

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD!

STUDY THREE

The Love of God

Selected Scriptures

What we think about God is the most important thing about us. If we shape our thinking about God from the culture around us, our life will remain complicated and even become chaotic. But if we allow the Holy Scriptures to shape our thinking, God will emerge in our minds as He is—real, personal, meaningful, all-powerful, loving—and our worship will be meaningful and pure, satisfying and deep.

—Charles R. Swindoll

LOVE—the most known yet least understood of all God’s attributes. When some think of God’s love, they imagine Him as a white-bearded grandfather, distant and aloof, even apathetic to the events of this world. But God’s Word presents no such portrait of the Divine.

Rather, the Bible exalts God as our loving creator, vigorously passionate about what He has made—especially us, His representative image-bearers. In other words, He cares . . . about what we do, what we say, what we think, what we feel, what we plan, what we like. Because His plans are for His glory and our good, His love governs human history in order to bring it to His desired end, the renewal of all creation.

It’s for that very reason that, while God’s love indeed *receives* us as we are, God’s love by no means *keeps* us as we are. God doesn’t turn a blind eye to our sin, saying, “Do whatever you please, and I’ll overlook it.” That wouldn’t be love. Barbs of sin, that wound us and others, pierce His heart too. Love moves God to action against anything that might harm His beloved, making His love the most powerful force in the universe! In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, Chuck Swindoll teaches us the practical side of the active, self-giving, life-transforming love of God.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

In Romans, the apostle Paul wrote that God's Spirit pours His love into the hearts of His people. Through our faith, He showers His grace on us, giving us hope in which we can rejoice and strength by which we can endure (Romans 5:1–6). Such a majestic, albeit mysteriously wonderful truth. Ruminates on it for a few minutes, then pray that God would use this study to increase your understanding, strengthening you to believe in and walk in His love.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Since this study examines multiple passages from Scripture, we perform observation and interpretation on each passage before progressing to the next.

His love reaches out, seeks us, and desires us. His love tempers His justice and His righteousness. His love prompts His grace to us. His love must never be separated from His other characteristics. It is an attribute of our heavenly Father. Therefore, what we think about God's love is the most important thing about us. —Chuck Swindoll





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The Lord Has Chosen You
Deuteronomy 7:6–8

The new generation of Israelites camped with Moses at the plains of Moab on the brink of entering the new land. Forty years prior, God delivered the descendants of Jacob from the heavy hand of Egypt. But the first generation would not taste the milk and honey of God’s promise, disdain the heavenly manna and cowering in fear of the giant Nephilim occupying Canaan. So, the new generation needed a fresh encounter with the God who rescued their fathers and made them His chosen people. Answer the questions below about God’s love for Israel, the love preached by Moses to the new generation in Deuteronomy 7:6–8.

 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Read <i>Deuteronomy 7:6–8</i>. What is the main point of the passage?</p> <p>1b. What did not influence God in His choice of Israel as His people?</p> <p>1c. Why did God choose Israel?</p>	<p>2a. What does this text teach us about God’s love? (Consult Netbible.org if you need help.)</p>

It is the sovereign act of God to allow His mercy to overrule His justice. There was nothing all that impressive about the Israelites, and God had seen them at their worst, but He chose to love them. —Chuck Swindoll





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As Moses Lifted Up the Serpent
John 3:14–16

Nicodemus, a scholar and teacher in Israel, never thought he needed to learn the basics of God’s kingdom until he approached Jesus late one night. From that intimate conversation, Jesus uttered one of the most profound statements about God’s love for the world. He used a famous story from the chronicles of Israel found in *Numbers 21:4–9*. Read that story first to gain context for Jesus’ teaching.

