

~Lesson Five~

## **Jesus Christ Shows Us the Love of God**

I think we try to understand God in human terms, but we fall short of who God really is when we do this. Romans 1 tells us God can be seen in His creation. Yet there again, God is so much more than His creation. God is God, so we can't put Him into a box that our human reasoning invents. Isaiah 40 makes it clear we can't compare God to us or to any of His creation. Isaiah goes on to say, God's power, His understanding, His knowledge, His justice and so on are far beyond ours. How can any of us comprehend God?

I know we struggle with understanding God's love, because His love is so different from ours. Our love is permeated with conditions and selfishness, and God's isn't. You might be thinking, "Can anyone truly understand God and His love?" Praise the Lord it is possible, but only through Jesus Christ!

John 1:18 tells us, it is Jesus Christ who has explained God to us!

*No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (NASB)*

In Exodus and in other scriptures, we are told that no one has seen God the Father on this earth. Yet, John the Apostle in his gospel (the book of John), very plainly teaches that Jesus has revealed God to us, because He is God in bodily form or flesh. Jesus Himself said clearly in John 14:9, "*he who has seen Me has seen the Father.*" We can know God (even physically touch Him) through Jesus Christ. This is a wow principle, isn't it? If Jesus reveals God to us, what should we be doing? Of course we should be learning about Jesus, and this week we will do just that. We will look at how Jesus has revealed God's love and forgiveness. In days 2 - 5 we will discuss, how God's love is shown to us by what Jesus gave up by becoming Man and living among us and dying for us.

### **Day One We are Completely and Fully Forgiven and Loved in Jesus Christ**

1. If you have believed that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, your sins are now forgiven! **Read Psalms 103:1-14, Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12, Matthew 1:21, Acts 10:43, Colossians 1:13-15 and Revelation 1:5** and then explain in your own words why and how God forgave your sins.

2. Do you believe all your sins are completely forgiven through Jesus Christ? (Be honest)\_\_\_\_\_ There have been a few sins in my life that I struggle with believing God would forgive because they seem so awful to me. I know this is because of a wrong mindset on my part and it has nothing to do with God! This wrong mindset has led me to think some sins are unforgivable when I do them (The weird thing is, others can do them and I don't think they are so bad. Can you relate?). So what happens is I start rationalizing about the sin in my mind, instead of just believing what God's Word says, that it is forgiven. Are you relating yet? What we all need to do (myself included) to stop this mental gymnastics is: Agree with God about the specific sin and trust God that it is forgiven. Remember all sin is the same to God and that He died for all our sins, not a select few. **Read 1 John 1:9.** Then we need to review what God has done for us through Jesus. This helps to transform our wrong mindset. **Read Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Hebrews 4:12-16.** What has God given us to transform our minds to His mindset?

Sometimes I *feel* I am too awful (too whatever) to be loved and forgiven by God. How about you? As women we need to remember we have many feelings, and some are very deceiving! Our emotions can take us on roller coaster rides that would out do Disney's, "Run Away Mine Train". Are you relating? To battle your wrong feelings, you need to trust in what God says, even though your feelings are telling you otherwise. You need to also keep in mind that God doesn't lie, like we do! So when He says, "your sins are forgiven and you are loved" you can trust in His statement! When you allow God's Word to rule your mind then when your emotions say, "God doesn't love me," or "God won't forgive me," then your mind can say, "Oh yes, look at what God's Word says!" (Just to make you aware - our thinking changes first but our feelings may take a while to catch up with our new mindset.)

3. Do you believe God loves you? (Be honest) \_\_\_\_\_ I know at times it is hard for me to believe that God loves me. This is because I can still feel unlovable or think I am not deserving of His love. Can you relate? PS Whether you believe God loves you or not, He still does!

To encourage you, God does understand all our doubts and struggles, and still loves us very much in spite of them. However you need to remember (me too), if you don't believe God when He says something (like He loves you), you are calling Him a liar. Ouch! I know that's a heavy statement, but it is a true one. In Numbers 23, through Moses, God makes it very clear that He doesn't lie and that what He says to us is the truth.

