GOD'S ATTRIBUTES · STUDY NOTES

Study 6: God is love

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

God is good

Is it possible that He could love me?

No one would pretend it is easy to understand some of the things that happen in the world. There is suffering, disaster and loss. It was not so at the beginning: God made a world that was very good, and it was mankind who spoiled it. When Adam and Eve sinned, the whole creation was affected, and it has suffered ever since.

1 **Read Romans 8:18–22**

What does verse 22 say about the whole creation?

We suffer too, because we live in this fallen world. But God, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, is able to use hardship to work good out of it. Hard experiences remind us that we are mortal, and that we must walk humbly before God. And even in a fallen world, the message is true: God is good. The world He created still speaks of a God who has goodness at heart.

There is still great beauty, intricacy and grandeur in it, with stunning wonders, delicate fragrances and awe-inspiring sounds. These all speak to us of God's glory and goodness, if we have eyes and ears to see and hear it.

2 **Look up Romans 1:20**

Through what are God's invisible qualities understood?

What is more, this goodness is shown to all. In spite of the famines and floods that affect the earth, God gives good gifts to everyone.

3 **Look up the last part of Matthew 5:45**

On whom does God send sun and rain?

Everything around us tells us that God is good.

Understanding the love of God

There is much that could be said about the love of God. It is best understood in the light of God's glorious being: He is so much higher than we are, and so different. His holiness is just one way to see how glorious He is, and how lowly and weak we are by comparison. He owes us nothing – and yet He loves this world, and shows compassion and mercy.

4 **Look up Psalm 103:8**

How is the LORD described?

5 **Look up Psalm 103:13–14**

To what is the LORD's compassion compared, and what does He remember about us?

Food and drink, family and friends, places to live and work, and a world teeming with variety and interest all bear witness to His love. So do the prayers He graciously answers, telling of His kindness, His active involvement and His interest in our lives. In countless ways God shows that He is willing to bless us, whether or not we acknowledge Him and thank Him.

PART 2

Love in action

Love in action

Above all, God's love is seen in His willingness to send a Saviour to die for sinners. We saw in the last study how His holy laws have been broken, with terrible consequences for sinners for all eternity. Through His Son Jesus Christ, a way is opened for sinners to come to God. He cleanses them from the sins that stand between them and friendship with God. The coming of Jesus Christ to earth as a man speaks volumes of God's love for mankind: His love moved Him to live a hard life among sinners who neither loved Him nor respected Him.

6 **Look up John 3:16**

What did God's love for the world move Him to give?

In his first letter, John says that God's love was shown in His sending a Saviour into the world for our sin.

7 **Look up 1 John 4:8–9**

How was God's love revealed among us?

It is a deep love, a love God truly feels. It is not shallow or fickle. It is steady and constant, and it keeps on showing kindness and favour, however unworthy the people concerned.

Sinners are not owed a Saviour, and have no right to one. But God decreed that sinners might have a Saviour. Through Him they might be rescued from His wrath and from the consequences of their sins. Without Him, a final judgement would take them away for ever to everlasting torment and misery. In His love, God saves sinners from that judgement.

The change that takes place when we come to see our sinfulness, and how vital Christ's coming, death and resurrection are for our own soul, is called "being made alive". The Lord Jesus called it being "born again" (John 3:3): born spiritually, from God. All of it comes from His love.

8 **Look up Ephesians 2:4–5**

Why did God make us alive with Christ, and what were we at the time?

In fact, God's love makes it possible for us to benefit from His Son's death, by giving us the gift of repentance and faith. Our sinful hearts would never repent and believe on their own. Without this new birth – a work of God's grace – not one of us would ever see how much we need the forgiveness that comes from Jesus Christ. Nor, without His love, would we ever want Him enough to admit that we are sinners and plead with Him to save us. This work of grace within us is the work of the Holy Spirit, as we saw in study 4.

9 **Look up Ephesians 2:8–9**

Is salvation from ourselves? What is it?

Joy in heaven

When a sinner comes to faith in His Son through repentance, God's love is plain to see. The parable of the lost son pictures a rebellious, reckless son coming home humbly and repentantly to his father – and being welcomed with a great feast (Luke 15:11–32).

10 **Look up Luke 15:10**

How does heaven react to a sinner who repents?

This shows how much God values the rescue of a human soul. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but delights in receiving another son or daughter into the kingdom of heaven. The joy is reverent, holy and unrestrained: the response of a God who deeply loves sinners, delights to make them His people, and cares greatly for their welfare.

