



~A Short Bible study on God's real and unfailing love~



~Chapter One~

God's Love for You is Seen in His Creation

God created you very good

God created everything in 6 days. After each day of creation, God saw what He had made was **good**. And after He had created everything – especially man and woman, He saw everything He had created was **very good**. You and me are very good in God's eyes!

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day. Genesis 1:31 (NIV)

At one time in my life because of my dysfunctional childhood, I felt I lacked value. However as I got older, and God and His Word (the Bible) became a part of my life, I realized from Genesis that I was made very good. The word **good** in Genesis means beautiful, delightful, happiness, pleasant, glad, precious, correct, excellent, lovely, convenient, joyful, fruitful, secure, kind, and righteous. Good is a very positive word isn't it? If you are very good in God's eyes, how should you think of yourself?

*Read Genesis 1 and 2 for more Bible knowledge on creation.

God created you in His image

God's Word tells us we are created in God's image. The word image in Genesis 1 - means similar but not identical. This is because God is God, and of course we are not God.

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

Why would God make us in His image? I loved my cat, but I could only have a certain level of relationship with her because she wasn't in my image. We can relate to each other because we are in each other's image, but even more importantly we can relate to God because He created us in His image. Since God created us in His image, we are linked to heaven and to God Himself unlike any other part of creation. He made us in His image to be able to have an eternal relationship with us. We could say, God created us to love us (Jeremiah 31:3). A beautiful reality, isn't it?

To consider: When we complain about who we are or our looks, and I can, let's remember we are created in God's image. This fact should give us joy and contentment in who we are - God's special creation. Since you were created in God's image, what value does that give you?

God created you wonderfully

God made man and woman wonderful. God made you wonderful! How should you think of yourself since God made you so wonderful?

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:14 (NIV)

*Read Psalm 139 to give you more Bible knowledge on Who God is and how wonderful He has made you. What have you learned about God and yourself from Psalm 139?

In Psalm 139 it is clear God knows everything about us, because He knows all things. God is always present no matter where we are or what we are doing. You can't hide from God. He has seen you at your best and your worst, but He still loves you so very much. What does it mean to you that God loves you when you are acting and looking your worst?

Psalm 8:3-6 also talks about how wonderful God made us,

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: Psalm 8:3-6 (NIV)

In Psalm 8, King David writes about how awesome it is that God cares for us and crowns us with glory and honor, and that He allows us to rule over His creation. You might be wondering who King David is? King David reigned as King in Israel around 1000 B.C. He also wrote Psalm 139; and was just as pleased as we are about God creating him wonderfully.

If God created us wonderfully, why isn't life perfect

In Genesis 2:16-17 God told the man (Adam) and woman (Eve) to obey Him. He gave them one command to obey. Yes, just one loving command.

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV)

Something awful happened. Adam and Eve did not obey God, but ate from the tree that God told them not to eat from, even though they could eat from any other tree. This disobedience brought the awful consequences of sin into the perfect world, leading to death and eternal punishment.

~Chapter Two~

God's Love and Our Sin

Sin and its worldly consequences

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin came into the world and changed everything. Before sin everything was perfect. Adam and Eve got along with God and each other perfectly. The world was a perfect place to live in. God had created them (and all of us) to possess only good but their sin brought evil and death into the world as well (Genesis 2:16-17). Because of sin, Adam's and Eve's relationship with God was broken. They started hiding from Him instead of wanting to be with Him. They were now led by their sin nature and had become rebellious against God. The world started to become a hostile place to live in. I don't have to explain evil to you because you experience it, see it and read about it. Sad but true, sin brought evil and death.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.... Genesis 3:6-8 (NIV)

*Read Genesis 3 for more Bible knowledge on how sin came into the world.

We are all sinners

A sinner is someone who disobeys God. God's Word teaches us that we all are sinners. This is because we are born with a nature coming from our ancestors who sinned. Yes, what Adam and Eve did thousands of years ago still affects us today in a horrific way, and that does seem unfair. But reality is, we all would have eaten the forbidden fruit sooner or later. To be honest, as a Christian, I sin in thought, word, and deed daily. Yes, for worse and not better, we all sin.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned – Romans 5:12 (NIV)

How often do you think you sin? The difficult truth is, even if we have only sinned once in our life, because of that one sin we are guilty and deserve to be punished. (I have sinned so much there is no way I could even start to count.) Remember one sin brought death and punishment into the world. If we are honest with ourselves, disobeying God is our natural way of life. It is supernatural for us to desire what God wants in our lives. (Psalm 14:1-3).