*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? Numbers 23:19 (NASB)*

4. Days 2 through 5 highlight the most sacrificial things God did for us through Jesus Christ. Take some time and prayerfully ask God to clearly speak to your mind and heart as you finish this lesson. Remember God loves to talk to you!

## **Days Two and Three    Jesus, Who is God, Became Man too!**

Jesus Christ, who is the God of the universe became man so He could die for you and me. This is sacrificial love, or what the New Testament Greek would call *agape* love! (If you remember from lesson 1, *agape* means unselfish, unconditional and sacrificial love.) The passage of scripture that to me best sums up the sacrificial love of God is Philippians 2:6-8.

*...who, although He [Jesus] existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (NASB)*

If you truly come to grasp the heart meaning of this passage it will help you to greatly understand how much God loves you! So we are going to take the time to study this passage for the rest of the week.

**I am going to break up Philippians 2:6-8 into three phrases and talk about them so you will more easily gain insight from them:**

Phrase 1- "*who, although He existed in the form of God*"

The word “*form*”, in the Greek language means nature and character, not shape, as we would think. This phrase means Jesus had the very nature and very character of God. Let’s reason this out a bit. Only you have your nature and your character so only you are you. Jesus has God’s nature and character, so He is God.

1. **Read John 14:7-11.** What do these verses say about Jesus?

Jesus Christ is God and has all of the characteristics that God has. We are going to cover several characteristics here so you can come to understand more fully what it meant for Jesus to be born (become a Man), live on this earth, and die for us.

***Jesus is Sovereign just like God which means He is the supreme ruler of the universe***

2. **Read about Jesus being Sovereign from Isaiah 43:10-13, Titus 3:4-7, John 1:29, Revelation 5:6-14 and Revelation 19:7-16.** Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
3. What does Jesus being the Sovereign God of the universe mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer. (Example: When I feel like a wreck, shouldn’t I call to the God who is King of Kings and who wants me to be His bride? (Revelation 19: 7 & 16))

***Jesus is eternal just like God, which means He is without beginning or end.***

4. **Read about Jesus being eternal in Isaiah 9:6-7, Hebrews 13:8 and Revelation 22:1-5.** Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.

5. What does Jesus being the eternal God mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer. (Example: When life seems impossible, shouldn't I trust in the God who sees my life from an eternal perspective and works everything for my good from His eternal point of view? (Isaiah 9:6))

*Jesus is Self-existent just like God; "YHWH" God's proper name, describes His self-existence.*

6. **Read the verses mentioned in this paragraph about Jesus being self-existent.** "YHWH" is the proper name which God gave for Himself to Moses in **Exodus 3:13-15**. In fact, any time in the Bible that you see the word LORD in all capitals it is this proper name "YHWH" for God. "YHWH" in the Hebrew language is translated by the two words "I am." Jesus is called God's proper name throughout the Bible (**Jeremiah 23:5-6**). Several times in John 8 along with various other places in the Gospel of John, Jesus calls Himself, "I am" (**John 8:24, 28, & 58**). Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
7. What does Jesus being self-existent mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer. (Example: When I need someone to be there for me, shouldn't I call to the God who needs no one, but died so I could be with Him? (Romans 6:23))

Phrase 2 – “did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself”

The word *emptied* in the Greek means - to empty oneself, to divest (strip) oneself of rightful dignity by descending to an inferior condition, to abase (humiliate) oneself. This phrase means Jesus willingly stripped Himself of His self-interests, not His deity, when He was on this earth. It also means He let go of His rights as God, and willingly allowed Himself to be humiliated while on this earth.

Daniel 4:34b-35 beautifully highlights what privileges, power and sovereignty God has.

*...I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' (NASB)*

When we compare these verses with the idea of who Jesus is, and that He laid aside His rights as God, and willingly allowed Himself to be humiliated for us, we start understanding the love that God has for us.

