

How to Love God

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INTRODUCTION

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones said...

| Love does not look at itself—it is absorbed in the object of its love.

| *The Love of God*, 77

- That is so true!
- And that is the kind of love that God calls us to give Him
- A love that is “absorbed in” Him
- It is clear in Scripture that we are to love God
- That is without question
- But how are we to do this?
- Is there any kind of visual display that we can show Him?
- Does the Bible tell us how God wants to be loved?
- The answer to both of those questions is a resounding “yes”!
- But before we can answer those questions, we first have to say that “loving God requires knowing Him, and that knowledge begins with His Word...to know Him is to love Him” (<https://www.gotquestions.org/love-God.html>)
- If you do not love Him, you do not know Him
- So let’s start by asking, “Are you a follower of Jesus Christ?”
- Have you “received Him?” ([John 1:12](#))
- Have you confessed Him as Lord? ([Romans 10:9](#))
- Have you believed in your heart that God raised Him from the dead? ([Romans 10:9-10](#))
- Have you called upon Him? ([Romans 10:13](#))
- If all this is true, then there are 5 ways that you are to manifest your love for God

· First...

LESSON

I. To Love God is to Worship and Praise Him

- Jesus reaffirmed it

- When Jesus was in the wilderness forty days and forty nights, He was tempted by the devil who said to Him in [Luke 4:6-8](#), “6 And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this dominion and its glory, for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 “Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.” 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’””
- This is a quotation from [Deuteronomy 6:13](#), “You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name”
- Jesus reaffirmed what the Scriptures taught—that we are to “fear only the LORD...worship Him and swear by His name” and no one else

- Deuteronomy was written by Moses. We can say with certainty that...

- Moses called for it from Israel

- The Hebrew word for “worship” means to “serve”
- To “serve” is to “surrender all” to the object that one is serving

- › It cannot be anything less because as...

- › John Gill says we are to...

An Exposition of the Old Testament, Vols. I–VI Chapter 6

Serve him through fear; not through slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation; but through filial fear, a reverential affection for that God that had brought them out of a state of bondage into great and glorious liberty, out of Egypt into Canaan’s land, out of a place of misery into a land of plenty; and therefore should fear the Lord and his goodness, and from such a fear of him serve him, in every part of worship, public and private, enjoined;

- This is the theme of the Psalms

- [Psalm 5:7](#), “But as for me, in the abundance of Your lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will worship in fear of You.”
- [Psalm 22:27](#), “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Yahweh, And all the families of the nations will worship before You.”
- [Psalm 29:2](#), “Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of His name; Worship Yahweh in the splendor of holiness.”
- [Psalm 66:4](#), “All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name.” Selah.”

- [Psalm 86:9](#), “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And they shall glorify Your name.”
- [Psalm 95:6](#), “Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before Yahweh our Maker.”
- [Psalm 99:5](#), “Exalt Yahweh our God And worship at the footstool of His feet; Holy is He.”
- [Psalm 99:9](#), “Exalt Yahweh our God And worship at His holy mountain, For holy is Yahweh our God.”
- [Psalm 132:7](#), “Let us come into His dwelling place; Let us worship at the footstool of His feet.”
- [Psalm 138:2](#), “I will worship toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.”
- This is a way of Life
 - [John 4:24](#), “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.””
 - The word that Jesus uses for “worship” (proskuneo) occurs 60 times in the NT
 - In the OT it meant “to do reverence or bow down”
 - When the three visitors came and visited Abraham, [Genesis 18:2](#), “And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing nearby; he saw, and he ran from the tent door to meet them, and he bowed himself to the earth,”
 - In NT it also meant “to do reverence or homage by prostration” (Mounce)
 - [Matthew 8:2](#), “And behold, a leper came to Him and was bowing down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.””
 - This carries the idea of giving “honor and adoration” to God (MacArthur)
- God wants us to give ourselves to Him, honor and adore Him and express it by bowing down in humility before Him
- So to love God is to worship and praise Him. Second...

II. To Love God is to Put Him First

- This is called chief or primary Love
 - Is God your chief love?
 - Do you love Him more than the things of the world?
 - Do you love Him more than those who are dear to you? Your spouse? Your children? Your friends?

- Before you say “yes,” keep in mind the believers at Ephesus also said yes but in [Revelation 2:4](#) they were guilty of leaving their “first love”
 - The idea of “first” is exactly what it sounds like
 - The Greek word is protos and is translated “first,” referring to being before all else, in [Matthew 19:30](#).
 - It is also translated “foremost” in [Mark 12:29](#) referring to the most important
- Loving God is the most important thing you can do

> Jesus said...

