

GOD IS: COSTLY LOVE

God's love is intrinsic, at the very heart of His divine nature. God's love is infinite, from eternity past to eternity future. The Bible resounds with the news that God's everlasting lovingkindness never fails. When you are born again and place your trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you begin living out His eternal spiritual life, as God blesses you with His life-changing love. He redeems you!

3- God's love is costly. God's love is sacrificial agape-giving to the unlovely undeserving. 1 John 4:10 says, *"in this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His appointed Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* Propitiation means the 'satisfactory payment' of Christ's sacrifice of His own perfect life, which paid the penalty for sin. Agape love is costly, sacrificial, giving. And what God gave, the life of His own son, actually paid the price. The sacrifice of Christ did not make salvation possible, it made it a promise, to whoever will receive it. God's love redeems you, calls you, and saves you.

SB Ferguson says, "God's love is the most amazing thing about Him. It is not His justice, nor His majesty, nor even His blazing holiness, but the fact that He has made and keeps a covenant of personal commitment and love to His people. John 10:11 *"The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep"* (John 15:13). Romans 5:8 *"God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* CH Spurgeon says, "God gave God. He alone can save."

4- God's love is willful. He chooses and acts, to lavish His love on His people. Nothing worthy in us deserves His love, it is only on the basis of His election. Luther said, "God loves us not because we are valuable, but we are valuable because He loves us." Deuteronomy 7:7 *"The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession. He has set His love on you and chose you, because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that He swore. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love."* God is the initiator, the lover who chooses you. 1 John 4:19 *"We love because He first loved us."* Ephesians 1 proclaims the willful volitional love of God, which we simply humbly receive - and then give, loving others by putting His love into giving actions.

5- God's love is passionate. His acts of love are transforming. SJ Lawson says, "God's love is not cold theology or accounting in His ledger. His heart is full of affection for His people and He takes action on their behalf. If God took no action, no one would be saved, because all are lost in sin." Deuteronomy 30:9 *"the LORD takes delight."* Isaiah 64:4 *"He acts for those who wait for Him."* Jeremiah 32:41 *"I will rejoice in doing them good, with all My heart and soul."* Zephaniah 3:17 *"He will rejoice over you with gladness and will quiet you by His love."* In Luke 15:20 the prodigal father (God) ran and kissed and embraced and rejoiced. God's love is costly, willful, and passionate. He takes action, redeems, and transforms you.

6- God's love is commanded. Love is a communicable attribute of God, so you can love as He does. Love is the communicable mark of the Christian. 1 John 3:16-18 says *"by this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's good and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"* James 2:15 and Matthew 25:40 echo this truth. Jesus said in John 15:10 that you are His follower if you obey His commands, and He commanded over and over, *"love one another."*

Especially the family of believers. How? By practicing the self-sacrificing love of God, putting the needs of others ahead of your own. Ephesians 4:2 *"with all humility and gentleness, with patience bearing with one another in love, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, so that the body of Christ builds itself up in love."* Ephesians 5:1 *"therefore be imitators of God. As beloved children walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God."* Verses 18,30 echo 1 John 4:13, that we obey Him in love by being filled with the Holy Spirit. Verse 25 specifically applies this *"profound mystery"* to marriage: *"as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her - in the same way husbands are to love their wives."*

Love throughout your life mirrors the love within the triune God. And this brings us back to where we started. God is love. You know love only by knowing God, in His attributes and actions. You never know true love until you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, God as Father, and the Holy Spirit as indwelling power. God wants His people to experience the *hesed-agape-love* of the Trinity. Practice it, and pass it on. Because He has called you and equipped you - to love others, as He first loves you!