**LOVING GOD**

Sunday School Lesson 9

*The Attributes of God*

Romans 8:35-39

7/25/2021

**Introduction:** On the heels of studying the mercy of God, we are now going to move into a study on His loving nature. God is a loving God. In fact, we know that God is love. Certainly, we saw a glimpse of that love when we considered His mercy last week. His love is the fuel that runs the engine of His mercy and His grace. Similar to mercy and jealousy, we must understand that love is not just an emotion that God experiences. It is a part of His overall character. His love is much different than the love that mankind has. As believers, we ought to strive to have the love of God flowing out from us. It is the purest love. It is the perfect love. It is the richest love. His love is the standard. It is better than the love that a parent has for his child. It is better than the love that a husband and wife have for each other. It is better than the love for any item that someone in this world might have a love for. As we review the love of God this morning, we must also understand that it will be impossible to fully articulate the depth of the love of God. We will do our best, though, to shine a light on just how great the love of God is. Through this study, the hope is that we will be encouraged by the love of God and that we will examine ourselves to see if the way that we interact with others truly shows out the love of God in our own lives.

1. **THE LOVE OF GOD IS INITIAL AND UNIVERSAL IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN.**
2. **Notice that we only love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19; Romans 5:8).** The Bible tells us in the book of 1 John that we love Him because He first loved us. No one can dispute who initiated love between God and man. God showed His love for man way before man ever loved God. He showed His love for mankind in creating the world. He showed His love for mankind by creating all of the things in this world for man to enjoy. He showed His love for mankind by allowing man to continue on this earth even after the fall. He showed His love for mankind by not destroying every soul during the flood. Every child that is born in this world comes in with God’s love already apparent to him. It has been shown and offered to every man before we ever even take our first breath. God’s love is an initiating love. While all of us may have some relationships where we initiated the love, it is likely that we also have earthly relationships where the love was first initiated by someone else. None of us are able to claim that we have an initiating love like the Lord.
3. **Notice that the love of God has universally been shown to all mankind (John 3:16, 15:13; 1 John 4:9-10; Deuteronomy 10:18; Matt. 5:46).** As mentioned in the first point, there is no one that can claim that God has not initiated love with them. God has shown His love to all of mankind. This has been shown through His offering of His Son Jesus Christ to the world on the cross of Calvary. While we could probably separate out a section of the lesson just for this thought, we’ll just note here that the love of God is a sacrificial love. Sacrificial love is the greatest show of love. The Bible says that there is no greater love than a man laying down his life for his friends. This tells us not just that God has shown His love to every single person on this earth, but it shows us that God has shown His love in the best way possible to every man. He has not just shown a small aspect of His love to man. Additionally, the Bible tells us that God has shown His love to the stranger. This is the person that has not even given any acknowledgement to the Lord. God has still shown His love even to that person. God’s love has generously been given to all of mankind.
4. **THE LOVE OF GOD IS SPECIFIC IN WHOM HIS LOVE IS DIRECTED TOWARDS.**
5. **Notice that the Lord loves the nation of Israel (Deuteronomy 7:7-13, 10:15, 23:5; 2 Chronicles 9:8; Isaiah 43:4; Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:2; Romans 9:13).** The Israelites should have been more thankful for the fact that the Lord chose to love them as a nation. They were not the most powerful nation in the world when the Lord chose to love them. In fact, they weren’t even a nation yet. The Lord has a special love for the nation of Israel that started because of the faithfulness of Abraham in obeying and following the Lord. He loved Jacob. He still loves His chosen nation.
6. **Notice that the Lord loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7; John 11:5).** Of all of the things or people in the Bible for the Lord to show His love to, it is interesting that the Lord specially notes that He loves a cheerful giver. This ought to get our attention. There is a special affection shown for those who give of themselves cheerfully to the Lord. I believe the reason for this is that it shows a greater love for God than a love for the things of this world. The person who will not give of himself cheerfully to the Lord reveals that His love for the Lord is not as strong as it ought to be. This is not just speaking from a financial position. One who will not cheerfully give up his life shows that he loves life more than God.
