

KNOWING GOD (18)
BEHOLD YOUR GOD!
THE LOVE OF GOD
 I John 4:8, 16

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** In the first lesson we stated our concept of God is the key to **knowing God**.
 - A. Our concept of God effects how we view **everything** in life!
 - B. Thus, there is nothing more important than our concept of God.
 - (1) It actually goes much, much further than mere **concept**.
 - (2) Our knowledge of God, not merely knowledge about God; but deep, intimate knowledge of every facet of His personality, His character, and His attributes is our most important pursuit. Why?
 - (3) Because, this knowledge or lack thereof; molds our entire perception of:
 - ✓ The world we live in, how we relate to it (cf. Phil. 3:7-14),
 - ✓ Our relationships (nature and quality) with our families, our brethren, our government, our friends, our co-workers, and with people in general (cf. Lk. 14:26; Matt. 19:9-10; Eph. 5:25, 28; Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 6:1-4; 6:5-9; I Pet. 1:22),
 - ✓ Our insight into God's Word and whether we truly understand its message and application in our life (cf. Ps. 119:14-20),
 - ✓ Very importantly, our goals and aim in life (The very purpose of our existence! Phil. 1:21; "Nobody will make it to heaven 'by the skin of your teeth'")!
2. ****** John repeats one of the most marvelous utterances in the Bible: **"God is love."** (I Jn. 4:8, 16)
3. Quite possibly John's simple and twice repeated statement, "God is love" is the most misunderstood statement and concept in the entire volume of Scripture.
 - A. For example, in lesson #1 we described the most common misconception people hold concerning the nature of God: the "Doting Grandfather" (briefly explain)
 - B. ****** Until we come to a full and complete understanding John's simple statement, "God is love," we **cannot** truly:
 - (1) Lay claim to **Knowing God**, or,
 - (2) Experience what Paul describes in **Phil. 4:7**: *"and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*
4. This series of lessons on **Knowing God** is a daunting task!
 - A. I can safely say that after writing every lesson I always feel I have only "touched the hem of the garment" insofar as adequately covering the topic.
 - B. That is especially true in this lesson!
 - C. ****** The love of God is so wonderful, so awesome, so utterly fantastic that I know I'm bound to fail to fully cover the subject.
****Eph. 3:17-19**: *"that you, being rooted and grounded in love, I8 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — I9 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*
5. **3** In this lesson we want to briefly consider what is meant by John's statement: "God is love."

II. DISCUSSION:

The first thing we need to understand about “God is love”; is the...

I. **4** Basics of God's love:

A. These are aspects of God's most people take for granted (even Christians!).

(1) **** Creator:** He created us...

Gen. 1:26-27: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Acts 17:25: “...He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”

Acts 17:28: “for in Him we live and move and have our being...”

(a) Most people either blatantly ignore this aspect of God's love, or rebelliously deny it!

(b) ****** In this unimaginable vast and complex Universe, God has made us the focal point and pinnacle of His creation!

Psa. 8:3-6: “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
4 What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.
6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,”

(2) **** Provider:** He provides for **ALL** our physical needs:

(a) The LORD designed the Earth to meet man's every physical need: Gen. 2:8-9, 15

(b) Have you ever thought of how well God takes care of our physical needs?

(c) Anthropic principle: Also called the “fine-tuning of the Universe” or “Goldilock's Principle”; the Universe is especially designed to support human life:

Fine Tuning of the Physical Constants of the Universe

Parameter	Max. Deviation
Ratio of electrons to protons	1×10^{37}
Ratio of electromagnetic force to gravity	1×10^{40}
Expansion rate of the Universe	1×10^{55}
Mass density of the Universe	1×10^{59}
Cosmological constant	1×10^{120}

These numbers represent the maximum deviation from the accepted values, that would either prevent the Universe from existing now, not having matter, or be unsuitable for any form of life.