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. James 2:10 (NIV)

Everyone throughout history, except Jesus Christ, is a sinner just like Adam and Eve.

But you know that he (Jesus) appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. / For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 John 3:5; Romans 6:23 (NIV)

~Chapter Three~

Who is Jesus Christ

Knowing Jesus Christ

If you get to know Jesus Christ through the Bible, you will know the true Jesus, Who loved you so much He died for you. Other books can explain the true Jesus rightly, but only if their understanding comes from the Bible. That is why I have used a lot of Bible passages in this study, so you may know the Jesus of the Bible and not some man-made idea of Him.

A Christian missionary group started a Bible club for kids in a country that wasn't friendly to Christianity. One hundred and ten children came to the first meeting and got to hear about Jesus from the Bible. Many children went home after the first meeting talking about Jesus' love for them. A police officer arrived at the second meeting to close it down until he heard about Jesus from the kids. The knowledge of Jesus has amazing effects, doesn't it?

Knowing Jesus Christ is God

The Bible tells us God is One God, but He is in three persons. He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This principle is called the Trinity. The word Trinity is never used in Bible, but the word Trinity represents one of the most important principles in the Bible, because it explains Who God is.

Have you ever heard of the Trinity? When I first became a Christian, I was taught about the Trinity, and just kind of took it on faith. However as I became more familiar with the Bible, I began to see God being One but in three persons all throughout it.

I think the idea of the Trinity is difficult for us to comprehend fully because our reasoning is from an earthly perspective. But we need to remember, God is God! He is incomprehensible. His ways, His thoughts, His reasoning, His power, His love, and so on, are so far above ours. Why wouldn't He be three persons since He is so much greater in all ways than we are?

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

God the Son, who is Jesus Christ, explains God to us. God the Father is Spirit, so no man has seen Him at any time (John 4:24). The New Testament, very plainly teaches that Jesus has revealed God to us - He is God in flesh (John 14:9; Colossians 1:15).

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God...has made him known. John 1:18 (NIV)

C. S. Lewis explained in his book *Mere Christianity*, "Jesus didn't leave it open for us to believe He is just a good man or a great moral teacher, because Jesus claimed to be God in the Gospels". I know some of you are struggling (probably right now) with Who Jesus is. Let me caution you not to try to fit Jesus into a feel good title such as a great moral teacher. You should either call Him God, because He claimed to be God, or you must think of Him as the wickedest liar in history or a narcissistic nut case, because He tells you He is God.

*Read these Bible verses for more knowledge about the Trinity from the Bible.

- God is One God: Isaiah 45:5-6, 21-22; Deuteronomy 6:4-5 also Mark 12:29-30; Matthew 28:19.
- Jesus is God in the Old Testament: Read Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 7:14 also Matthew 1:23 (Immanuel means God with us).
- Jesus is God in the New Testament: John 1:18; John 14:7-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15, 19-20, 2:9; Hebrews 1:3; 1 John 5:20.
- The Holy Spirit is God: Exodus 31:3; Isaiah 11:2; John 16:13-15; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9-11.

Knowing Jesus is both God and Man

Jesus Christ, who is God, took on flesh and blood. In other words He became a Man. He became a Man, so He could represent us and die on the cross for our sins. He was born to the Virgin Mary about 2000 years ago. The birth of Jesus Christ is explained in Matthew 1:20-23,

... an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet (Isaiah 9:6): "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). Matthew 1:20-23 (NIV)

Think about the fact that the God of the Universe became a Man. I have heard people give the example that for God to become one of us would be like for us to become an ant. I can see where that is a sensible deduction, since God is so above us. Yet can any illustration really come near to what it was like for God to become man. I think you would agree that whatever example you use for God becoming human, the conclusion you have to come to is, that it was a huge sacrifice. Amazing love our God has for us, isn't it?

~Chapter Four~

Jesus Christ died on the Cross

Why did Jesus Christ have to die for our sins

As you know, the punishment for sin is death and eternal punishment, which means going to hell after you die.

