

God Loves You Unconditionally

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Imagine the night before Jesus' crucifixion. He has communion with His disciples and washes their feet. He reveals that Judas is the one who will betray Him. He tells the disciples that He is leaving and they can't come. Then, He speaks these words:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." - John 13:34-35

By virtue of the fact that this would be, in part, His final words to the disciples, they had to be very important. And notice that what He said to them was in the form of a command, not a suggestion.

I am sure that everyone reading this letter has read or heard this passage many times. But in reality, most do not think that this is something they can actually do. It's a goal that they may strive to reach with gritted teeth, but usually with little success.

It begs the question—would Jesus give His disciples a command He knew they couldn't keep? The answer is obviously no, so why is it so hard for us today to love other people? Could it be this simple—we can't give what we don't have?

The majority of churches are teaching that God's love for us is conditional. They are misrepresenting His love, and it is one of the main reasons that we as Christians are so judgmental and harsh toward other people. Consciously or not, we tend to treat people the way we believe God is treating us.

We must understand that God does not love us because we are lovely. He does not love us because we read the Bible, go to church, pay our tithes, or do our best to keep the command to love others as He loved us. The truth is that He loves us without conditions. That's huge!

Most Churches preach the message of evangelism. They make you feel like you have to pay God back for saving you by leading others to Jesus. It becomes such a part of you and you think this is your existence.

If evangelism is the sole purpose for your existence, then what about Adam and Eve? They had no one to lead them to the Lord, no Sunday school class to teach, no one to pray for, and no physical need of any kind. The answer to our true existence can be found in **Revelation 4:11**—

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

The original purpose of all creation was to give God pleasure. And that is still God’s purpose. Adam and Eve were created for fellowship with God. He wanted someone to love and for them to voluntarily love Him back.

God’s purpose for creating human beings was all about relationship. But religion has succeeded at turning us from “human beings” into “human doings.” When that becomes the focus, we begin to tie God’s love for us to something that we do for Him. I did! But that was never His plan.

Many believers think by doing things for God will get them healed and delivered. They do not realise they are pointing to their own strengths and not that of Jesus.

The same is true about our relationship with the Lord and with other people. We have come to believe that God loves us and acts on our behalf based on our performance. Therefore, we hold others to the same standard—our love for them is in direct proportion to their works, or how they treat us.

Romans 5:8 says,

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

God’s love has never been or ever will be conditional. He loved you at your worst, and most Christian churches would agree with that initially. They believe you are saved by grace through faith, no matter your history, but that is often where

grace stops and religion starts. And religion always puts the emphasis on the external.

Once you're saved, religion says you must live holy, and the evidence of your holiness will likely be judged by the standards of your church: Do you dress the right way, do you say the right things, are you leading people to Jesus, and most importantly are you tithing—just to give a few examples.

That is not how God sees us. God looks on the heart. **First Samuel 16:6-7** says this:

“And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

Samuel was going to choose Eliab to replace King Saul because of his outward appearances. But God was not looking on the outside. The church today is judging believers in the same way. You might carouse in secret on Saturday night, but as long as you come to church the next morning well kept and well dressed with your tithes in your hand, you're accepted because you have the appearance of holiness.

Under the New Covenant, God is still concerned about your actions and behaviour. It's not okay to lie, to steal, to commit adultery, or any other sin. However, He knows that those are nothing more than the byproduct of a relationship—or the lack of one—with Him. So, He is focused on your heart.

As long as you believe God is judging you according to your performance, you will never fully receive His love. Love is a decision, and God decided to love you even though you didn't deserve it. There is nothing you can do to earn it or deserve it, so just receive it as a free gift.

When you understand how much God loves you, it becomes easy to love others. And when you love others as He has loved you, your behaviour will change toward them. If you loved your husband, wife or your children the way that Christ

loves you—unconditionally—you would never commit adultery. If you loved your neighbour as Christ loves you, you would never steal from them or bear false witness against them.

How does the world know that we are Disciples of Christ? **John 13:35** says, **“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”**

Did you know that the first-century church evangelised the known world in thirty years? They didn’t have television, the internet, smartphones, or had instant messaging apps. But they loved one another, and that love was so evident; it attracted people like honey attracts bees.

A Pharisee who was a lawyer asked Jesus this question: “Which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus answered this in Matthew 22:37-40.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to name the most important “Thou shalt not,” and instead, Jesus spoke “Thou shalt.” Many believers are still living under the Old Testament Law mentality. They are trying to earn the love of a God who already made the decision to love them unconditionally.

Once you begin to understand how much God loves you, love will flow out of you toward others like rivers of living water.