☛ Recent studies have confirmed the fine tuning of the Universe is truly amazing. The degree of fine-tuning is difficult to imagine. Dr. Hugh Ross gives an example of the least fine-tuned of the above four examples in his book, The Creator and the Cosmos, which is reproduced here:

- ☛ ******One part in 10^{37} is such an incredibly sensitive balance that it is hard to visualize. The following analogy might help: Cover the entire North American continent in dimes all the way up to the moon, a height of about 239,000 miles (In comparison, the money to pay for the U.S. federal government debt would cover one square mile less than two feet deep with dimes.). Next, pile dimes from here to the moon on a billion other continents the same size as North America. Paint one dime red and mix it into the billions of piles of dimes. Blindfold a friend and ask him to pick out one dime. The odds that he will pick the red dime are one in 10^{37} .
- (d) ****** Despite man's fall all these wonderful physical provisions provided by God's love still holds true!

Acts 14:17: "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."; cf. Matt. 6:25-33

- (3) **5** God's love provides all our physical needs despite all the problems we've caused Him!

- (a) God made us upright: **Eccl. 7:29:** "Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."
- (b) **BUT** We have consciously rebelled against Him!

Rom. 3:10-12: "As it is written:

'There is none righteous, no, not one;
 I I There is none who understands;
 There is none who seeks after God.
 I 2 They have all turned aside;
 They have together become unprofitable;
 There is none who does good, no, not one.'"; Rom. 3:23

- (c) Our sins separated us from God: Isa. 59:2; Rom. 6:23
- (d) Yet, He still reached out to save us: Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Col. 1:21-22
- (e) He doesn't want any to perish: 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9
- (f) His love toward us is persistent and strong.

B. ****** Do you regularly thank God for these facets of His love most take for granted? Rom. 1:20

As we contemplate "God is love"; let us examine the...

2. **6** Character and nature of God's love:

A. God's love is an abundant resource **given** to every Christian!

- (1) **** Available:** God's love is universal in the sense that He makes it available to all men.

****Jn. 3:16:** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

- (a) God does not predicate His love toward us because of our "goodness":

****Rom. 5:8:** "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

- (b) There is no person too vile and sinful that God cannot forgive! 1 Tim. 1:15; **Acts 22:4:** "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women," (think ISIS!)

****Psa. 103:11-12:** “For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

- (c) However, even though God’s love is universal in this sense, to receive God’s love one must obey Him! Jn. 3:16; Eph. 2:8-10; Jas. 2:24-26

****Jn. 3:36:** “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (ASV); Heb. 5:8-9; Jn. 14:15; 15:14

- (d) ****** Very important: To be the beneficiary of God’s love we **MUST** obey! And, obey not just what we find easy, convenient, or enjoyable!

2 Cor. 10:5: “...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”

- (2) **7 Abundant:** God’s love is given to the Christian in unrestricted **abundance**!

****Rom. 5:5b:** “...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

- (a) The same word (“poured out” or “shed abroad”) is used to describe the “outpouring” of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18; 33; 10:45; Titus 3:6).
- (b) It suggests an “inundation”; hence the rendering of Rom. 5:5 in the NEB: **Rom. 5:5b:** “...God’s love has **flooded** our inmost heart...”
- (c) God does not pour out His love to us in miniscule doses; but rather His love pours out to us as a rain-swollen river bursts through a floodgate...a massive torrent of infinite love! Think Niagara Falls!

****1 Tim. 1:14:** “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”; **1 Pet. 1:3:** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

- (3) **8 Abiding:** God’s love is **abiding**...it is a flood whose waters never recede!

- (a) In Rom. 5:5 Paul uses the verb “poured out” to describe what God does with His love; He inundates our hearts with His love.
- (b) Paul uses the verb “poured out” in the perfect tense:
- “The thought is that the knowledge of the love of God, having flooded our hearts, fills them now, just as a valley once flooded remains full of water. Paul assumes that all his readers, like himself, will be living in the enjoyment of a strong and abiding sense of God’s love for them.” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 118)

****Rom. 8:37-39:** “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- (4) **9 Absolute:** The **full measure** of God’s love is given to **each and every** Christian!

Rom. 5:5b: “...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

- (a) The Holy Spirit is given/dwells in every person who obeys the gospel (Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:11; Eph. 3:17).
- (b) God does not “pour out” more love to apostles, preachers or elders than He does to the “average Christian”! Each of us gets His love in its totality!