For the wages of sin is death... Romans 6:23a (NIV)

The meaning of death in Romans 6:23 is both physical and spiritual death. All of us know what physical death is because we have had loved ones die, and we will die someday. But the idea of spiritual death is new to most people. Spiritual death means separation from God. Because of the sin nature we were born with, sin permeates our whole life. God can have nothing to do with sin so we are separated from God. Sin presents a problem because God loves you and does not want you to be punished. He desires to have a close relationship with you and not to be separated from you.

God solved the problem of sin by sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us. Jesus took your punishment for your sins on Himself when He died on the cross. This allows you to have your sins forgiven, to have the power of your sin nature broken, to have a new life in God, and to have the power to live as God wants you to. His death allows you to have a close relationship with God too. This relationship is eternal which means going to heaven instead of hell after you die. Just think about it, Jesus died on the cross so He could be close to you. Would anyone else give up so much for you, even their life, just so they could be close to you?

Jesus' sacrifice of love

The Bible tells us sin is very destructive in our lives. It took death to pay for even one sin, so God out of love for us chose sacrificial blood as the substitute price for a person's life. In the Old Testament, God revealed to the Jews that it was necessary for them to shed the blood of animals (without blemish) to cover their sins. The animal sacrifice became the person's substitute when he laid his hand on it and killed it. The life of the animal, its blood, was the means of temporary covering-forgiveness for their one sin. (Leviticus 17:11 also 4:32-35).

Yet, God didn't take pleasure in animal sacrifices. He knew animal sacrifices could never deal with our sin problem. Something permanent needed to be done to stop eternal punishment from sins and it wasn't killing animals. That something permanent is the one time sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross for everyone's sins. Jesus' sacrifice, His blood, removed our sins thereby forgiving us. Instead of putting our hand on an animal's head and killing it to deal with our sin, we now put our faith in Jesus Who because of love sacrificed Himself to forgive all sins. (Hebrews 10:1-18).

A man heard his daughter screaming in their backyard. As he ran into the yard he saw three wild dogs biting her. The father ran between the dogs and his daughter. A neighbor saw the situation and called 911. The father's life blood had drained from his body leaving his daughter covered with his blood. Both the father and daughter looked dead, but his daughter was miraculously alive because her body was protected by her father's. Jesus compassionately protected us from certain eternal punishment by sacrificing His own flesh and blood on the cross for us. Because Jesus sacrificed His life for us, He is called the Lamb of God many times in the Bible (John 1:29).

*...To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood... Revelation 1:5b
(NIV)*

Jesus didn't stay dead but rose from the dead

Jesus Christ died, but He did not stay dead; He rose from the dead three days later. This is called the Resurrection. Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead proves that He is God and that He did have the power to pay the price for all of our sins.

God's love for us conquered death by raising Jesus from the dead. Some movies and shows portray death as a character who people can reason with, pal around with or even destroy. Unfortunately, death is nothing you can reason with or get rid of. A group went hiking for fun, not even thinking of anyone dying, when a girl slipped and grabbed a ledge. The group leader heroically grabbed the girl's hand which caused the leader to fall down the cliff to her death. The girl survived. Death in reality is always there, and Jesus knew we couldn't escape its grip, so His love conquered death to give us the gift of the resurrection.

Because of Jesus' resurrection you will live eternally, not as a spirit or even an angel, but as yourself with your body renewed, being in His glorious presence - blameless with great joy - doing extraordinary things. Yes, as Christians, we will rise bodily, just like Jesus did (Luke 24). Does the hope of the resurrection make you rejoice? It does me.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ... he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.... 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (NIV)

How does Jesus Christ's death and resurrection show that God loves you?

*Read 1 Corinthians 15 to gain more Bible knowledge about Jesus' resurrection and your resurrection.

~Chapter Five~

God's Personal Love for You

Jesus' love for a sinner

Most of us have disobeyed man's laws, such as speeding in your car, but all of us have disobeyed God's laws (sin). If you don't do the things God wants you to do, such as loving Him and people, being kind, patient, forgiving, caring and so on, you are disobeying God's laws. If you have lied, stolen, been angry, selfish, nasty, slandered or said and done things that was mean, or even thought (yes thought) mean thoughts, or committed violence, betrayal or adultery, you have disobeyed God. All sin is the same to God and deserves to be punished. That is why Jesus Christ had to die for your sins.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God still did not stop loving them. God does not stop loving you when you sin. He still thinks of you as valuable, precious and special. He died for you when you were a sinner.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NIV)

Do you think God loves you because Jesus died for you?

