

6. EXPERIENCING GOD'S LOVE

Is it true that God is love to me as a Christian? And does the love of God mean all that has been said? If so, certain questions arise: Why do I grumble and show discontent and resentment at the circumstances in which God has placed me? Why am I ever distrustful, fearful, or depressed? Why do I ever allow myself to grow cool, formal, and half-hearted in the service of the God who loves me so? Why do I ever allow my loyalties to be divided, so that God has not all my heart? – J.I. Packer, Knowing God

1. The Lord God expects that we love him with all our being.

** Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deut 6:5 NIV)*

** You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 22:37-40 NKJV)*

** And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good. (Deut. 10:12-13 NKJV)*

2. God initiated love toward us in choosing us to be his children.

** The LORD did not choose you and lavish his love on you because you were larger or greater than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! It was simply because the LORD love you, and because he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the LORD rescued you with such amazing power from your slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. Understand therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God, He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and constantly loves those who love him and obey his commands. (Deut. 1:7-9 NLT)*

** Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure. (Eph. 1:4-5 NLT)*

3. God demonstrated his love for us by sending Christ to die for undeserving sinners.

** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*

** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)*

** We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. (1 Jn. 3:16 NLT)*

4. God providentially works for good in the lives of those who love him.

** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28 NIV)*

** The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. (Psa. 145:20 NIV)*

** The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will quiet you in His love. He will rejoice over you with singing. (Zeph. 3:17 NKJV)*

5. The Lord disciplines those whom he loves.

** My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Prov. 3:11-12 NIV)*

** For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. (Heb. 12:10-11 NLT)*

** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. (Rev. 3:19 NKJV)*

6. Our heavenly Father listens to the prayers of his children.

** I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. (Psa. 116:1-2)*

7. God loves those who are cheerful givers and good stewards of their possessions.

** So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Cor. 9:7-8 NKJV)*

8. The Lord has prepared a future for us that exceeds our human capacity to anticipate.

** No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Cor. 2:9 NLT)*

9. God has promised the crown of life to those who love him.

**Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jas. 1:12 NKJV)*

10. Nothing can separate us from God's eternal love.

** 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? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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. (Rom. 8:32, 38-39 NKJV)

PRAYER

Father of love, I marvel at the love that you have lavished on the likes of me. To my dying day, the profoundest thought to grip my soul will always be the simple truth sung by the youngest of children, 'Jesus love me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so' To know that nothing in this world will ever be able to separate me from your love is my greatest comfort, I pray that your love will so radiate from my life that others may be drawn to you through me. I offer this prayer in the name of the one who loved me and gave himself for me.

PROMISE

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 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. (Rom. 8:38-39 NKJV)