7. **Notice that the Lord loves those who love Him and His Son (Proverbs 8:17; John 14:21-23, 16:27).** We have already observed that the Lord shows His love to all, but we also see that the Bible speaks of His special love for those who love Him and His Son. This should be an obvious thought to us, as this is an easy love for the Lord to show. The Lord Jesus spoke of how easy it was to love those who love you. As people, we are even capable of such love. Yet, that does not undermine the fact that God loves those who love Him and His Son. The point of this is to provoke us in our own love toward Him. If we do not love His Son as we ought, how can we expect to experience the full measure of God’s love in our own lives? We reciprocate love back to Him because of the love He has shown us, and then He reciprocates even more love back to us.
8. **Notice that the Lord loves the righteous which is why He loves His own Son so much (Psalm 11:7, 45:7, 146:8; Proverbs 15:9; John 3:35, 10:17; Hebrews 1:9).** The Lord loves righteousness. He loves judgment. The Lord is a righteous God. Thus, it should not surprise us that He loves those who are righteous. Of course, the only one that can truly claim righteousness is His Son. The Father has great love for His Son because His Son loves righteousness. Additionally, as believers, we have righteousness imputed upon us because of Christ. We ought to love righteousness as our Saviour loves righteousness. If we do, then we can expect for a special love from the Lord. As a reminder, faith was counted unto Abraham for righteousness, so the answer for righteousness for us is also faith.
9. **THE LOVE OF GOD IS DECLARATIVE AND DEMONSTRATIVE TO THOSE HE LOVES.**
10. **Notice that the Lord is plain in telling His followers of His love (John 15:9; Romans 5:5, 8:35; Ephesians 2:4; Revelation 3:9).** The love of God is not a hidden or secret love. His love is declarative. He told His disciples that He loved them. They did not have to wonder about His love. Sometimes, we are not as straightforward in expressing our love for others, but that’s not an issue for the Lord. He declares His love to us over and over again in His Word. He also declares His love to us through the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. The person of the Spirit regularly communicates God’s love to us. We also see in the Old Testament that God communicated His love with the people of Israel. He told the prophet Jeremiah that He loved Israel. The Lord has always made His affection plain and clear for us to see.
11. **Notice that the Lord is very expressive in how He shows His love for us (John 11:36; 2 Corinthians 5:14; 1 John 3:1; Hosea 11:4).** Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God! The Lord shows His love to us in not just a plain manner. He speaks it to us expressively. When the Israelites turned from the Lord, He used the prophet Hosea and his own relationship as an expressive way to show His love for the Israelites. Additionally, the love of the Lord was seen with great expression in the miracle that happened with Lazarus. The Bible tells us that the love of Christ constraineth us. God’s love is so strong in its expression to the believer that it literally constrains us! If the Lord is willing to be expressive with us in our love toward Him, shouldn’t we be willing to show that expressive love back to Him?
12. **THE LOVE OF GOD IS COMPLETE AND CORRECTIVE IN ITS CHARACTER.**
13. **Notice that the Lord loved His followers unto the end and has an everlasting love for Israel (Jeremiah 31:3; John 13:1).** He loved them unto the end. That’s what the Bible says about the Lord and His relationship with His disciples. Despite all of their failures, He loved them unto the end. Despite their betrayals and denials, He loved them unto the end. The Lord’s love is persistent. His love does not quit. His love does not give up on us. He loves the people of Israel with an everlasting love. He loves them even though they have failed Him so many times! Many people struggle to love those who they do not think that they can trust. Yet, the Lord loves us even though He knows that He cannot trust us. We are not reliable, and we are not faithful when compared to Him. Yet, His love continues. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God!
14. **Notice that the Lord loves His children enough to rebuke and correct them (Proverbs 3:12; Revelation 3:19).** The Lord’s love is perfect and just. He loves us enough to rebuke and correct us when we need it. As the recipient of correction, it can be difficult at times to see the love in it. Yet, we should fully understand that God’s rebuke proves His loves to us. When we receive correction, we ought to praise the Lord that He loved us enough to try to correct our behavior. He could have allowed us to just continue down the wrong path. We know that any path away from the Lord is a path of destruction. That means that His rebuke saves us from destruction. It saves us from a fall. Let’s praise God that He loves us so much to intervene when we need it. Let’s praise God for His amazing love that is available for all, continued in some, displayed to us, and corrective in nature.