I try my best not to get myself in a humiliating situation. However Jesus, because He loves you and me so very much, allowed Himself to be humiliated for us when He was on this earth. I don't know about you, but the thought that Jesus was willing to be humiliated for me touches my heart so much! It makes me want to love Him. How about you?

Phrase 3 – “taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”

Paul uses the same word *form* again in this phrase as he did in “*who, although He existed in the form of God*”. What Paul wanted us to realize and know was that Jesus still was very much God on this earth. Paul wanted us to know that Jesus had the nature and character of Man on this earth, as well. We are told, Jesus was in our *likeness*, but we need to understand *likeness* in the Greek has a meaning of similarity with differences. The difference is pretty obvious - He is God and we aren't and we will never be God.

Some people think Jesus was just kinda like God on this earth. However, from Philippians 2 and many other scriptures it is plain Jesus was and is God. There is no way God could become ungod for a while, because God cannot be any less than who He is (Hebrew 13:8).

Some people think that Jesus was a pseudo man. However, scripture is very clear that He would become Man on this earth so He could die in our place (Hebrews 2:9ff). It is also clear the Christ or Messiah would be "YHWH", which is translated LORD in our translations (Isaiah 9:6-7). Just to remind you, "YHWH" is the proper name which God gave for Himself to Moses in Exodus 3.

What did Jesus do as God, to become Man? This is a question we could speculate about until Jesus comes back, but let me try to answer this very simply here. First of all, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit thus born of a virgin (Luke 1). This allowed Him to be God and a sinless man. He also willingly laid aside His right on this earth to manifest Himself visibly as God, which means that He stripped Himself of His glory and splendor. Isaiah 53 tells us as a man, He had no dignity or beauty that we would be attracted to Him. We could say His human appearance was plain or even ugly from our perspective. (If you are wondering what Jesus looks like in His glorified state as God read Revelation 1:12-18.)

Philippians 2:6-8 is so important for us to understand because it explains to us God's love in word and deed. So bear with me and let's review. Jesus gave up His rights, His glory, and His splendor as God and was humiliated for you so He could represent you on a cross and die for your sins. This was so you could be close to Him. (Remember before you were a Christian you were separated from God.) He also took everything upon Himself so you would have His power and help through His Spirit to live for God. Jesus also lived on this earth so He could experience first hand all that you experience so He could sympathize and care for you. Hebrews 2:17-18 and 4:15-16 highlight what Jesus did for us by becoming Man.

*Therefore, He (Jesus) had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted... For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (NASB)*

8. **Read about Jesus being God and Man in Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25, John 1:18, and Colossians 2:9.** How does what Jesus did for you, show you how valuable and loved you are to Him? Since Jesus was willing to be humiliated on this earth for you, do you feel He truly loves and cares for you? Since He laid aside His rights as God for you on this earth, can you lay aside your rights for Him when He asks you to? Since Jesus laid aside His glory and splendor as God on this earth for you and became an ordinary man, can you have confidence (trust Him) in how He created you - your looks, personality, your abilities...? Jesus' love for you drove Him to be born, live and die for you. Can what He did for you, drive you to follow Him out of love?

## **Days Four and Five What Jesus Did for Us while on this Earth**

Philippians 2:6-8 summarizes all that Jesus gave up and took upon Himself while on this earth. Since this passage is so key let's read it again.

*...who, although He [Jesus] existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (NASB)*

Have you ever really truly thought about what Jesus gave up for you when as God, He became a Man? Have you ever wondered specifically what Jesus took upon Himself to live and die for you and me? Let me give you my thoughts on what it meant for Jesus to step out of eternity and to be born, live and die. I will do this by comparing 12 circumstances from Jesus' life on this earth to Him being God. These concepts will highlight Jesus' characteristics as God, as well as His

laying aside His rights as God and His right to manifest Himself visibly as God. Hopefully my thoughts will get you thinking about what it meant for *you* that the God of the universe lived and died for you.