While He was on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ showed again and again His personal concern for the people He met. He knew most were hardened against Him, and that few were to be

among His people. His reaction to their unbelief tells us everything about the depth of His love.

11 **Read Luke 19:41–44**

What single word in verse 41 shows us Jesus' reaction to the city of Jerusalem?

PART 3

Love that does not end

Love that does not end

God's love continues, and will continue until the end of the age, when the Lord Jesus Christ Himself returns to the earth. Everyone who comes to Him and trusts in Him for salvation is assured that the end of their life will lead into happiness and joy.

12 **Look up Christ's promise in John 6:39**

How many of those given to Him will He lose?

13 **Look up the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 11:25–26**

What does He promise to whoever believes in Him?

Each of His people, when they believe, receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, as we saw in study 4.

14 **Look up the last part of Ephesians 1:13**

With whom were believers sealed?

No one whom God counts among His people is ever lost. They still face many hard challenges in this life. Yet through the blessings of answered prayer, and the work of the Holy Spirit deep within them, Romans 8:28 becomes a wonderful reality.

15 **Look up Romans 8:28**

For whose good does God work all things together?

See also: something to read and consider: John 10:1–18; Ephesians 2.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Do you ever thank God for the many good gifts He gives?

2. Have you ever been struck by the love that made it possible for sinners to be saved?

3. Have you experienced God's love by knowing that your own sin has been dealt with through the Lord's death on the cross?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 6

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES · STUDY 6 · MEMORY VERSE

“This is how God’s love was revealed among us: God sent His one and only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.”

1 John 4:9

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Romans 8:18–22** *18I consider that our present sufferings are not comparable to the glory that will be revealed in us. 19The creation waits in eager expectation for the revelation of the sons of God. 20For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of the One who subjected it, in hope 21that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until the present time.*

2 **Romans 1:20** *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from His workmanship, so that men are without excuse.*

3 **Matthew 5:45** *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

4 **Psalm 103:8** *The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion.*

5 **Psalm 103:13–14** *13As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. 14For He knows our frame; He is mindful that we are dust.*

6 **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

7 **1 John 4:8–9** *8Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9This is how God's love was revealed among us: God sent His one and only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.*

8 **Ephesians 2:4–5** *4But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved!*

9 **Ephesians 2:8–9** *8For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9not by works, so that no one can boast.*

10 **Luke 15:10** *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."*

11 **Luke 19:41–44** *41As Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it 42and said, "If only you had known on this day what would bring you peace! But now it is hidden from your eyes. 43For the days will come upon you when your enemies will barricade you and surround you and hem you in on every side. 44They will level you to the ground—you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."*

12 **John 6:39** *And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of those He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day.*

13 **John 11:25–26** *25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies. 26 And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

14 **Ephesians 1:13** *And in Him, having heard and believed the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

15 **Romans 8:28** *And we know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 6: God is love

> **Memory verse:** “This is how God’s love was revealed among us: God sent His one and only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.” (1 John 4:9). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See God's goodness in creation and His kindness to all.
- Understand that God's love is seen above all in sending His Son, and in the gift of new life, repentance and faith.
- Rejoice in a love that never ends: none of Christ's people will be lost.

Suggested timing (about 75 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (3 min); Romans 1:20, Matthew 5:45, Psalm 103:8, 13–14.
- **25 min** Part 2 video (4 min); John 3:16, 1 John 4:8–9, Ephesians 2:4–5, 2:8–9, Luke 15:10, 19:41–44.
- **20 min** Part 3 video (3 min); John 6:39, 11:25–26, Ephesians 1:13, Romans 8:28.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer.

Tips

- Hold together God's general kindness to all (Matthew 5:45) and His saving love in Christ.
- The authors stress that repentance and faith are God's gifts (the new birth). Let that lead to gratitude, not to passivity.
- Invite each person to ask: have I experienced this love for myself?

Answers to watch for

- **Romans 1:20; Matthew 5:45:** God's goodness in creation; sun and rain for all.
- **Psalm 103:8, 13–14:** compassionate and gracious; a father's compassion.
- **John 3:16; 1 John 4:8–9:** God so loved the world that He gave His Son.
- **Ephesians 2:4–5, 8–9:** made alive with Christ; saved by grace through faith, the gift of God.
- **Luke 15:10:** rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents.
- **Luke 19:41:** Jesus wept over Jerusalem.
- **John 6:39:** He will lose none of those the Father has given Him.
- **John 11:25–26:** "I am the resurrection and the life."
- **Ephesians 1:13:** sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- **Romans 8:28:** God works all things together for the good of those who love Him.