

Bible Study: The Character of God

I. God is Love

Passage(s) to read: 1 Cor. 13:4-8; 1 John 4:7-21

Related passages for personal study:

- * of God (Father) - origin: Rom. 5:5; 1John 2:5,15; 3:1; 4:7-10, 5:2-3
- * of Christ - manifestation: John 14:21,31; Rom. 8:35-39; Eph. 3:19; 5:2, 5:25; 1Jn 3:16
- * of Holy Spirit - impartation: Rom. 5:5, 15:30; Gal. 5:22
- * Matt. 22:37-39; John 21:15-17

Description of love:

General: Love, whether used of God or man, is an earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in, the well-being of the one loved. (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*)

Agape: The highest, most perfect kind of love, implying a clear determination of will and judgment, and belonging particularly to the sphere of Divine revelation. (*ISBE*)
Example: Rom. 5:8

Phileo: The natural human affection, with its strong feeling, or sentiment, and is never used in Scripture language to designate man's love to God [the Father]. (*ISBE*)
Example: John 11:3

Philadelphia: The love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren (*Thayer*)
Example: Rom. 12:10

Aspects To Consider:

- * **God's love toward His Son** (John 17:21-26)
- * **God's love toward the lost** (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
- * **God's love toward His own, the Saints** (1John 3:1)
- * **Our love toward God** (2Cor. 5:14-15; John 14:15)

What is love characterized by? (Includes our love for one another)

- * Works no ill toward others (Rom. 13:10)
- * Giving selflessly (Gal. 5:13, 1 John 3:16)
- * Obedience (John 14:15)
- * Seeks to build up others (1 Corinthians 8:1)
- * Forgives (1 Peter 4:8)
- * See also: 1Cor. 13:4-7, Rom. 12:10, Eph. 4:2,15, etc.

How should God's love affect me?

Questions for Discussion:

- * Does God always act in love?
- * How can God hate when "God is love"?
- * Why does God chasten?