There are quite a few verses to look up in these 2 days but if you are willing to spend the time, you will see God's love by what He did for you! I think you would agree He is worth our time!

1. Jesus created everything. Jesus is the reason everything exists. He is the eternal God. Yet, He became one of the tiniest pieces of life, an embryo, so He could be born, live and die for us. **Read Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-4 and Luke 2:6-7.** Since the God of the universe did whatever He needed to, to become one of us (Gosh, how did God do this?), do you think this shows He loves you?
2. Jesus formed every detail of a woman's body, because He is the Creator. Yet, Jesus willingly allowed Himself to become a fetus, which is absolutely dependant upon a woman for survival. He placed His survival and security into the arms of a woman, like you and me. (I wonder how it was for Mary to hold the God of the universe in her arms. Did His tiny hand grab her finger? Did His smile touch her heart?) **Read Genesis 2:21-22 and Colossians 1:13-16.** How big of sacrifice do you think it was for Him to do this?
3. Jesus sits upon the throne of heaven, in glory and splendor, as King of kings and Lord of lords. Nonetheless, He allowed Himself to be born into and live in poverty on this earth for us. **Read Isaiah 6:1-4, also John 12:41 and 2 Corinthians 8:9.** Jesus also came to be a servant (not to be served) and to give His life to save us from our sins. **Read Matthew 20:28.** Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 6 saw Jesus in His glorified state and was terrified. What does it mean to you that He let go of His rights and splendor as God to serve you?

4. Jesus is the everlasting God, who is the source of life. Yet, on this earth He allowed His life to be cut short for us. He lived just 33 years and died a very painful and emotionally distressing death. **Read Isaiah 43:10-13, John 10:17-18 and 1 Peter 2:21-25.** The Source of Life willingly suffered for you, so you could be with Him. How much does this show He values you? How much does your life show you value Him?
  
5. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords of the universe. However, on this earth He was a carpenter and unofficial pastor teacher. He was plain to look at, and some even think He might have been ugly. He was despised by many of His own people, and was not particularly esteemed. He was a man acquainted with sickness and pain. He also had no degree, no income, no wife or children, no house to call His own, no means of travel but His feet, no retirement fund, no official building whatsoever to use for His ministry. The only material possessions that He had at His death were His clothes off His back. He had only 12 men who were committed to Him and His ministry. One of these men ended up betraying Him, so that they could put Him to death. Think about this statement: "Would you think His life was a failure by our human standards today?" **Read Isaiah 53:2-6, Matthew 8:20, Mark 14:43-45 and John 19:17-24.** When you are struggling with how you feel, your financial situation, how bad your career or ministry is going, how you look, or unloving relationships, remember He has experienced all of these things for you because He loves you. He is more than willing to empower you to have peace, joy and even victory through these trials and any other. Just ask for His help!

6. Jesus destroyed Satan's forces by just being Who He is, God. Yet, He allowed His people, the Jews, to blaspheme Him (without destroying them), when they said, "He was of the devil Himself." **Read Mark 1:21-28 and Mark 3:22-30.** What does this tell you about Jesus?
  
7. Because Jesus is God He knows our sinful hearts (better than we do) and can change them into God's hearts, if we want. However, many of His people hardened their hearts so much against Him that they called for His crucifixion over another man who was a criminal and deserved to be crucified. **Read Jeremiah 17:9-10, Ezekiel 36:26-28 and Mark 3:1-6 & 15:6-15.** Jesus was crucified for you because He wants you to be His Bride. **Read Ephesians 5:25.** Because of everything Jesus did for you, are willing for Him to transform your heart and mind? If you are, tell Him...
  
8. Jesus is called the Lamb of God because He was willing to sacrifice His life for us. Yet, when He needed His best friends to support Him the most, they thought sleep was more important than He was. One of His best friends denied knowing Him three times when Jesus needed his allegiance the most. **Read John 1:29 also Revelation 5:6 and Mark 14:29-37, 66-72.** When you are struggling with relationships that are discouraging, or even with a loved one betraying you, remember Jesus understands and went through everything on this earth to be your best friend.
  