- This is to be done with your entire being
 - Jesus said in [Matthew 22:37](#), “...“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.””
 - This is a quotation of [Deuteronomy 6:5](#), which says, “You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
 - God wants you to love Him with your whole being and in every possible way
 - He also wants you to love Him exclusively above all other things and beings
 - Lukewarm, half-hearted, or apathetic fondness for God won’t do. He wants our total devotion
 - King David had this kind of devotion to God - [Acts 13:22](#), “...‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.’”
 - The Hebrew word that Moses uses for “love” in [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) is Aheb and refers “primarily to an act of mind and will...It might well include strong emotion, but its distinguishing characteristics were the dedication and commitment of choice. It is the love that recognizes and chooses to follow that which is righteous, noble, and true, regardless of what one’s feelings in a matter might be. It is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *agapaō* in the New Testament, the verb of intelligent, purposeful, and committed love that is an act of the will” (MacArthur)
 - To love God with “all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” is referring to “comprehensiveness.” We are to love God with every part of our being.
 - “heart” referred to the core of one’s personal being - [Proverbs 4:23](#), “Guard your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”
 - “soul” is closest to what we would call emotion and is the word Jesus used when He cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane the night He was arrested: “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death” ([Matt. 26:38](#)) (MacArthur)

- “mind” is used here in the sense of intellectual, willful vigor and determination, carrying both the meaning of mental endeavor and of strength (MacArthur)
- Genuine love of the Lord is intelligent, feeling, willing and serving. It involves thought, sensitivity, intent, and even action where that is possible and appropriate (MacArthur)
- In the words of the psalmist in [Psalm 73:25](#), “Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.”

· Not only is our love to God be comprehensive but...

III. To Love God is to Desire Him, to Yearn for His Righteousness, His Word, and His Grace

- It is like thirsting for water
 - [Psalm 42:1](#), “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.”
 - David said in [Psalm 119:131](#), “I opened my mouth wide and panted, For I longed for Your commandments.”
 - [Psalm 84:2](#), “My soul has longed and even fainted for the courts of Yahweh; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.”
- It is like sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to Him
 - [Luke 10:39](#), “And she had a sister called Mary, who was also seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word.”
 - [Luke 10:40-42](#), “40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the preparations alone? Then tell her to help me.” 41 But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things, 42 but only one thing is necessary. for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.””
- It is more desirable than all the riches of the world
 - [Psalm 19:10](#), “They are more desirable than gold, even more than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.”

Suppose a man is separated from his sweetheart and receives a letter from her. His first action will be to eagerly open the letter and pore over its contents. His love for his beloved will naturally cause him to love her correspondence with him. The same is true with our love for God’s Word. Because we love the Author, we love His message to us. We read it avidly and often, we hold it close, and we hide its words in our hearts.

| <https://www.gotquestions.org/love-God.html>

· **Worshiping, praising the Lord, putting Him first, desiring Him and His righteousness, Word and grace**

Last...

IV. To Love God is to Obey Him

We naturally wish to please those we love, especially God

- Obedience proves our love
 - [John 14:21-24](#), “21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?” 23 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 dwelling with him. 24 “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.””
- Obedience reveals our desires
 - [Psalm 40:8](#), “I desire to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my inner being.”
- Obedience is abiding in His love
 - [John 15:10](#), “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”
- Perhaps one of the purest examples in the Bible of how to love God comes from an unnamed woman who anointed the Lord’s feet with her perfume
- [Luke 7:36-50](#), “36 Now one of the Pharisees was asking Him to eat with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37 And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner. And when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 And standing behind Him at His feet, crying, she began to wet His feet with her tears. And she kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. 39 Now when the Pharisee, who had invited Him, saw this, he said to himself, saying, “If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.” 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he replied, “Say it, Teacher.” 41 “A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 “When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which...”
- So grateful was she for Christ’s forgiveness of her many sins that she poured out her love in extravagant worship and absolute devotion.
- This woman appreciated the true worth of her Savior, and in humble gratitude, sacrifice, and servitude, she loved and worshiped Jesus with her tears, her hair, her kisses, and her priceless bottle of perfume. She loved God with all she was and everything she had to offer.
(<https://www.gotquestions.org/how-to-love-God.html>)

V. To Love God is to Hate Sin

Charles Spurgeon said, “You and your sins must separate or you and your God will never come together. No one sin may keep you; they must all be given up, they must be brought out like Canaanite kings from the cave and be hanged up in the sun.”

