?

Day 15: Read 1 Chronicles 29:11-12. Do a word study on *control*. If God is indeed the head over everything, does that include all governments, good or bad? How can a loving God allow evil men to reign, in families or in regimes?

Summarize these verses. Do you like what you read? Do they defuse any confusion or bitterness you might harbor?

- Proverbs 21:1-2
- John 19:10-11
- Acts 5:25-29
- 1 Tim 2:1-3
- Titus 3:1-2
- 1 Peter 2:13-17

Day 16: Draw up guidelines outlined in Matthew 22:18-21 and Romans 13:1-7. What do these verses tell you about submitting to governing powers and the laws of the land?

Day 17: Does God use evil or suffering to carry out His plans? Can you recount examples in your personal life where something bad turned out to be a good thing in the end?

Summarize these accounts. How do these relate to evil and suffering in the world?

- Judges 14:1-4
- Psalms 46: 8-11
- Isaiah 45:7
- Job 38:22-23
- Daniel 9:11-14
- Romans 9:14-18

Day 18: Read of Ben-Hadad's plan to overtake Israel in battle in 1 Kings 20:1, 21, 23-30. How did God use the Syrian king's arrogance for good? What does this account tell you about the character of God?

Day 19: What title is given to God in Psalm 50:6? Why do we need an arbitrator? Do you generally approach judges with trepidation? Why? Do you view God's justice differently than a human's? Why or why not?

Consider these passages concerning the judgment of God. Is He fair, just, merciful? In what ways has His judgments toward you been positive and beyond question?

- Joshua 23:2, 14-16
- Psalm 103:10
- Micah 7:8-9
- Colossians 3:25

Day 20: Read about the goodness of God's judgment in Psalm 89:11-18 and Zephaniah 3:5. In what ways do these writers picture His righteousness? Do you feel God is loving in His verdicts? Why or why not?

Day 21: If circumstances beyond your control go awry, do you have a tendency to blame God? Are you afraid to voice your frustration, anger, bitterness to Him? Is God reasonable? Will He even listen?

Read two sides of the argument in the passages below. What do these verses reveal about God to you? Record your insights.

- Job 24:12; 40:2
- Psalm 89:46
- Psalm 147:5
- Jeremiah 4:10
- Isaiah 1:18

Day 22: Read about three choices given to David in 2 Samuel 24:1, 10-25. Was God being overly harsh here? Why did David select that particular option?

Day 23: Label each of these verses with an attribute of God. Explain how each passage reveals His love for you personally.

- Isaiah 54:8-10
- Joshua 21:45

- Psalm 102:25-27
- Psalm 116:12
- James 1:17
- Romans 8:37-39

Day 24: Summarize Acts 17:16-33. List the characteristics of God mentioned by Paul in his sermon to the Athenians. Although the listeners were very religious, why was it necessary for Paul to preach at all? Wouldn't their obvious sincerity have been sufficient to satisfy God?

Day 25: Continue your list of the many facets of God's character. Which verse impacts you the most? Why? Hide that verse in your heart.

- Psalm 40:17
- Psalm 138:8
- Ecclesiastes 3:11
- Isaiah 64:4
- 2 Timothy 2:13
- 1 Peter 5:7

Day 26: Revisit the story of the first man and woman in Genesis 2:8-9, 15-25; 3:1-7, 20-24. Study the relationship between God, Adam and Eve. What actions on God's part reveal His love for them? Why was it important that after their initial sin the couple be sent away and the garden of Eden hidden? Was His judgment too harsh for their wrongdoing? Why is the sentence left unfinished in verse 22? Explain your answers.

Day 27: Read Exodus 37:6-9 and describe this piece of furniture in the Israeli tabernacle. How does it depict mercy? Why did God take such extremes to create a visual aid for the children of Israel? What visual aids has He given you to invoke daily reminders of His immense feelings?

Meditate on these passages. In what ways do these verses continue the imagery of the Mercy Seat?

- Deuteronomy 4:7
- Psalm 17:8-9
- Psalm 36:7
- Psalm 57:1
- Psalm 91:4
- Malachi 4:2

Day 28: Read the following passages. Is there a cutting off point in God's mercy? Are these sentences abrasive to you? Explain your answers.

- Psalm 79:8-9
- Jeremiah 21:1-10
- Matthew 12:31-32
- 1 John 5:16-17

Day 29: Has your opinion of God changed because of this study? In what ways? What was the greatest discovery for you?

Examine the dimensions of these qualities of God.

- Deuteronomy 7:7-9
- Psalm 56:9
- Psalm 78:38-39
- Psalm 80:3
- Psalm 89:33-35
- Micah 7:18-19

Day 30: What is the depth of God's feelings? Summarize the expositions of Ezekiel. How do you feel about each passage below?

- Ezekiel 18:21-23, 30-32
- Ezekiel 33:10-20
- Ezekiel 39:25-29