9. Jesus had all the angels of heaven at His command. Nevertheless, He allowed a large group of religious leaders to arrest Him in a garden. They were led there by one of Jesus friends who betrayed Him with a kiss! **Read Matthew 26:46-56.** Have you ever been unloving to someone, maybe even betrayed someone? Remember, because Jesus loved you ever so much, He died for you, so you can be forgiven from any sin.

10. Jesus is Sovereign over all things. Yet, He allowed His trial to be like a Hollywood circus. He also allowed His own countrymen, who wanted Him dead and out of their way for reasons of only jealousy, to engineer His crucifixion. He allowed this all because of His love for us. **Read Mark 15:9-15.** Are you understanding from this lesson, at least as well as you can, how much Jesus gave up and took for you on this earth? How much are you willing to give up to love Him back, such as a half-hour of your time everyday to read and study His Word?
11. Jesus, since He is God, has a character that is completely absent of sin. Because He is holy, His whole being instinctively abhors sin. Nevertheless, He willingly took our sin upon Himself when He died on the cross, so our sins could be forgiven. **Read Isaiah 6:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.** How do you think God feels when His Spirit is convicting you of a sin and you refuse to listen to Him?
12. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Yet, He allowed Himself to die a criminal's death on a cross for us. As He was dying, He allowed His executioners and others to humiliate Him. They also played games for His only worldly possessions, the clothes off His back. He died alone except for a small group of people, mostly women (who were thought to be just a possession in that society). His tomb was someone else's because it only needed to be borrowed. This was because three days after Jesus' death, He took back His rights as the God of the universe. He also took back His splendor and glory as God when He rose from the dead in victory over our sin and our death. Even though He is the God of the universe, and is called by many wonderful names such as the Lord of lords and the King of kings. His favorite name for Himself is the Lamb of God. (Read Revelation if you doubt this.) This is because His sacrifice brought the people that He loves so very much back to Himself. **Read Matthew 27:23-28:10 and Revelation 22:1-5 also John 14:1-3.** Since Jesus was willing to live and die for you, you can go from a state of eternal death to eternal life. You can go from never seeming to be able to change for the good, to having the power, strength and desire to live well for God. You can go

from a future that promised hell, to the only happily-ever-after ending which is living throughout eternity with God who loves you! Take some time and thank Jesus for all He has done for you because you are His beloved. You might want to write a prayer and share it with your group.

We enjoy words of love no matter how they are said to us! But how do you feel when a person tells you they love you but act like they don't? When words of love don't have actions to back them up, we don't feel or think we are truly loved. We all know it is deeds of love that speak to our hearts the loudest, not fancy words or gifts. God has certainly backed up His Words of love with what He did for us! Hasn't He? I hope this lesson has given you concrete evidence of His love towards you through Jesus becoming one of us, living among us and dying for us. Do you now believe He loves you?

- 13. End of the lesson application:** Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind one thing you learned from this lesson that He wants you to remember and make a part of your life. Be quiet before God and wait on Him to tell you. Write it down and ask Him to help you do it!

I hope I have given you at least a glimpse into what Jesus gave up and took for us on this earth because of His love for us. Try to watch the movie "The Passion" by Mel Gibson. Other than God's Word, I feel that this movie communicates vividly what God in His great love did for us. If you are doing this study in a group setting, you might want to watch the movie together or watch a piece of the movie each week or just agree to watch it separately. I would choose a time when you can discuss what the movie meant to each person concerning God and His sacrificial love for them.

## Bibliography

My ideas on the following topics come from the following sources.

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Albert Barnes, **Barnes' Notes - Notes on the New Testament**, p 169-174.

### **Jesus emptying Himself**

Spiros Zodhiates, **The Complete Word Study Dictionary - New Testament**, definition of keno, the Greek word for emptied. Strong's number 2758, p 857

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