

The Nature of God ~ Love

Intro: The ultimate example of God's Love is His devotion to His chosen. God's Love is demonstrated in the keeping of His covenant no matter the cost to Himself!

Deuteronomy 4:37

"Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power,

Deuteronomy 7:

7 "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,
8 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.

Observation:

- Carefully read and reread the text. Examine its context.
- Note all persons, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions & articles.
- Ask: Who? What? When? Where? How? & Why? Find answers in the text, *only!*
- Note and mark key words and ideas, as well as their relationships with one another.

Note and mark

- Why God chose the people of Israel. (Deut 4:37)
- Why God loved Israel. (Deut 7:7-8)
- How God demonstrated His love. (Deut 7:8)

Interpretation:

Deuteronomy 4:37 What does this verse say about God's love?

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 What is Moses' point in verse 7? _____

What does this say about God's Love? _____

How is the keeping of an oath an expression of love? _____

Describe the Love of God as expressed in these verses: _____

Note:

The concept of God's love, faithfulness and mercy is usually expressed by the word 'lovingkindness' which is translated from the Hebrew word 'hesed'. In the Old Testament, the idea of God's lovingkindness is linked to His covenant with His chosen people. God bestows His lovingkindness upon them because He has made an oath/covenant to do so. The withholding of His lovingkindness results from their failure to keep their commitment to the covenant.

In a similar way, God's Love reaches it's highest expression through His New Covenant with those who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ, His Son. God Loves us by faithfully keeping His oath to us even when we falter.

The Nature of God ~ Love (cont)

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying,
"I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore
I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

Joel 2:13

And rend your heart and not your garments.
" Now return to the LORD your God,
For He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger,
abounding in lovingkindness
And relenting of evil.

Micah 7:18

Who is a God like You,
who pardons iniquity
And passes over the rebellious act
of the remnant of His possession?
He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights in unchanging love.

Intro: Many view the God in the Old Testament as angry and vengeful. But these OT passages reveal another aspect of His Nature ... His Lovingkindness.

Observation:

- Carefully read and reread the text. Examine its context.
- Note all persons, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions & articles.
- Ask: Who? What? When? Where? How? & Why? Find answers in the text, *only!*
- Note and mark key words and ideas, as well as their relationships with one another.

Note and mark

- God's attitude toward Israel. (Jeremiah 31:3)
- How God is described. (Joel 2:13)
- What God does. (Micah 7:18)

Interpretation:

Jeremiah 31:3 What does 'everlasting love' imply? _____

Why do you think God draws us with His 'lovingkindness' and not fear? _____

Joel 2:13 Read the entire book of Joel (only three chapters!). How does this verse contrast with what is happening in the book? _____

What is significant about who will experience God's lovingkindness? _____

Micah 7:18 Read the subsequent context of this passage. How will God demonstrate His love toward His people? _____

Note:

God's Love, as is His Being, is 'everlasting'. Despite Israel's many escapades of spiritual 'adultery' with other gods and idols, there has been the one constant of God's lovingkindness. No matter how many times God's chosen turned away from Him, His love has always been there when they repented and returned.

That is the reason for Micah's exclamation, 'Who is a God like You...?' God's love is saturated with mercy, and receives any who truly repents from the heart.

As noted in the intro above, many see an incongruity between the God of the Old Testament and His Son in the New Testament. But when the point of comparison is God's Love, the two images merge into one and the same!

The Nature of God ~ Love (cont)

Intro: There are three definitive statements made about God. He is Spirit, Light and Love. And there is no greater expression of His Love than the sacrifice of His Only Son for a sinful and rebellious race.

1 John 4

- 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Observation:

- Carefully read and reread the text. Examine its context.
- Note all persons, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions & articles.
- Ask: Who? What? When? Where? How? & Why? Find answers in the text, *only!*
- Note and mark key words and ideas, as well as their relationships with one another.

Note and mark

- What God is. (1 John 4:8)
- Whom God loved. (John 3:16)
- When God loved. (Romans 5:8)
- How God loved (1 John 4:8; John 3:16 & Romans 5:8)

Interpretation:

1 John 4:8-9 What does 'God is Love' mean? _____

Why is loving others an indication one knows God? _____

John 3:16 Jesus spoke these words to Nicodemus, an interested Pharisee steeped in Jewish laws and traditions. What significance does this bring to this verse?

Romans 5:8 What does the timing of God's Love reveal about it? _____

Why is every reference to God's love linked to the giving of His Son? _____

Note:

The word 'Love' has been painted with many shades of meaning through the generations, some very lofty and others very carnal. The Greeks avoided this problem by developing at least four words that are all translated into the English word 'love'.

The word the NT writers used to express God's love is 'agape'. Though it is not uniquely used of God (see 1 John 2:15), it has come to exemplify God's attitude toward mankind in general, and toward those who choose to receive it by faith, specifically.

Agape is not a wishy-washy, feel good, self-serving love, but a solid commitment to sacrifice all for the good of the object of that love. It is a love that values, not debases.

If Love is measured by what one is willing to give up for another, then the ultimate must always be God's Love for us!

Application Principles: In light of what you have learned, what **Truths** or **Principles** are taught in these texts about *God's Love*?

- ❖ _____

- ❖ _____

- ❖ _____

- ❖ _____

- ❖ _____

Write out a verse from above that you would like to memorize and/or meditate upon:

Application Practicals: In light of these Truths & Principles, what will you **do** to apply them to your life **today**?

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

From what you learned, how is God different from His creation and/or creatures?

Final Note:

Though we stand in awe at a distance at the beauty of God's Holiness, it is His Love that draws us near. God chose to love us, not because of any perfection in our being, for we had none, but because He is Love. He could not help it! Though His Perfect Holiness separated Him from us, His Love compelled Him to become one of us to die on our behalf. Truly, He is God, for there is none other who is like Him!

God is Love

Who willingly gave His Only Begotten Son for me!