The love and grace of God

Before putting your faith in Jesus Christ, you were spiritually dead and constantly doing what you wanted to do or what others wanted you to do, not what God wanted you to do. In other words, you were rebelling against God. You were His enemy (Romans 5:8-10). Yet, God's love for you did not want you to be spiritually dead to Him, so out of His mercy or compassion He made you alive to Him in Christ. You are saved from your sin because of God's grace or unearned favor towards you.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:1-9 (NIV)

Consider this: When we were God's enemy, He loved and saved us. He gave us abundant grace or favor. There was nothing we could do to save ourselves from sin, but God out of His grace saved us through Jesus Christ's work on the cross. I would say that type of love and favor is beyond human love and favor. You too?

How can your sins be forgiven

It's pretty evident salvation (deliverance from sin) had to be a gift from God because of our sin. We receive the gift of being saved from our sins like we would receive any gift, we take it. However, instead of using our hand to take the gift of salvation from God, we take it by belief or faith that Jesus Christ paid for our sins. (Psalm 68:19-20). You might be wondering what belief (n) or faith (n) mean? Both mean the same thing, which is to accept something as being true and trust in that something.

If we believe in Jesus we are saved from the consequences of our sins: Giving us forgiveness of our sins; Taking away the sentence of eternal punishment upon us; Making us righteous (just right) in Jesus; Giving us eternity in heaven. Belief in Jesus Christ completely and absolutely erases the consequences of our sins forever!

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him (Jesus Christ) shall not perish but have eternal life. / All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name./ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.../ For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." John 3:16; Acts 10:43, 16:31; Hebrews 8:12 (NIV)

Some of you have already believed that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins. However, if you haven't, you can tell God right now that you believe in Jesus and in what He did for you. Here is an example prayer you might want to use.

*Dear God, I recognize my great need before you because of my sins.
I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins.
I ask for forgiveness for my sins. I thank You that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins,
so I can be forgiven.
Thank you God for loving me. Help me to live my life for you.*

Did you pray the above prayer?

Or are you already a Christian?

When you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, you are saying, it is true Jesus died on the cross for my sins and I trust only in His death to save me from my sins, not on anything I have done. This makes you a Christian. After you have believed in Jesus, you need to ask God to help you to live how He wants you to.

When this author became a Christian

At the age of 17, a friend kept inviting me to a youth Bible study at her church. I didn't want to go, so I made every excuse I could come up with. God very much wanted me there, so He took away every excuse. Finally, I ran out of excuses and went and loved it. Every time God's Word was talked about, I felt a peace.

At the Bible study the teacher talked about Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins so that God could forgive us. That statement got my attention immediately, because I knew I did wrong things that were against what God wanted. The teacher said, "If we believe we are sinners, then we should believe we need a Savior." He then told us about Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for our sins. He went on to say, "If any of you truly believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, you will be forgiven of your sins, and they will never be held against you, because Jesus paid the penalty for those sins." I thought, "Who wouldn't want that forgiveness?" I also was taken back by the knowledge that God would die for my sins when He had done nothing wrong. I knew I had finally found unconditional love. That day I knew I needed a Savior, which led me to believe in Jesus Christ.

I am nearing 70 years old now and have never regretted believing in Jesus Christ. He is definitely my God, Savior and best friend. People have let me down but He never has. Walking with Him has given me a purposeful life, a marriage of fifty years and a wonderful family. I am looking forward to meeting Him face to face in heaven. If you haven't made the decision to believe in Jesus, my question is, what are you waiting for?

God's Spirit comes to live in you

Something wonderful happens when you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live within you. He is our Helper. He will empower you to follow God's laws. Remember, He is God Himself.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you ... But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:16-17, 26 (NIV)

There is no way we can live the way God wants us to live, in our own power and strength. That is why God gave us His Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers and strengthens us. He leads us through God's Word. Will you ask God daily to let the Holy Spirit lead you?

If you said yes, you need to be reading the Bible, so the Holy Spirit can lead you.

~Chapter Six~
Jesus Christ Shows Us Love

Where real love can be found

Just think about it, Jesus Christ, who was still the God of the universe, became Man, so He could die for you and me. This is real love!

