

# THE DOCTRINE OF GOD: THE GOD WHO LOVES

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*A threefold love of God is commonly held; or rather there are three degrees of one and the same love. First, there is the love of benevolence by which God willed good to the creature from eternity; second, the love of beneficence by which he does good to the creature in time according to his will; third, the love of complacency by which he delights himself in the creature on account of the rays of his image seen in them. The two former precede every act of the creature; the latter follows (not as an effect its cause, but as a consequent its antecedent). By the love of benevolence, he loves us before we were; by the love of beneficence, he loves us as we are; and by the love of complacency, he loves us when we are (viz., renewed after his image). By the first, he elects us; by the second, he redeems and sanctifies us; but by the third, he gratuitously rewards us as holy and just. John 3:16 refers to the first; Eph 5:25 and Rev 1:5 to the second; Is 62:3 and Heb 11:6 to the third.*

—Francis Turretin

Everyone knows that God is \_\_\_\_\_.

(T/F) The major world religions believe in all-loving God.

(T/F) Nature testifies to an all-loving God.

(T/F) Christianity and the Bible testify to an all-loving God.

## What Is Love?

The world defines it as: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One scholar defines it as "*His self-giving affection for his image-bearing creatures and his unselfish concern for their well-being, that leads him to act on their behalf and for their happiness and welfare.*"

## GOD'S \_\_\_\_\_ LOVE

**Matthew 3:17** says, "*and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'*"

**John 17:24** says, "*Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*" (cf. **v. 26**)

**John 14:31** says, "*but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.*"

**1 John 4:8, 16** says, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love....<sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

## **GOD'S LOVE FOR \_\_\_\_\_? DOES GOD LOVE \_\_\_\_\_?**

**Deuteronomy 7:6–8** says, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup>but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

**Matthew 5:43–48** says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

**John 3:16** says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

(T/F) God loves every single person in the same way.

**John 17:9** says, "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours."

(T/F) God loves all sinners out of his benevolence, his goodness, for his glory.

**Acts 14:16–17** says, "In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup>Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

**Romans 2:4–5** says, "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup>But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."

God's goodness and kindness toward the world is meant to lead them to \_\_\_\_\_.

## **GOD'S \_\_\_\_\_ LOVE**

**John 3:16** says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

**John 15:13** says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

**Romans 5:8** says, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

**1 John 4:9–10** says, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

**Revelation 1:5b** says, "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood"

**Romans 8:32, 35** says, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?"

**Ephesians 2:4–5** says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved"

**Ephesians 1:4–5** says, "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will"

**Response: We \_\_\_\_\_ him. Giving our lives for his \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Galatians 2:20** says, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

**2 Corinthians 5:14–15** says, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup>and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

**Response: We are expected to \_\_\_\_\_ his love.**

**Ephesians 5:2** says "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

**Ephesians 5:25** says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"

**1 John 3:16** 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."

**1 John 4:19** says, "We love because he first loved us."

**Matthew 20:25–28** says, "But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, <sup>28</sup>even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Response: We are to \_\_\_\_\_ well, die to sin, and live to righteousness.**

**1 Peter 2:21–25** says, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup>When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

**Response: \_\_\_\_\_ on the love of God.**

**Ephesians 3:17–19** says, "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."