- If you love God you hate sin

| The more a Christian hates sin, the more he desires to hate it.

| Jonathan Edwards

- [Psalm 97:10](#), “Hate evil, you who love Yahweh, Who keeps the souls of His holy ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”
- [Proverbs 8:13](#), “The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the mouth of perverted words, I hate.”
- [Romans 12:9](#), “Let love be without hypocrisy—by abhorring what is evil, clinging to what is good,”

| But it is the excellence of a holy man that he is not at peace with indwelling sin, as others are. He hates it, mourns over it, and longs to be free from its company.

| J. C. Ryle

> Erik Raymond asks...

| Do you hate sin? Do you hate what sin is doing? Every tear, every ounce of pain comes from sin. It fuels every hearse. Every grieving widow wails because of its might. Sin provokes every wail of hurt. Every bit of shame is sourced in sin. Every regret and burn mark upon the soul is the handiwork of sin. Every biting word is loaded with the sting of sin. Every prideful thought is concocted upon the conveyer belt of sin. Every bit of injustice is deputized by General Sin. Every betrayed heart aches because sin has made its presence know. Every bit of corruption is a footprint of sin. Every bit of neglect demonstrates sin’s attention. It’s all sin. Sin is the greatest evil on this planet. Will you not hate it?

| (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/hate-sin-effects>)

• Not only do you hate sin but...

- If you love God you will put sin to death
 - [Colossians 3:5](#), “Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.”
 - [Romans 6:13](#), “and do not go on presenting your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”
 - [Romans 8:13](#), “for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the practices of the body, you will live.”

- If you love God you will flee from sin
 - [1 Corinthians 6:18](#), “Flee sexual immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral man sins against his own body.”
 - [2 Timothy 2:22](#), “Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

CONCLUSION

- Loving God requires knowing Him
- To love God is to worship and praise Him
- To love God is to put Him first
- To love God is to desire Him, to yearn for His righteousness, His Word, and His grace
- To love God is to obey Him
- To love God is to hate sin
- Thomas Watson closes with these thoughts:
 - He who loves God desires His presence. Lovers cannot be long asunder, they soon have their fainting fits, for lack of a sight of the object of their love. A soul deeply in love with God desires the enjoyment of Him. David was ready to faint away, when he had not a sight of God. "My soul faints for God." [Psalm 84:2](#).
 - He who loves God is not much in love with anything else. His love is very cool to worldly things. The love of the world eats out the heart of piety; it chokes holy affections, as earth puts out the fire. He who loves God—uses the world but chooses God. The world engages him—but God delights and satisfies him. He says as David, "God, my exceeding joy!" [Psalm 43:4](#). "God is the cream of my joy!"
 - He who loves God cannot live without Him. Things we love, we cannot be without. A man can do without music or flowers, but not food. Just so, a soul deeply in love with God looks upon himself as undone without Him. "Hide not Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit." [Psalm 143:7](#). If God is our chief good—we cannot live without Him! Alas! how do they show they have no love to God—who can do well enough without Him! Let them have but food and drink, and you shall never hear them complain of the lack of God.
 - He who loves God will be at any pains to get Him. What pains the merchant takes, what hazards he runs—to have a rich return. Jacob loved Rachel, and he could endure the heat by day, and the frost by night—that he might enjoy her. A soul that loves God will take any pains for the fruition of Him. "My soul follows hard after You." [Psalm 63:8](#). The soul is much in prayer; it strives as in agony, that he may obtain Him whom his soul loves. "I will seek Him whom my soul loves." [Canticles 3:2](#).

- He who loves God, prefers Him before estate. "For Whom I have suffered the loss of all things." [Phil 3:8](#). Who that loves a rich jewel— would not part with a flower for it? (<https://www.monergism.com/how-may-we-know-whether-we-love-god>)
- Does this describe you?
- God calls for nothing less
- You are to love Him “WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND” ([Matthew 22:37](#)).
- If you’re here today and have never been saved, you don’t love God. You love yourself. That’s why you refuse to come to Him.
- Swallow your pride
- Humble yourself before Him
- Repent of your sin
- And graciously receive His wonderful gift
- John said in [John 1:12-13](#), “12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
- Let’s pray