

God is Love

John Morris

God is love. This is stated twice in Scripture (**1 John 4:8, 16**). And there's a lot packed into those three words.

To say that God is love is to say that He is the *source* of love. God is "*from everlasting*" (**Psalm 90:2**). He existed "*before the world was*" (**John 17:5**). The world was made by Him (**Genesis 1:1**). All the love, and all the knowledge of how to love that exists in this world, therefore, must ultimately have originated with Him.

To say that God is love is also to affirm that God *will not deviate* from love. The apostle John does not say that God is *loving*. Perhaps that could serve to say the same thing, but "*God is love*" is more precise. It is more absolute. A man might be said to be loving...but, of course, even that loving man will occasionally do unloving things. He may *usually* love, but he won't *always* love. Not so with God. When the Scriptures say that God *is* a thing, they automatically exclude anything contrary to that thing. "*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*" (**1 John 1:5**). "*God is true*" (**John 3:33**), indicating that He "*cannot lie*" (**Titus 1:2**). Every motivation or action of God's, therefore, is driven by love. But aren't there "*six things the LORD hates?*" (**Proverbs 6:16-19**) someone might ask. Yes, but God hates those things only because He loves their opposites. His hate for those sins is not contrary to love; it is a necessary component of it.

God is love, and as such, exhibits all the qualities of love. Paul enumerates 16 qualities of love in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**. An examination of those in the light of Scripture reveals that God fulfills them all... with only the possible exceptions of "*believes all things*" and "*hopes all things,*" since God has it in His power to *know* and *see* all things. But apart from what His divine nature may exempt Him, God fully and flawlessly satisfies all the requirements of love. And again, He does so *all* the time. With Him, "*there is no variation or shadow of turning*" (**James 1:17**).

God loves the world (**John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4-5**). He loves a cheerful giver (**2 Corinthians 9:7**). He loves justice (**Isaiah 61:8; Psalm 37:28**). He loves righteousness (**Psalms 11:7; 33:5**). He loves His people (**Deuteronomy 23:5; 2 Chronicles 2:11**).

And if you're a Christian, you're one of His people (**1 Peter 2:9**).

"In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: 'Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing'" (**Zephaniah 3:16-17**).

Do you fear, Christian? There is a place of quiet rest; it is near to the heart of God. The heart of God swells with love for you. It is this vast reservoir of love that drives Him to be jealous for you. And this love is intended to quiet you. God is rejoicing over you with gladness, with singing! Like a spouse or a child who is quieted, calmed, and made secure by the knowledge that she is loved by her spouse or parent, so God's love is intended to quiet your fears and fill you with a sense of peace and security.

A number of years ago, a dear brother spoke these words to an assembly of Christians: "What we understand about God's heart toward us is what we tend to become in our hearts toward Him." How true! It is Satan's modus operandi to derail and discourage us by getting us to believe lies about God's thoughts toward us. That's how he succeeded in deceiving Eve. He talked her into believing something about God's thoughts toward her that was entirely false. And it prompted her to make the biggest mistake of her life. We are no different. What we believe God thinks and feels toward us has powerful consequences for how we think and feel...and behave. If God's love for us is not given its proper place in our outlook, our perceptions becomes skewed and, in turn, our zeal for serving Him languishes. God's love for us is intended to inspire us to pursue Him with passion. "*We love Him because He first loved us*" (**1 John 4:19**). But it's impossible to be long excited about serving a God you are certain is never happy with you.

“But how *could* He be happy with me?” someone might ask. “I never get it right.” Well, if we’re willfully persisting in sin, and making only half-hearted efforts to conform our lives to God’s will, then the question is well-founded. God will not accept our leftovers (**Malachi 1:8, 12-14**). But if the question is driven instead by a nagging awareness of our imperfections and weaknesses, a fear that even our best efforts in seeking the Lord are still so deficient that God is never likely to be pleased, consider the following: “*For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights*” (**Proverbs 3:12**); “*For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives*” (**Hebrews 12:6**). The LORD corrects/chastens the Christian who needs maturing, it is true; but even while doing so, He “loves” that Christian, “delights” in that Christian, and “receives” that Christian! So says the word of God. “*He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust*” (**Psalms 103:14**). God is not looking for flawless Christians; He is looking only for whole-heartedly seeking Christians (**Jeremiah 29:13**). If you’re in that category, brother or sister, rejoice in the Lord! God is rejoicing over you, right now! He is delighted with you! He is receiving you!

God seeks to quiet you with His love. Will you let Him?