- (c) This is not a sermon on the nature and work of the Holy Spirit; however, let us notice a couple of brief, but important, observations on this point:
- ☛ The role of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of redemption involves the revelation of truth (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13); the revelation of God's mind (2 Cor. 2:1-13),
 - ☛ It is only through this revelation, the truth; that the Holy Spirit "sanctifies" (sets apart) the Christian (2 Thess. 2:13-14). Christians are different (set apart) from the world by the fact that we are "led by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:14); we "walk in truth" (3 Jn. 3), we follow God's word (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).
 - ☛ It is ONLY through faith (Rom. 10:17); the faith revealed by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:3-16) that the torrents of God's love flood every Christian's heart!

Rom. 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. I 7 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" ; Jude 3

****Eph. 3:14-20:** "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I 5 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, I 6 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, I 7 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, I 8 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; I 9 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,"

- (d) ****** Do you desire to experience the love of God "which passes knowledge"?
- (e) It is available to you in limitless abundance and will abide with you at all times.
- (f) **IF** you just listen to the Spirit! **IF** you listen to Spirit's revelation of God's mind! By listening (following) to the Word of God!
- **Jn. 14:23:** "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'" (KJV)

3. **10** What is God?

****1 Jn. 4:8b:** "...God is love."

Jn. 4:24a: "God is Spirit..."

1 Jn. 1:5b: "...God is light..."

A. ****** "God is love" is not the complete truth about God as far as His Word is concerned.

- (1) I do not mean that John is misleading us. Truth never misleads! We are misled when we define "divine" concepts in "human" terms.
- (2) John's affirmation that "God is love" does not mean that God is not:
 - ☛ The God who spoke the world into existence! Jn. 1:1-3; Heb. 1:1:3
 - ☛ The God who judged the world by the flood! Gen. 6-9
 - ☛ The God who disallowed Moses entry into the promised land for his irreverence! Num. 20:12
 - ☛ The God who struck Uzzah for touching the ark! 2 Sam. 6:6-8

- ☛ The God who chastened Israel w/conquest, captivity, & exile for their sins! Deut. 28; Lev. 26
- ☛ The God who cast off unbelieving Israel and allowed the Romans to thoroughly crush them! (i.e., destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., see Matt. 23 & 24)
- ☛ The God who will one day judge the world and “...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”! (2 Thess. 1:8)

******“It is perverse to quote John’s statement, as some do, as if it called into question the biblical witness to the severity of God’s justice. It is not possible to argue that a God who is love cannot also be a God who condemns and punishes the disobedient; for it is precisely of the God who does these very things that John is speaking.” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 120)

- (3) To understand what the Bible means when it says, “*God is love*” we must interpret John’s affirmation in connection with what it means for God to be “*spirit*” and “*light*.”

B. ****** “*God is spirit*”. Therefore, God is...

- (1) **** Non-material** (He is not made of “stuff,” matter),
- (2) **Non-corporeal** (He does not have a physical body),
- (3) **Non-localized** (His presence is not limited to one physical location at a time).
 - (a) God is **omnipresent**; He is free from all limitations of time and space (????!!).
 - (b) God has no parts; His personality, powers, and attributes are perfectly integrated in such a way that nothing about Him or in Him alters or is less than perfection.

Jas. 1:17: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (cf. Heb. 6:17-18)

- (c) God is not subject to fluctuating human passions and emotions; He remains eternally the same; unchanging, deliberate, making voluntary judgments devoid of the frailties and vicissitudes of human wisdom and emotion. Therefore...

******“So the love of God who is spirit is no fitful, fluctuating thing, as human love is, nor is it a mere impotent longing for things that may never be; it is, rather, a spontaneous determination of God’s whole being in an attitude of benevolence and benefaction, an attitude freely chosen and firmly fixed. There are no inconstancies or vicissitudes in the love of the almighty who is spirit.” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 121)

C. **I** “*God is light*”. Light refers to holiness, purity, & righteousness as defined by God’s law.

- (1) Light is in direct contrast and opposition with darkness.
- (2) The same law, God’s law, defines darkness as moral perversity and unrighteousness (cf. 1 Jn. 2:7-11; 3:10).