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10 (NIV)

I grew up in a family where love was conditional. If I lived up to their expectations, then I would be loved. I got to a point in my life, when I just gave up trying to be what everyone wanted me to be, because I could never meet their expectations. I felt I was a failure and worthless. I remember feeling I was not even worth receiving a cupcake at the 6th grade party. Pretty sad, isn't it. Maybe you have felt that way too. How did your family love you as a child or adolescent? How are you loved now?

I still struggle once in a while with God's love for me. But fact is, if you don't believe God loves you, you are calling Him a liar. Ouch!

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Numbers 23:19 (NIV)

Some people do try to give us real love and their love is very precious and special to us, but their love will fall short of real love at times. Only God can love you and me with an unconditional or real love. This is because His love for us has nothing to do with us. Remember He loved us when we were His enemies.

Explain why God's love is real. Do you believe God loves you?

Can anything or anyone separate us from the love of Jesus (Romans 8:31-39)

The Bible tells us nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus! Have you ever put super glue on two of your fingers and stuck them together? (Don't!) If you have, then you understand how well super glue sticks. God's type of love sticks to you better than super glue. God's type of love sticks to you forever because it is a supernatural love from the God of the universe. His love graciously gives us exactly what we need on this earth as well as in heaven.

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:31b-32 (NIV)

We can know God is never against us because He had His Son died for us. How does that make you feel?

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:33-34 (NIV)

Do you feel condemned at times because of your past sins or the sins you have committed recently? You do not need to feel condemned because Jesus died for those sins. He was condemned for you on the cross because He took the punishment for your sins on the cross. (Romans 8:1). Since Jesus died for you, God has forgiven you and made you just right before Him. God sees us as His beloved sons and daughters, not as guilty people. Remember, He values us so very much, He died to have a relationship with us. When I think of being God's beloved daughter I feel loved. Have you ever thought of yourself as God's beloved?

What does it mean that Jesus is interceding for us? The word intercession means what you think it would - pray for, intervene, support, talk to, decide for, ask on behalf of and act as a go-between. Jesus is praying to God on your behalf. He is supporting you constantly as you live life. Pray to Him! (Philippians 4:6-7).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither 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. Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

Nothing can separate you from God's love in Jesus Christ: Bad health can't. Losing someone you love can't. Having no job, support or financial help can't. Experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse can't. Nothing in life or death, or any power on this earth or in the universe, human or demonic can take you away from Jesus and His love. God's love will always be there for you - to strengthen you and get you through any situation. There is nothing too big for God's love, it covers everything in our lives. Call to Jesus and He will strengthen you to conquer anything.

Have you ever been abused? Explain how you have been abused if you want to.

Do you need support or help? Explain how if you want to.

~Chapter Seven~
God is Your Loving Father

God adopted us to love us

The moment we become Christians, we become God's children. He adopts us. When you think of adopting a child, you think of a parent choosing to love and make a child her own. How do you feel about God choosing you to be His child? This truth has always encouraged me to live in my eternal Father's embrace.

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God... / He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will / See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!... John 1:12-13; Ephesians 1:5; 1 John 3:1 (NIV)

My father did not always love me but God my Father in heaven always loves me. To be honest, sometimes I am not very lovable, but no matter what I do, God my Father loves me. No matter what you do, God your Father loves you. He will never give up on you. Has anyone ever loved you when you were unlovable?

God will never abandoned us

King David wrote Psalm 27 so we know he felt forsaken by his parents. Looking at the other Psalms David wrote - he felt defeated, down and lonely like the rest of us. Yet he recognized God was always there for him - protecting, saving and loving.

Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. Psalm 27:10 (NIV)

My mother died when I was 6 years old. I went to live with my grandmother who criticized me a lot. My father lived with us, but stayed away a lot, so he was not very involved in my life. I felt abandoned and lonely a lot as a child. We can all feel lonely, down and even abandoned, can't we? At this age with my loving family and friends I don't feel abandoned like I did as a child, but I certainly can feel lonely and down at times. I now go to God with those feelings, and let Him and His words surround me with optimism and hope. Yes, God is always there for you and me (Matthew 28:20).

Do you ever feel abandoned or forsaken by your family or others that should be there for you?

God will never forget us

Once in a while I can feel forgotten by family and friends. You too? However, I have learned and seen throughout my many decades of knowing Jesus that He never forgets me. If I go to Him and allow His words to fill my thinking, I know He is there loving me (Psalm 139:1-18).

