



Life Principles Notes™

Love in Its Highest Form

Summary:

Love is a free gift for everyone, yet many people live their entire lives without experiencing it. Think about this: If you make it all the way through life without loving or being loved, then nothing else matters. You have missed the one goal that truly matters. No amount of wealth, fame, or fortune can take the place of that wonderful gift called love.

When we consider how many married couples live under the same roof without loving each other, we realize what a tragedy it is to miss out on God's

gift—for love, of course, comes only from God. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7).

This passage goes on to tell us that God is the very essence of love. Such a love is experienced only by believers, and it is manifested in the cross.

Key Passage: [1 John 4:7-11](#)

Supporting Scripture: *John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; Romans 5:8; Hebrews 12:6; John 3:36.*

Scriptural Principles:

1 What is the definition of God's love?

There is a great deal of confusion about the meaning of this word, so we need to define our terms carefully. When we think in terms of God's love, we are talking about His unselfish giving of Himself to us, especially because we are in no way deserving of any gift from Him. We are selfish, disobedient and sinful, yet God continues to pour out His goodness upon our lives. This kind of love is not some emotion or temporary feeling. God's commitment is to give His greatest gift to those who are unworthy of receiving it. In the same way, a wedding should always be a commitment between two people to give themselves unselfishly, whether a partner is fully deserving or not.

2 How has God expressed that love to us?

First, God has expressed His love in the creation. All we need to do is look around at this lovely, awesome world to understand that God created all of it and gave it to us as a gift of love. God has loved us before the foundation of that world was laid. (Ephesians 1:4) Second, He loves us in the way He continues to provide for us, protect us, and answer our prayers, day after day. Third, His love has been expressed through the cross. Romans 5:8 tells us that “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” He allowed His own Son to die for us, so that we might be reconciled to Him, regardless of how unloving and how unworthy we are.

3 What is the nature of God's love?

God's love is best described by one word: it is unconditional. Conditional love is given as long as certain conditions are followed, but unconditional love means there are no limitations at all. Do you love your spouse or your close friends unconditionally, or do you set restrictions? Are you saying, “I will love you if . . . ?”

Conditional love creates tension and uncertainty in relationships and leaves you with no true sense of security. It is the way of the world that we must earn grades in school or promotions at work. Therefore many people expect God to love them on the same basis. He never requires us to earn His affection, because it would be impossible for us to do so.

4 Why is it so difficult for us to accept God's love?

We struggle to understand and to live out this whole idea of God's unconditional love. Why? First, this concept is difficult for us because we have come to expect that everything worthwhile must be earned. Second, we've simply been taught false doctrine about God's love. Third, we have guilty feelings based on knowing how sinful and unworthy we are. We struggle to accept God's love because of our failures. God has put them in the past and refuses to hold them against us, but we still remember. For all these reasons, many of us live for decades or even a lifetime without experiencing the awesome power of God's sacrificial love.

5 How does God's love work in the life of a believer?

We become children of God the moment we accept His gift and acknowledge Christ as our Lord and Savior. Then our debt of sin is paid in full—past, present, and future. From that moment there is nothing we can do to earn our status as His blessed children. Otherwise our entire lives would be consumed by trying to measure up to such an unattainable standard. Instead, we realize that He loves us without any conditions whatsoever. It doesn't matter what we have done in the past. He has even forgiven those occasions still in our future when we will make poor decisions. This is the only way God could ever love and accept us.

6 How can we reconcile God's love with His wrath, His judgment, and hell?

Many people wonder how the perfect love of God can possibly relate to those issues of His wrath and His judgment, but His character is consistent. God's purpose for discipline is not punishment but correction. He loves us and wants to protect us from our errors. (Hebrews 12:6) The punishment of God is seen in His anger and wrath. He is a holy God who must deal with sin. His love and His justice cannot be separated, and our proof is the atoning death of Christ which satisfied both. As for hell, God sends no one there. People who choose to reject Him and to live in sin will be eternally separated from God. Even then, God continues to love them. His love and His justice are both perfect.

7 How should God's love affect the way we live?

When we begin to understand this issue of God's perfect love, we realize that we must also love unconditionally. Loving by way of required standards is an ungodly approach. If we love someone genuinely, we love them through God's power, we pray for them, and we love them regardless of what happens. Is this difficult? It certainly is. Even if they mistreat us, we continue to love them. We are not called to account for their sin but for our obedience to God. Therefore we cannot live in fear of commitment. God will strengthen us and honor our decision to love others as He has loved us. Then, when we find ourselves loved this way by others, we realize what a wonderful gift God has given us. The love of God is life's greatest joy.

Conclusion:

This generous, unrestricted love is what life is all about. Nobody should live a single day without this gift. The great pleasure of life is the joy of relationships—with each other and with our God, who first loved us, who has given Himself for us, and who continues to show us what love is about, every moment of our existence.

If you have experienced that love, no one

will need to explain it to you. It is so powerful that it changes us completely. Once we realize that His love can never be earned or lost, life becomes exhilarating. We feel the warmth of His love, we thank Him for it, and we want to help others experience that same gift. I pray that you are experiencing love in its highest form? 🙏

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