1 Jn. 1:5b: “...God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”

- (3) Fellowship w/God can only be found by those who “*walk in the light*”; those who seek to be like God in their manner of life (holy and righteous; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 2:20).
- (4) Those in fellowship with God not only “*walk in the light*” they reject, hate, and refuse to follow any course of life that is “*antithetical*” to God and His character (i.e., darkness; We must hate sin as God hates sin!)(1 Jn. 1:6-7).

I2“So the God who is love is first and foremost light, and sentimental ideas of his love as an indulgent, benevolent softness, divorced from moral standards and concerns, must therefore be ruled out from the start. God’s love is holy love. The God whom Jesus made

known to us is not a God who is indifferent to moral distinctions, but a God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, a God whose ideal for his children is that they should “be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). He will not take into his company any person, however orthodox in mind, who will not follow after holiness of life.

- (5) **** Note:** It is not enough to be right insofar as the (1) acts of worship, (2) organization of the church, (3) work of the church or other “doctrinal issues”; these things are important, but not all that’s involved in being a “faithful Christian”!

13 And those whom he does accept he exposes to drastic discipline, in order that they may attain what they seek. ‘The Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son...God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness...It [discipline] produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it’ (Heb. 12:6-11). God’s love is stern, for it expresses holiness in the lover and seeks holiness for the beloved. Scripture does not allow us to suppose that because God is love we may look to him to confer happiness on people who will not seek holiness, or to shield his loved ones from trouble when he knows that they need trouble to further their sanctification.” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 122)

- (6) **14** God is not our “doting grandfather”! He is our “heavenly Father”! There is a world of difference!!

D. ****** “God is love” is not the complete truth about God as far as His Word is concerned; **BUT**, the more mature we become as Christians the more we can come to see that “God is love” is the complete truth about God as far as the maturing Christian is concerned!

- (1) “OK, Craig has gone off his nut!” “How can “God is love” not be the complete truth about God as revealed in His Word; but, at the same time be the complete truth for the maturing Christian?”
- (2) ****** The more we mature as Christians the more we can understand that every act God has performed, or will perform; whether positive (e.g., blessings and rewards for the righteous) or negative (e.g., chastening for righteous or punishment of wicked), is for our **ULTIMATE GOOD!**

****Rom. 8:28:** “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

- (3) Ruminant on that. If that is not love, then I don’t know what love is!!

- ☛ Why did my mother die from cancer? (Rom. 8:28; Eccl. 7:2-3)
- ☛ Why did I end up preaching in an out of the way place like Sanilac County, Michigan for twenty years? (Rom. 8:28)
- ☛ Why do I suffer ridicule for being a follower of Christ? (Rom. 8:28)
- ☛ Why do I always seem to have more outgo than income? (Rom. 8:28)
- ☛ Why does my spouse/children not obey the gospel? (Rom. 8:28)
- ☛ Why? Why? Why? (Rom. 8:28)

- (4) ****** I am not saying:

- ☛ God robs us of “free will”!
- ☛ That “time and chance” don’t happen to all men! Eccl. 9:11
- ☛ We are merely glorified marionette puppets totally under God’s control!

- (5) I’m saying that when we finally “get it”→Romans 8:28? Even death! Psa. 116:15

4. **15** Defining God's love:

******“God’s love is an exercise of his goodness toward individual sinners whereby, having identified himself with their welfare, he has given his Son to be their Savior, and now brings them to know and enjoy him in a covenant relation.” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 123)

Let’s unpack that statement...A. **** God’s love is an expression of his goodness:**

Psa. 145:9: “The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.”

Psa. 145:15-16: “The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season. 16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

Lk. 6:35: “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.”

Acts 14:17: “Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

“...perfection in God...prompts him to deal bountifully and kindly with all His creatures.” (Berkhof)

Matt. 5:45: “that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

B. **** God’s love is an expression of his goodness toward sinners:** this is the source of His grace and mercy (future topics in this series):

16“It is an outgoing of God in kindness which not merely is undeserved, but is actually contrary to desert; for the objects of God’s love are rational creatures who have broken God’s law, whose nature is corrupt in God’s sight, and who merit only condemnation and final banishment from his presence.