This is what the LORD says:... "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me." Isaiah 49:8a, 15-16 (NIV)

What God is saying in Isaiah 49 is: It might be possible but not likely for a nursing mother to forget her baby but it is impossible for God to forget you and me. We are engraved on God's hands. God's name the LORD is His formal name that comes from Exodus 3.

A woman was teaching a Bible study I had written on God's love. When she read Isaiah 49:15 from that study, she told me that one of her students started crying. The young woman said, "Wow I now understand about God. I could never forget my son! Every time I nurse him I realize how much he needs and depends on me. My son almost died in my arms, but God didn't forget me and my baby. He allowed me to resuscitate him. I understand why God would never forget me, because He loves and knows me, even more than I know and love my son." Some mothers might forget, but God will never forget you!

Thinking of God engraving you on His hands: My daughter use to write important things on her hands in school so she would not forget those things. God has written you permanently on His hands because He loves you and will never forget you. What do you think about the fact you are written permanently on God's hands?

~Chapter Eight~

A Love Relationship with God

God's forever love

As a Christian, God still loves you when you sin because He is in a love relationship with you. Are you glad even when we are sinning God's love covers you? I am.

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. / Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." Jeremiah 31:3; Lamentations 3:21-24 (NIV)

Other people might get tired of giving you love and compassion but God will not. His love and compassion will never wear out or grow old for you even when your sinful desires are controlling you. Does it give you hope that God's love and compassion towards you is new every morning? Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone's love and compassion for you were new every morning? Are you glad you are in a love relationship with God that will never end even in death?

When Christian's sin

Should we care about sin in our lives since Jesus took our punishment for our sins? Of course! When we sin as Christians, we are still disobeying God's laws, which He put in place to give us well-being on this earth. Sin is never good for us! Frankly it can sicken our lives if we habitually continue in some sins (Psalm 38:5).

As Christians, sin in our lives is like baby poop on us. I know that sounds weird but bear with me. When you go to change a dirty diaper, especially of a toddler who wiggles, poop can get on you. When we sin as Christians, we are spiritually sickening ourselves, putting the stench of death (even worse than poop) on us (Ephesians 2:1). In other words, when we decide to sin we are turning back to death instead of following God Who is life. As you can imagine sin is a disgusting thing to God which He doesn't want to be near. (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23a).

When we sin as Christians we are still eternally forgiven in Jesus but we need to confess that sin to God. This is because it is God that sin is against. Even if you have sinned against another person, you still have first sinned against God, because He has asked us to be loving, kind, and forgiving toward all people (Ephesians 4:31).

I went to take a bite and the scoop of chocolate ice cream fell off the cone, hitting my white fleece jacket and landing in my lap. Yes, I looked dirty! When we sin as Christians, we dirty our lives up in God. Reality is when you sin, God sees it, whether you think so or not. Confessing your sins is the easiest way God could give you to quickly be close to Him again and to cleanse you from those sins (Psalm 32:1-5). How do you confess your sin to God? Agree with God that your sin is wrong. God will forgive any sin you have done because Jesus Christ died for your sins, so confess your sin and move on with Him.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NIV)

Sometimes my feelings say I am too awful to be forgiven by God. Do you have these feelings? We need to remember they are just feelings. Women, and even men, are driven by their feelings. Feelings can be deceiving so remember, some feelings are true in your circumstance, but some are just not reality. No matter what your feelings are telling you, you need to remember the fact you are loved and forgiven by God.

Explain in your own words why God will forgive your sin.

God's love stops His anger

The nation of Israel was sinning greatly around 700 BC. God told them He would turn away in anger from them for a moment, but His love for them will last forever.

"Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach... For your Maker is your husband – the LORD Almighty is his name – the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer (deliverer); he is called the God of all the earth.... "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer.... Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. Isaiah 54:4-5, 7-8, 10 (NIV)

In these verses God is saying, He may be angry with us because of sin for a second but His love for us lasts forever. Sin in your life makes God angry because sin is very harmful to you and it leads you away from Him. When you sin, remember God still loves you. His anger is not directed at you but at the sin in your life.

God's Word keeps us from sin

As Christians, God wants us to live righteously or just right in Him. At times we think we are doing what is right but we are not (Isaiah 64:6). God's Word teaches you what is right to do, and what isn't - so you need to know His Word.

