

James Rafferty Q1-L2- 2025-The Everlasting Love of God-Jan 5

NEXT WEEK-Lesson 3

**January 11-17*

To Be Pleasing to God

Lesson 2

**January 4-10*

Covenantal Love

Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: *2 Pet. 3:9, Deut. 7:6-9, Rom.*

11:22, 1 John 4:7-20, John 15:12, 1 John 3:16.

Memory Text: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves

Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and

We will come to him and make Our home with him' " (*John*

14:23, NKJV).

[any have been taught that the Greek word *agape* refers to a love that is unique to God, while other terms for love, such as *phileo*, refer to different kinds of love, more deficient than *agape*. Some claim, too, that *agape* refers to unilateral love, a love that only gives but never receives, a love entirely independent of human response.

However, careful study of divine love throughout Scripture shows that these ideas, though common, are mistaken. First, the Greek term *agape* refers not only to God's love but also to human love, even sometimes misdirected human love (*2 Tim. 4:10*). Second, throughout Scripture, many terms other than *agape* refer to God's love. For example, Jesus taught, " 'the Father Himself loves [*phileo*] you, because you have loved [*phileo*] Me' " (*John 16:27, NASB*). Here, the Greek term *phileo* is used not only of human love but also of God's love for humans. Thus, *phileo* does not refer to a deficient kind of love, but to God's love itself.

Scripture also teaches that God's love is not unilateral, but deeply relational, in that it makes a profound difference to God whether or not humans reflect His love back to Him and to others.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 11.*

Sunday *January 5*

The Everlasting Love of God

Scripture is clear: God loves everyone. The most famous verse of Scripture, John 3:16, proclaims this truth: “ ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life’ ” *(NKJV)*.

GOD SO LOVED...BAPTISTS, CATHOLICS, ADVENTISTS OR EVEN CHRISTIANS. GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD. GODS LOVE IS ALL INCLUSIVE.

Read Psalm 33:5 and Psalm 145:9. What do these verses teach about how far God’s lovingkindness, compassion, and mercy extend?

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

Psalm 33:5 KJV

“The LORD is good to all: And His tender mercies are over all His works.”

Psalm 145:9 KJV

Some might think that they are unlovable, or that God might love everyone else, but not them. Yet, the Bible consistently proclaims that *every single person* is loved by God. There is no one whom He does not love. And because God loves everyone, He also wants everyone to be saved, as well.

Read 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:4, and Ezekiel 33:11. What do these texts teach about God’s desire to save everyone?

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Ezekiel 33:11 KJV

The verse after John 3:16 adds: “ ‘For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved’ ” (*John 3:17, NKJV*). If it were up to God alone, every human being would accept His love and be saved. Yet, the Lord will not force His love on anyone. People are free to accept or reject it.

And even though some do reject it, God never stops loving them. In Jeremiah 31:3, He proclaims to His people: “ ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you’ ” (*NKJV*). Elsewhere, the Bible repeatedly teaches that God’s love endures forever (*see, for example, Psalm 136*). God’s love never runs out. It is everlasting. This is hard for us to understand because we often find it easy not to love others, don’t we?

However, if we as individuals could learn to experience the reality of that love—that is, to know for ourselves God’s love—how differently we might live and treat others.

If God loves everyone, this means He must love some pretty despicable characters, because there are some (a lot, in fact)

despicable characters out there. What should God's love for these people teach us about how we should seek to relate to them, as well?

1 TIMOTHY 2:1, 2-

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

1 Timothy 2:1-4 KJV

BIBLE VERSES FROM EVERLASTING GOSPEL OUTLINE:

The Bible describes God's love for us in various ways:

Matchless love (see Romans 5:6-8).

Boundless love (see Ephesians 3:19).

Infinite love (see Luke 23:34).

Unmerited love (see Luke 15:20).

Everlasting love (see Jeremiah 31:3).

Changeless (see Malachi 3:6).

SO HOW CAN WE LOVE PEOPLE THAT WE DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE? ONE WAY AS WE JUST NOTED IN 1TIM 2 IS PRAYING FOR THEM.

SEE SERMON ON 3ABN -HOW TO LOVE PEOPLE YOU DON'T LIKE.