

## Do you Really Believe it?

*We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16).*

If you had to describe the one true God in one word what would it be? You probably know so many of His attributes: all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, full of mercy. But as John describes Him here, “**God is love.**” Notice, God doesn’t possess love - He IS love! This doesn’t diminish His other attributes, however, His love shines through every one of the others. When the Lord appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai, He came in great power, and He spoke of justice and punishment. Yet His overall tone on this momentous occasion was **love**.

**Exodus 34:5-6**, *Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed His name, the Lord. And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.”* I like the New Living Translation, *Then the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and He called out His own name, “Yahweh.” The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.”*

Throughout Israel’s history, this verse was repeated - it is a reality. They knew that on so many occasions they were rescued from their rebelliousness by only one thing: His love. **Lamentations 3:22**, *“The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease.”*

I’m sure we all have some idea concerning the ‘doctrine’ of the love of God. But it’s so important for us to truly understand - “to believe” God’s love for us (the awesomeness of His great love). Remember our opening verse... “**We have known and believed the love that God has for us.**” The question is, “Do you really believe it?” To help you believe, I have listed five things that God’s intends His love to produce in our lives. But first let us closely examine the word “believe.” The Greek word “pistevo” means to be “*fully persuaded of.*” It implies, “*to have complete confidence and heartfelt trust in something.*” In this sense of the word, to “believe” is to be totally reliant upon that which you trust!

So let me ask you... Do you know and believe the love that God has for you? Are you fully persuaded that God does actually love you? Do you have complete confidence and heartfelt trust in the love that God has for you? Finally, are you totally reliant on His love? Here are five things that will help you with your **belief** - things that God’s love will help us discover:

### I. **The love that God has for us will help us to find peace.**

One of the blessings that the prophet Zephaniah revealed to Israel was: “*For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty saviour. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs” (Zephaniah 3:17).* In these times, when so many cry out for acceptance and love, God lavishly pours out His love. We seek love, while love is seeking us! But more than that, the love that God has for us is meant to calm us and remove all fear. “*There is no fear in love;*

*but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. He who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).*

2. **The love that God has for us will help us to find true worth.**

God loves you not because you are 'valuable', but rather, you are valuable because God loves you! **1 John 3:1**, *“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!”* A father is always expected to love his children. Love is the result of that relationship. But how much better is a relationship that has come about as a result of love. God doesn't love us because it is His duty. Rather, He has taken the role of father because He loves us. More importantly, God does not love us because of our role as His adopted children, or anything else in fact! He has given us this privileged position, because of His preexisting (unconditional) love for us. How reassuring to know that God had already decided to love us - no matter what! We don't have to perform or prove anything! With foreknowledge, He loves us as we are! What's more, His love is not based on what other people think of us. Our true worth is housed in the truth that He loved us first! *“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19)*. If God didn't choose to love you first, you could never feel valuable and precious. You would still be looking for self-worth in your own endeavours.

3. **The love that God has for us will help us to find refuge.**

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble” (Psalm 46:1)*. *“O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress” (Jeremiah 16:19)*. Even in extremely difficult circumstances, in impossible situations, when everything is going wrong, we can cry out to God to rescue us. *“He brought me out into a spacious place; He rescued me because He delighted in me” (Psalm 18:19)*. But on what basis is it that we can cry out to God? What gives us the right to cry out? King David, in all he went through, understood that it was the love of God. He outlined a long list of complaints and then said: *“Help me, O Lord my God; rescue me in accordance with your love” (Psalm 109:26)*. Because of the great love that God has for each of us, we can cry out to Him at any time and take refuge in Him.

4. **The love that God has for us will help us to find forgiveness.**

Sometimes we don't feel worthy of love, and the main reason for this is our human failings. If God hates sin and you sin, how can He love you? Many of you have probably asked this question! The devil wants you to feel condemned, so that you will give up and not run back into the arms of love! However, **Romans 8:1** declares, *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* Before you can forgive anyone else you need to forgive yourself! **Luke 10:27** says, *“Love your neighbour as you love yourself.”* Remember, God has given you His love so that you can love yourself first, and you cannot love yourself if you cannot forgive yourself.

5. **The love that God has for us will help us to find security.**

You will never find security in anything outside of the love of God. Therefore, until you can comprehend His love you will always feel insecure. Here are three things that will help you to feel more secure:

(a) God's love is a proven love. In your relationships, how many times do you say that you don't want people to tell you they love you; you want them to show you they love you. God's love is a love that has already been fully demonstrated. *"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (**Romans 5:8**).

A certain medieval monk announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on "The Love of God." As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the darkness of the altar, the monk lit a candle and carried it to the crucifix. First of all, he illuminated the crown of thorns, next, the two wounded hands, then the marks of the spear wound. In the hush that fell, he blew out the candle and left the chancel. There was nothing else to say! To give your life for a friend is amazing love. To give your life for a stranger is incomprehensible love. To give your life for an enemy is the God kind of love!

(b) God's love is an eternal love. **Psalm 136:1**, *"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever."* This entire psalm ends every verse with the same words: *"His love endures forever."* It is not like the love of man, here today and gone tomorrow, we can count on His love. Like Him, it is the same yesterday, today and forever!

(c) God's love is an unconditional love. **Romans 8:38-39**, *"For I am convinced that neither death angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither 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."* Nothing in heaven or hell, nothing now or later, nothing that you or anyone else can do, will make God not love you. God loves you unconditionally!

I'd like to end but going back to a few questions that were asked earlier... Do you know and believe the love that God has for you? Are you fully persuaded that God does in fact love you? Do you have complete confidence and heartfelt trust in the love that God has for you? Finally, are you totally reliant on that love?

If you are not unable to say "yes" to all these questions, you will probably be in fear. Being fearful brings about anxiety and stress. That in turn causes many physical and mental ailments. And here's another thing you need to know about fear - fear bleeds into every area of your life. **1 John 4:18** states, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."* Torment is a strong word because it has to do with human suffering. There are far too many of you suffering needlessly because you are not totally relying on the love that God has for you! Another translation of **1 John 4:18** says, *"Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of the outcome, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love."* God wants you to fully experience His great love!

Again, "Do you believe the perfect love that God has for you?" It is speaking to your heart right now! The Person of Love Himself is saying to you... *"I love you as you are! And I will always love you - no matter what!"* The Bible says you are the apple of His eye! It says, His eyes follow you wherever you may go. Quite simply, God cannot take His eyes off of you!