... and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (NIV)

To live the way God wants you too, God has given you the Holy Spirit. The Spirit uses God's Word to show you what is sin and what isn't sin, so you need to be reading it. Knowing what God's Word says, and thinking about it, helps me greatly not to sin. Ask the Holy Spirit to whisper in your mind when you are sinning.

To consider: Some sins we just seem to do automatically. I had a friend years ago that told me she liked to chit chat so at times without realizing it would spread awful lies. Sins that we just do without thinking, we need to start thinking about them so we just don't do them. When you are about to sin - ask God out loud, if you can, to help you not to do that sin. Sounds pretty funny to do. But saying things out loud, underlines to yourself and God, that you really don't want to sin. Yes I have done this some.

~Chapter Nine~
God's Love Empowers Us to Love

Our love

Human love can be like Kleenex. You use it and then throw it away. We tend to love when it benefits us - when it is convenient. If loving someone gets difficult for various reasons, most of us want to run or avoid them. Someone can love you for years and then never love you again. Or you can love someone for years and then never love them again. Something else we do with love is put conditions on it. I will love you if you make me feel good. I will love you if you are rich or desirable, good-looking or smart or so on. Does this type of love sound familiar to you? Well it should because it is how we love most of the time.

Psychology textbooks tell us, we learn to love through the example of parents and others who have loved us. People's love can be very conditional, selfish, and temporal, can't it? Sad but true, we most likely end up loving in the same selfish way our examples did. So it just makes sense, if we get familiar with God's way of loving, we will slowly but surely start loving His way.

God's love

As you have seen in this study, God's love is unconditional, unselfish and eternal. His love lasts forever no matter what we do, because His love doesn't depend on what we do or who we are. His love is supernatural. Now, as a Christian, you can learn to love through God's examples - in His Word and through the power of His Spirit. First Corinthians 13 is a great place to start learning the qualities of God's love. Below is the passage specifically describing God's love.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV)

Keep in mind God never asks you to do what He hasn't done. So when you are asked to love others with these loving qualities, Jesus has loved you that way. Just replace the word love with Jesus: *Jesus is patient, Jesus is kind, Jesus keeps no record of wrongs (means Jesus forgives) and so on.*

What's your favorite characteristic of God's love from this passage? Ask Jesus to empower you to love with that characteristic.

Loving God and others

God wants us to love others with His type of love, so much so that He poured out His love within our hearts through His Spirit.

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Romans 5:5 (NIV)

Since God's love lives within us, we have the power to love others God's way. He gave us His Word so we will know specifically how to love. God always seems to use Ephesians 4:31-32 to remind me how to love others His way.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)

I think all of you know God wants you to love others, but He also wants you to love yourself. That can be hard for some of you. How do you love yourself? You love yourself by thinking of yourself as God thinks of you - as loved and valued. God says in Zephaniah 3:17 you are worth being delighted in,

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

It is so important for us to love God too, because He loves us. Jesus tells us in Mark 12, that loving God is the most important thing we can do. When you love someone, you want them to love you back. God has done so very much for you and He desires your love in return.

... The most important one (commandment), answered Jesus, "... Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:28-31 (NIV)

How do we love God? Simply put, by getting to know God and His Word, and asking Him to give you the ability and desire to love Him. Talk with Him as someone you love to be with. One of the ways I show my love for God is by memorizing His words, especially the Psalms. Memorizing allows Who God is and what He has done for me to become a part of my thoughts and my heart.

If you want decent relationships and a good marriage you need to make Jesus the foundation of your marriage, relationships and self-worth. Then His love will enable you to love others and yourself the right way. Since God loves you so very much, will you ask Him to help you to love Him, yourself, and others?

To End the Bible Study on God Loves for You and Me

For review: Explain in your own words, why you know that God loves you.

Maybe you would like to thank God right now, for loving you so very much!

Write out one or two Bible verses on God's love that have meant the most to you in this study. This will help you remember that God loves you.

Now memorize those verses. You memorize by repeating the verse until you know it.

This Bible study on God's love was done for **Answers for Life** by Gini Crawford.
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The author of the Bible study: Gini has taught women in God's Word through church and community ministries for over 40 years. She started Because of God ministries in 2007 that has a popular website (BecauseofGod.com) with Christian resources that are Biblical with a little humor thrown in. Gini stated, "God's real and unfailing love has changed my life in so many wonderful ways throughout my many decades with Him. I wrote this Bible study on God and His love because I hope His love will bless your life too." Because of God's love, Gini