It is staggering that God should love sinners; yet it is true. God loves creatures who have become unlovely and (one would have thought) unlovable. There was nothing whatever in the objects of his love to call it forth; nothing in us could attract or prompt it. Love among persons is awakened by something in the beloved, but the love of God is free, spontaneous, unevoked, uncaused. God loves people because he has chosen to love them...and no reason for his love can be given except his own sovereign good pleasure.” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 124)

****Rom. 5:5-8:** “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (cf. Eph. 1:7-11; all this done according to the “good pleasure of His will”)

C. **17** *God’s love toward sinners involves his identifying Himself with our welfare.*

(1) Such an identification is the ultimate test of genuine love. Does love correct/chasten a child who goes near the hot stove or the basement steps? Yes!

(2) Those who truly love, are only happy when those whom they love are truly happy.

18“...God’s end in all things is His own glory—that he should be manifested, known, admired, adored. This statement is true, but it is incomplete. It needs to be balanced by the recognition that through setting His love on human beings God has voluntarily bound up His final happiness with theirs. It is not for nothing that the Bible habitually speaks of God as the loving Father and Husband of his people. It follows from the very nature of these relationships that God’s happiness will not be complete till all His beloved ones are

finally out of trouble...He has in effect resolved that henceforth for all eternity His happiness shall be conditional upon ours.

Thus God saves, not only for his glory, but also for His gladness. This goes far to explain why it is that there is joy (God's own joy) in the presence of the angels when a sinner repents (Lk. 15:10), and why there will be "exceeding joy" when God sets us faultless at the last day in his own holy presence (Jude 24 KJV). The thought passes understanding and almost beggars belief, but there is no doubt that, according to Scripture, such is the love of God." (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 125) cf. Lk. 15:20

D. 19 *God's love shows its ultimate expression in Christ.*

- (1) Someone has said, "The measure of love is how much it gives."

****1 Jn. 4:9-10:** *"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

****Eph. 2:4-5:** *"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"*

Eph. 3:18-19: *"may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*

- (2) The cross is the "crowning proof" of the reality and boundlessness of God's love!!!

****Rom. 8:32, 37:** *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."*

E. 20 *God's love to sinners reaches its objective as it brings us to know Him and enjoy Him in a covenant relationship.*

- (1) A covenant relationship is one in which two parties are voluntarily, but permanently, bound to one another in mutual service and commitment (e.g., marriage).

- (2) A covenant is entered into on the basis of vows (i.e., promises, pledges, affirmations):

Gen. 17:1-7: *"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you."*

Gal. 3:15-29 21 & 22

23 "This is true love to any one, to do the best for him we can. This is what God does for those he loves—the best he can; and the measure of the best that God can do is omnipotent! Thus faith in Christ introduces us into a relation big with incalculable blessing, both now and for eternity." (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 126-127)

III. CONCLUSION: 21

1. "God is love"...
2. Do I really understand that? Do I really believe that? Does that change my life? Does that have an impact on me every day?
 - ☛ Does it make me hate sin...the antithesis of love?
 - ☛ Does it make me appreciate that all the good in my life comes from God? Physically & spiritually?

- ☛ Or, do I grumble and complain over the circumstances of my life?
- ☛ Am I distrustful, fearful, or depressed?
- ☛ Am I ever lukewarm and halfhearted in my service to God?
- ☛ Am I more interested in myself (job, family, riches, pleasures, etc.) or in God? (faithful attendance, teaching and encouraging others, denying self, serving others before self, etc.)

Rom. 5:8: *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Rom. 8:32: *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*

2 Cor. 13:5: *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?; unless indeed you are disqualified.”*

3. ** When I truly know God by coming to a fuller appreciation of the immensity of His love for ME, then, and only then, can I: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* (Phil. 4:6-7)

4. Invitation

Some of the material in this sermon is
from *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer