

# A Loving God

Understanding the magnitude of God's love is an awesome task. Although it is impossible to comprehend completely it is personally so satisfying to try! This article is an effort to help us as we struggle to appreciate the greatness of His love and the individual benefits of God's personal involvement in our lives.

In our effort to understand how much God loves us we must consider that God has done, and is doing everything He possibly can to *tell* us, *guide* us, to *motivate* us and *help* us as we live this life and look forward to Heaven.

What, then, are the details of how God has planned, implemented and demonstrated His great love for us?

**First**, God described the great blessings of Heaven if we follow His will. Then He set up the laws of nature and human nature so all of us have the opportunity to spend eternity in there. God wants everyone to be saved, John 3:16, Acts 17:30, 1 Timothy 2:4. He makes the realities of Heaven so awesomely wondrous and so perfectly clear in order to motivate us to obey him. God also gave us free will so that we can choose our final destination. God does all these things to underscore the benefits of His enormous love.

**Second**, knowing we were a forgetful people, He wrote it all down for us to ponder and apply to our lives. He even inspired the writings so The Book would be perfect in every word. He even protected the manuscripts so there would be plenty of evidence to convince every open-minded person that the writings were in fact from God. He saw to it that this book was complete and would give us all the information we needed for every good work, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Any question about God, how to live in this life, or how to prepare for the next life was given in such a manner that we could understand it, 2 Corinthians 1:13.

**Third**, during the entire time of human existence God communicated to the people how to be happy in this life and have Heaven in the next life, by obeying Him. The prophets warned of disaster for disobedience, Jeremiah 22. God gave us examples to help us understand the severity of the punishment, i.e. the flood in Noah's time (Genesis 6-9), Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's time (Genesis 18-19). We also have Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) and Hebrews chapter 12 in the Christian era. The Old Testament examples are referred to several times in the New Testament. I give only two verses for your consideration,

2 Peter 2:5

*if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; 6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;*

Jude 1:7

*In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*

The severity and clarity of these examples are a warning from God to us. God has always blessed His followers.

**Fourth**, He put His Spirit in us to help us understand, 1 Corinthians 2:12-14. His indwelling Spirit helps us as we strive to serve Him (Romans 8). This assistance from the Spirit is just another way God helps us to have a joyous life here and instills in us the hope of Heaven. This indwelling Spirit is a guarantee of what is to come, encouraging us to obey God to guarantee our position in Heaven.

2 Corinthians 1:22

*set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

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2 Corinthians 5:5

*Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

Ephesians 1:13

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession— to the praise of his glory.*

**Fifth, Prayer.** We can talk to God anytime, and for as long as we want. He is always there for us. Not only will He listen, He will answer. This idea is so important we must read, believe and meditate on the following scriptures.

John 14:13

*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

John 14:14

*If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.*

John 15:16

*Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

John 16:23

*And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.*

John 16:24

*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.*

John 16:26

*In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for You;*

Please note: these are just the verses from John. There are many other scriptures telling us God will answer our prayers. Think about how important this one attribute of God is for our peace of mind, confidence, hope, encouragement, and guidance on our way to Heaven.

He promises to give us wisdom if we ask in faith, James 1:5-8. This wisdom will assist us in understanding His word and help us as we decide how to live our lives and serve him, constantly looking forward to our home in Heaven.

When God decides to answer “yes” to a prayer request, *at least one* of the following things must happen:

- 1) Something happens (rain, good health, etc.) that would not have happened without the prayer,
- 2) Something does not happen (drought, sickness, death, etc.), that would have happened without the prayer,

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- 3) Someone does, thinks, or says something that the person would not have done, thought or said without the prayer, or
- 4) Someone does not do, think, or say something that the person would have done, thought or said without the prayer.

Prayer is another way in which God helps us to remain faithful in this life and be in Heaven in the next life.

**Sixth**, God's many great promises are very encouraging and they help to guide us as we live this life.

He tells us not to worry! He will take care of us!! Matthew 6:31

*So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

You simply must meditate on this passage to realize its importance. If we but put Him first He will take care of our physical needs. Taking care of our physical needs in this life is but one more way God is assuring us He keeps His promises and will also take care of us in the afterlife.

**Another great promise** is God will forgive us of all our sins. No matter how bad we have been, if we repent and obey Him, He will forgive us! Afterwards He holds no grudges, takes no revenge, "will remember our sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12, 10:17), and gives great rewards... all of these things in this life .... and Heaven in the next!!

**Another great promise** is God will protect us from the evil one. We don't need to fear that the devil will "get us" and force us to do wrong. Paul says God will protect us,

1 Corinthians 10:13

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it*

**Another great promise** is that his commands are not burdensome. Yes, we must obey His commands, but, all his commands are designed only for our good.

1 John 5:3

*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.*

This doesn't mean all His commands are easy to obey. This verse teaches that each and every command is designed for our benefit. Our obedience to each command contributes to the hope, purpose, confidence and comfort in our lives so we can have the joyous life He desires for us on earth. This same obedience will be rewarded with Heaven.

**Seventh**, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit intercede to God on our behalf.

Romans 8:26

*And in like manner the Spirit also helps our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; ...34 who is he that*

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*condemns? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

Both Christ and the Holy Spirit are our advocates, pleading our case before the Father. They ask for God's blessing to help us in this life, and correct the imperfections in our prayers. All of this makes up the difference between what we should be and what we are, assisting us in attaining Heaven.

**Eighth**, the church. God created us. God knew and knows what we need. We need a group support system. The church is it. The church is our new family in Christ. Each of us is a member of it. Just like each part of our physical body is a part of our one body, each member of the church is a part of our spiritual body. Together Christians form one spiritual body as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:11-31.

In this passage Paul points out how we all belong to the one body of Christ. This body meets the psychological and spiritual needs of everyone. We need to belong to some group whose purpose is bigger and greater than ourselves. Each member of the group can offer support and encouragement in times of need. Without the church we would be alone and we simply couldn't make it in this world of "sin, sickness and sorrow" without the guidance, companionship, and kindness of our brothers and sisters in Christ. All of this is yet another demonstration of God's love, helping to guide us in this life and reward us in the next.

**Ninth**, God shows His love for us even in how He created the universe. He created it as a sign, a flag, a demonstration of His intelligence so that even an uneducated person could know His divine qualities by just looking at the world around him. No reasonable person can observe the universe and conclude that it all happened by chance. Paul puts it this way:

Romans 1:18

*18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

**Tenth**, He disciplines us. He loves us so much that He watches over us and guides us and disciplines us so that our life will produce in us the peace of mind and confidence that are needed to have a joyous life here on this earth and heaven in the next life, Hebrews 12:4-11

*4 ¶ In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

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Notice verse 6 *“because the Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”* God loves us so much and He does everything He can to help us live this life so as to avoid Hell.

He does not just leave us to our own devices. When He sees us do anything that threatens our heavenly home He disciplines us to guide us back to the straight and narrow. This discipline produces a harvest of righteousness and peace *if* we are trained by it, verse 11.

This constant care and intervention, His discipline, is just another way in which He is involved in our lives. This involvement is to help us and to steer us with a gentle, yet firm, hand towards the fruitful and meaningful life of service to Him which will result in heaven after our life here is over.

**Eleventh.** The greatest proof of all that God has done everything possible to help us attain Heaven and avoid Hell in the afterlife is: -- Jesus, His only son!!! Probably the best known and most loved scripture in all the Bible is:

John 3:16,

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*

The very reason He gave His son was so that “whoever believes” (anybody at all) may have eternal life! Think of that. God did this for us... for the very purpose of getting us into Heaven! Just think of all Jesus did for us. Think of all the ways Jesus helped, and is helping, us. Consider these points:

1) He gave up his equality with God. In Philippians chapter 2, Paul says,

*5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

This sacrifice was not just for the 33 years that Jesus spent on earth, but was forever,

1 Corinthians 15:27, 28

*“For he has put everything under his feet.”* Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. *28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.*

We cannot even imagine what a great sacrifice this was. To be equal to God the father and to give up some part of that equality just for *me* is almost beyond human ability to comprehend. Colloquially we might say “It blows my mind!” And Jesus did this just so that *I* can have a joyous life here and the hope of Heaven. **(To emphasize this thought, reread this paragraph replacing the pronouns *me* and *I* with your name.)**

A story is told of a father and his young son taking a walk through the woods on a beautiful fall day. As they were enjoying the beauty of nature, they accidentally stepped on an ant hill. The young boy noticed all the ants scurrying around, some injured, some dead. The boy said, “Dad, let’s help them ...I want to help them!”

“But son, we can’t.”

“Why dad, why can’t we help them?”

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“Well son, we can’t help ... because ...well ... We are just too big. To help them now with their injuries, we would have to become small, like them.”

This story illustrates a point. God decided the best way to help us was to become like us, physically so *we could see and believe*. Since even this did not convince everybody, can you imagine what it would have been like if Jesus had not come to earth?

2) Jesus paid the price as if He were guilty of our sins. He suffered the agony of the cross, the grief of being separated from God and the humility of rejection by the very ones He loved and the very ones for whom He was dying.

God, being just, required death as payment for sin, Romans 1:32,

*Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things [the sins listed in the previous verses - cb] deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

Who could pay the price for our sins? After all they are *our* sins and therefore we should have to pay for them. Thankfully, God loved us enough to have the price for our sins paid by another. But who would be able to do such a thing? No human could do it because we all deserve to die for our own sins. It had to be a sinless person. It had to be a *perfect* person to die for the sins of others. It also had to be a great person, a person equal to the task, a person whose importance matched the magnitude of all the sins of all those who have ever lived or will live. It had to be God incarnate. Jesus was willing! The words of this song says it all:

**"He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay..."**

Paul put it this way in Romans 5:8,

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us,*

3) Jesus demonstrated **and** taught us with a great supernatural wisdom never before seen on earth. He showed us how to live a life of joy, peace, confidence and hope. If we lead this lifestyle, it will produce an afterlife of ecstasy in Heaven. He not only talked the talk, He walked the walk, consistently demonstrating His great love for us by His life and His death. Thereby offering us a chance.

4) Jesus performed miracles to prove He was the son of God and therefore had the power to keep His promises of an awesome reward in Heaven.

5) God watched as Jesus suffered. We never focus much on what God was doing as Christ was on the cross. ... He watched. Imagine what it must have been like. To watch your only beloved son suffering, knowing you could stop it with just a thought. Knowing He was suffering for those who did not even know Him, some who did not believe in Him, and yes, even for those who were causing the suffering. Why did God just watch (and maybe cry) as Jesus agonized on the cross? The same reason Jesus voluntarily died, simply because they loved/love us. Their love for us is proof that their promises are true and the promised afterlife as recorded in the Bible is a certainty.

All of these facts are just God’s way of doing His best to inform us, encourage us, guide us, command us, plea with us, promise us, forgive us, and show us the way to Heaven.

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Every single characteristic of God or Jesus mentioned above, every single promise listed, every single action described in this paper demonstrates the effort of God to *help* us achieve a joyous life while on earth, and ecstasy in Heaven when we leave here.

No claim is made that the above material is in any way exhaustive. It should, however, give us enough evidence to prove God has done everything possible to help us spend eternity in Heaven..

What more could He have done? How much more help could He have given us? How many more incentives could He offer? How much greater the reward or more severe the punishment, in order to get us to live righteously? How much more love could He have shown us? How many more sins could He have forgiven to prove His love?

How much longer should He wait for our repentance?

How could He have made our choices more clear? How much more evidence could be offered to prove the finality and fairness of the afterlife?

***There is only one other thing He could have done!***

**He could have eliminated free will!  
Thereby making us robots, ensuring our destiny in heaven!**

**Is that what He should have done??** Do you really think being a robot would be a better life than the current one, the way God planned it? Surely not! Surely not even the most arrogant among us, not even the most prideful of mankind could ever think he, a mere man, could improve on how God created man. At least, I hope not.

Sin is a violation of God's law. All sin deserves death (Romans 1:32). Yet we keep on sinning, every hour, every day and sometimes more often. We all know the "big" sins like drunkenness, adultery, lying, stealing, and murder, but what about all the other sins? Carefully consider the following list of sins:

Ephesians 5:3

*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person— such a man is an idolater— has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no-one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.*

2 Corinthians 7:1

*Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Philippians 4:8

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think about such things.*

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James 4:17

*Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

Matthew 5:27

*You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not commit adultery: 28 But I say to you, That whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Matthew 12:36

*But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken.*

These are but a few examples that could be multiplied to show we sin continually. Note two things about this short list of sins: 1) We violate these instructions all the time, thereby, sinning and 2) We are not forced to do these things. Our free will allows us to decide not to sin, but we fail. Often.

These scriptures show, illustrate and demonstrate how much God loves us. He loves us enough to forgive us of each and every sin!! Think about how often we sin as you read the next scripture. John's message here is beyond awesome!

1 John 1:5-7

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleans us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

With all the above evidence we have proven that God has done everything possible to assist us in our efforts to attain Heaven. Importantly, these efforts **are** enough. We know this is so because many are now in heaven and many more will, indeed, be there. Because God loves us we know we all *can* be there, if we but follow His instructions.

If the evidence presented here is not enough to substantiate this conclusion, how much more is needed?

Can we repay God for all this love, attention and guidance? No! But maybe we should **try**. The best way (and really, the only way) is A, B, C, i.e.

- A** stands for Always pray,
- B** stands for Bible study daily,
- C** stand for Church worship regularly.

With so much encouragement from God how can anyone deny, doubt, hesitate, resist or question the need to respond to His love and, thereby receive these many promised blessings?