 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Now observe <i>John 3:14–16</i>. Why did Jesus say the “Son of Man” must be lifted up?</p>	<p>2a. How does Jesus correlate with the serpent Moses lifted up?</p>
<p>1b. Verse 16 begins with “for.” What is the logical connection between 3:14–15 and 3:16?</p>	<p>2b. How does one receive God’s provision through Jesus?</p>
<p>1c. What did the bronze serpent provide Israel, and how did they receive that provision?</p>	<p>2c. What does this text teach us about God’s love?</p>

God writes you a love note every day in a dozen different ways. With the world the way it is, we often miss it. So look to Jesus. Often, culture teaches that if life is going well, then God loves us. With God, whether life is going well or not, whether you feel loved or not, whether you deserve to hear about God’s love or don’t . . . it’s true. God loves you. He loves you. —Chuck Swindoll





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God Is Love
1 John 4:7–9

Near the end of his life, the apostle John penned a short letter to his children in the faith—about how he himself touched Jesus, looked into His eyes, experienced His forgiveness, and walked with the light of the world. John tasted the love of God in Jesus Christ and, after Jesus ascended into heaven, John spent the rest of his days helping others experience the same love.

 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Read <i>1 John 4:7–9</i>. Who knows and does not know God?</p>	<p>2a. What is significant about John’s statement, “Love comes from God” (1 John 4:7)?</p> <p>2b. What does “God is love” mean (4:8)?</p>

“Jesus loves me.” Say it to yourself. And will you please remember this: Even when you’ve gone home, you’re alone, nobody’s around, the sun has gone down, your mind begins to play tricks on you, and the enemy says, “You can’t believe that.” Believe it. Say it to yourself. You have never told yourself more truth than you have in those three words. —Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: Nothing Can Separate Us from the Love of God

Now we will review three passages from the book of Romans that add even more weight to the truth of God's love. Think of Romans as the Christian constitution—the longest exposition and loftiest expression of gospel truth from the heart of God through the mind of Paul.

The Dark Truth—Romans 3:10–18

Read *Romans 3:10–18*. Why is the truth in this passage important for our understanding of God's love for us?

The Timely Truth—Romans 5:8

Paul wrote:

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.
(Romans 5:8)

How was Christ's death for us an act of love from God?



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The Eternal Truth—Romans 8:31–39

Read *Romans 8:31–39*. According to this passage, how and why is God’s love significant in the life of the Christian?

You are loved by God—far more than any one of us could ever love a spouse or a child.
—Chuck Swindoll



Application: Claiming the Love of God

Now that we have traced the deep, deep love of Jesus throughout the redemption story, it’s often helpful to still the body, quiet the mind, and bask our hearts in divine truth. Do that now. Don’t rush. Meditate on the hymn below if you want.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me!
Underneath me, all around me,
Is the current of Thy love
Leading onward, leading homeward
To Thy glorious rest above!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Love of every love the best!
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing,
'Tis a haven sweet of rest!
O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
'Tis a heaven of heavens to me;
And it lifts me up to glory,
For it lifts me up to Thee!¹

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Spread His praise from shore to shore!
How He loveth, ever loveth,
Changeth never, nevermore!
How He watches o’er His loved ones,
Died to call them all His own;
How for them He intercedeth,
Watcheth o’er them from the throne!



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A FINAL PRAYER

Write a simple prayer claiming God's love, thanking God for His work in your life, and requesting wisdom for expressing that love to others.

ENDNOTE

1. Samuel Trevor Francis, "O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus," Indelible Grace Hymn Book, <http://hymnbook.igracemusic.com/hymns/o-the-deep-deep-love-of-jesus>.



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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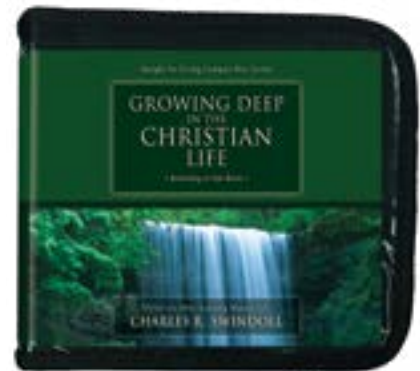
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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